

## **APPENDIX D**

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Cultural Resources Documentation



# **HISTORICAL RESOURCE INVENTORY AND EVALUATION REPORT**

**Capitol Towers Apartments  
1500 7th Street  
Sacramento, California 95814**



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## APPENDIX

Appendix A: DPR 523 Forms

## 1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Kennedy Wilson proposes to develop the Capitol Towers property at 1500 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Sacramento. The proposed project, known as the Sacramento Commons, will include demolition of the existing two-to-three-story garden apartments and some of the designed landscape features on the property for construction of mid-rise and high-rise apartments and condominium, as well as a hotel and restaurant. The existing 15-story tower apartment building on the property will remain. The property is located on the “super-block” bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, N Street, and P Street on three assessor parcels, which constitute the study area for this report. The location of the study area for this project is depicted in **Figure 1**.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the City of Sacramento, as the project’s lead agency, to determine the significance of impacts the project may have on historical resources. AECOM is preparing the environmental document for the project’s CEQA compliance. Kennedy Wilson hired JRP Historical Consulting, LLC (JRP) to provide assistance for the project’s CEQA compliance as it pertains to historical resources. This report provides information and analysis regarding potential historical resources. This study was conducted in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)-(b) of the CEQA Guidelines using the criteria outlined in Section 5924.1 of the California Public Resources Code.

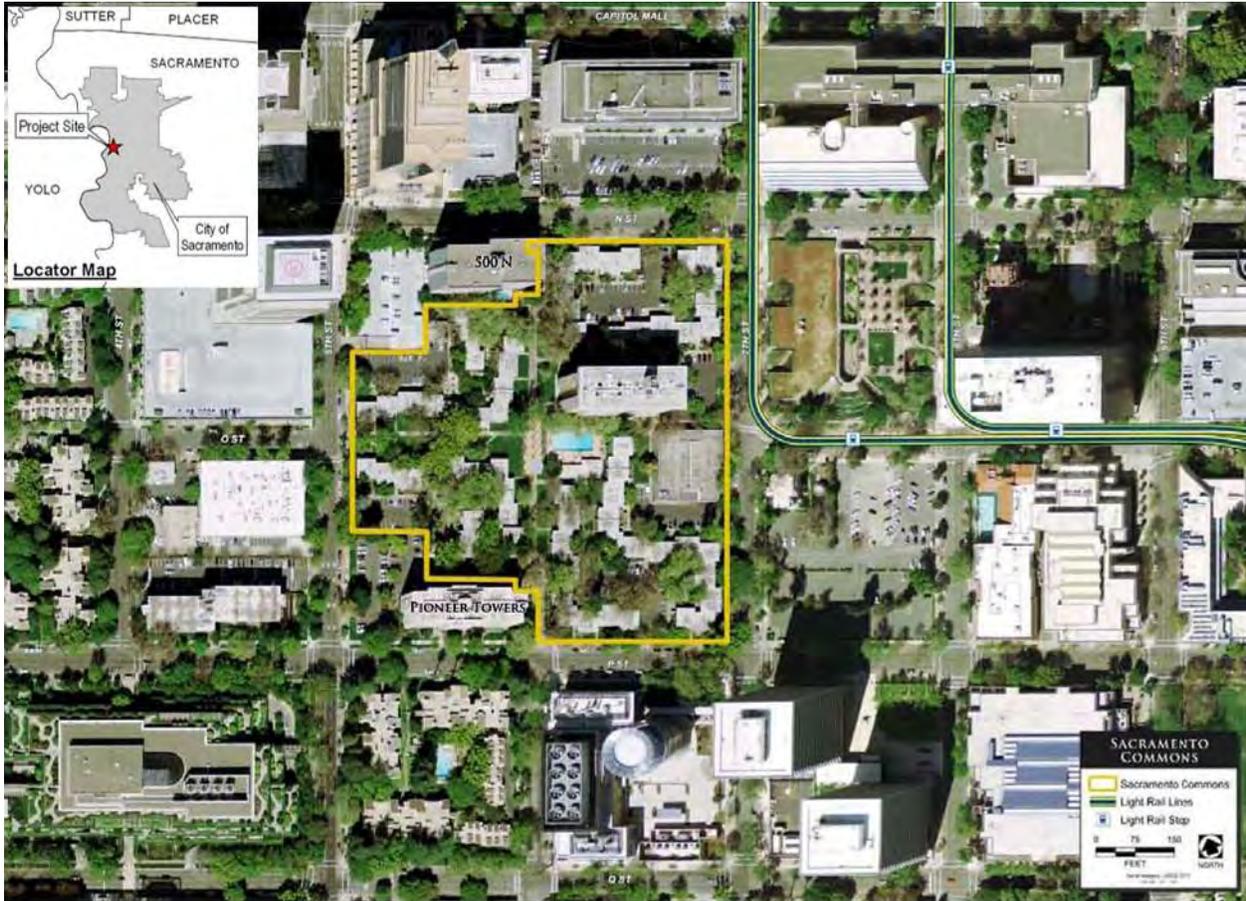
JRP inventoried and evaluated the property to assess whether the property in the study area should be considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA, i.e. whether it is listed in, determined eligible for, or appears to meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (Sacramento Register). This report is based on an inventory and evaluation that JRP prepared in 2008 for a previous development project at this property.<sup>1</sup>

The Capitol Towers property, which was initially designed, developed, and built between 1958 and 1965, has not been previously inventoried and evaluated as a potential historical resource. This report concludes that the property does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the CRHR, NRHP, or Sacramento Register. The property, including its buildings and designed landscape, is described and evaluated on Department of Parks and Recreation Primary and Buildings Structures and Objects Record forms (DPR 523 forms) provided in Appendix A. Thus, this report concludes that the Capitol Towers property is not a historical resource for the

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed development project at this property in 2008 did not complete the environmental process under CEQA. Consequently, JRP’s previous report was prepared to administrative draft final and only received internal review by the environmental team and City of Sacramento staff.

purpose of CEQA and there will be no impact to historical resources in the built environment.<sup>2</sup> This report does not address potential impacts nor suggest any mitigation measures to historical resources because the Capitol Towers property is not considered a historical resource, as defined in the CEQA guidelines.



**Figure 1:** Project Location and Project Vicinity Map

<sup>2</sup> This report does not include analysis regarding potential archaeological resources that may be impacted by this project.

## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION<sup>3</sup>

Kennedy Wilson proposes to modernize the existing Capitol Towers building and replace the aging low-rise garden apartments on the property with an integrated residential mixed-use community. Sacramento Commons will include a variety of housing types and accommodations—mid-rise and high-rise apartments and condominiums; a hotel with supporting restaurant, meeting spaces, and guest service uses; ground floor live-work and neighborhood retail and support services; and a central community commons, shaded walkways, and landscaping, integrated into an overall garden setting, as shown in **Figures 2, 3, and 4**. Between 1,373-1,473 homes, 49 live-work units, a 320 hotel room project option, and approximately 69,000 square feet of neighborhood retail and support services are planned for Sacramento Commons. The design for Sacramento Commons features:

- A park-like community setting, with expansive commons area, landscaping, and pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- Tree-lined streets and paths allowing bike and pedestrian access through the community and connections to adjacent uses
- Attractive and distinctive homes, live-work, and neighborhood retail and support uses, with entries and storefronts lining the streets and open space
- Mid- and high-rise residential and hotel development serving diverse housing needs
- Green and sustainable design elements- from its infill location to energy-efficient and water-efficient site and building design features

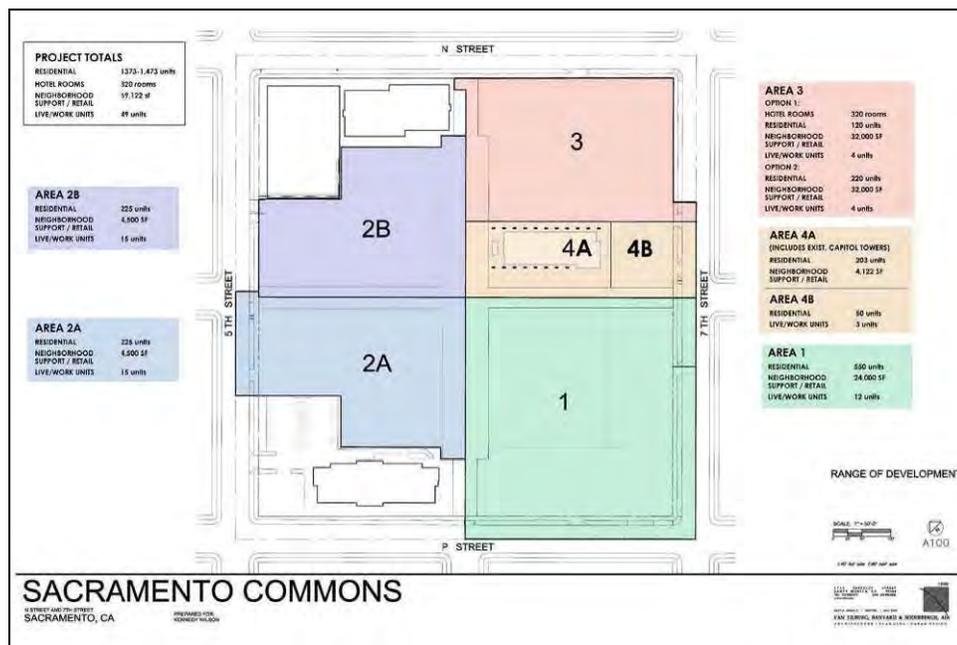


Figure 2: Range of Development

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy Wilson provided JRP with the text for this project description in March 2014.

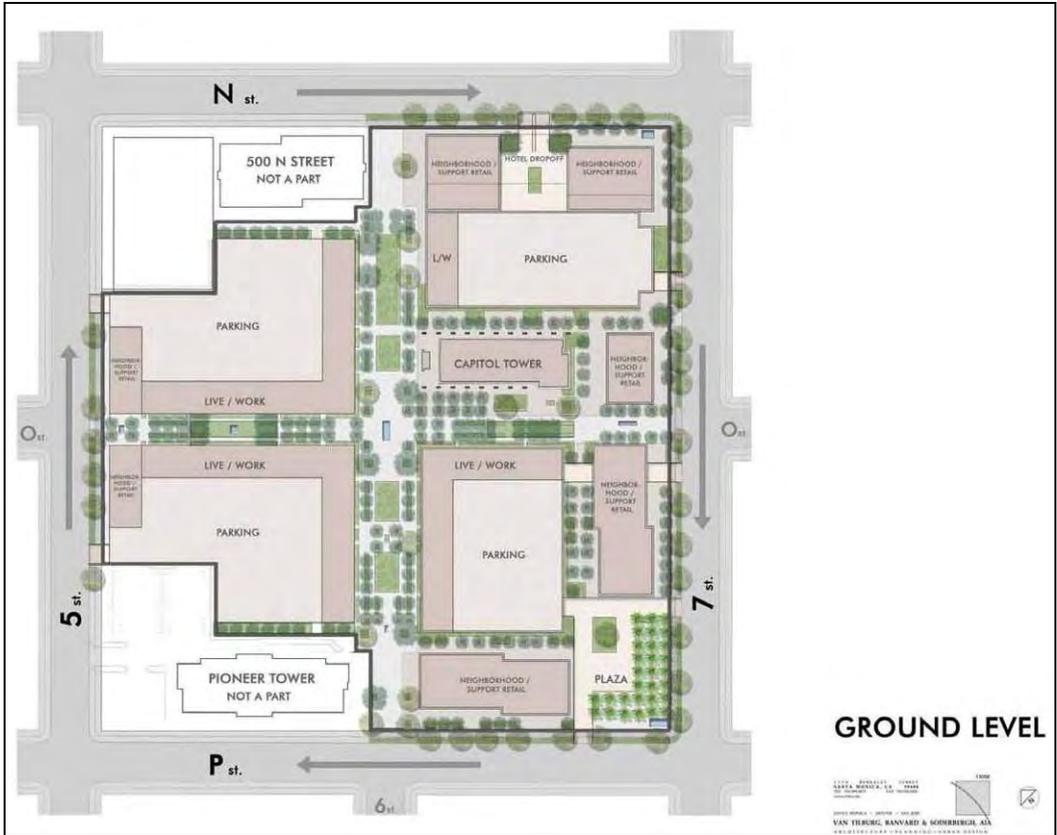


Figure 3: Ground Level Site Plan

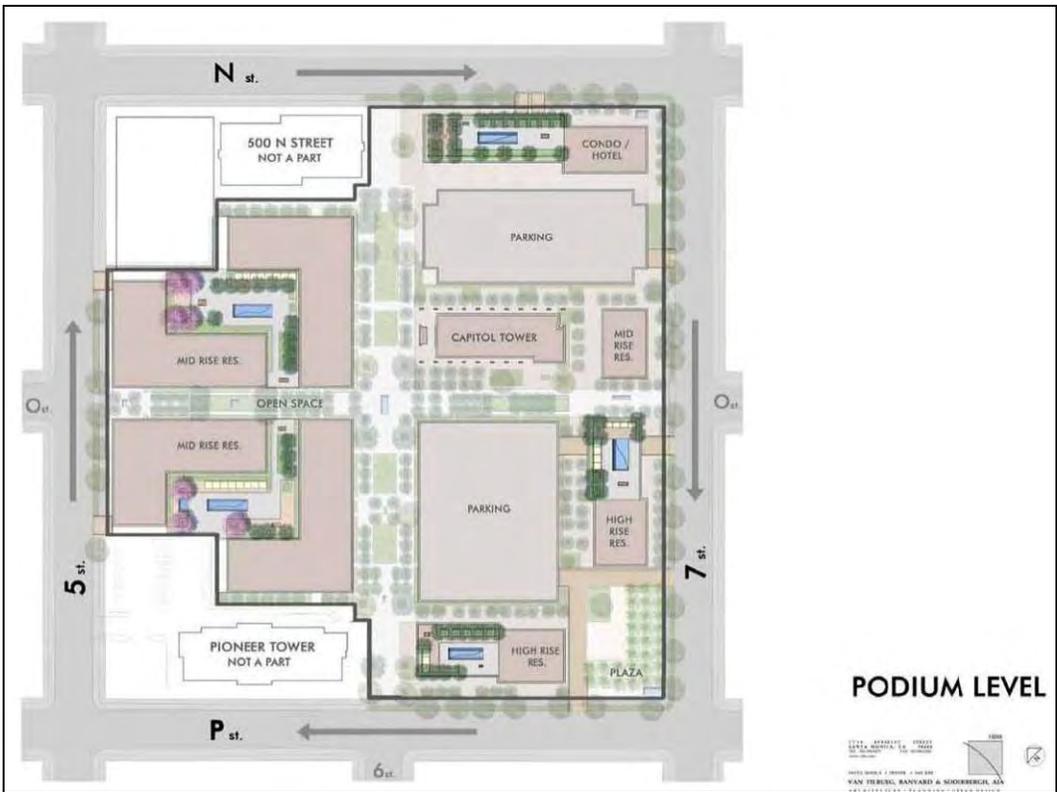


Figure 4: Podium Level Site Plan

### 3. RESEARCH AND FIELD METHODS

The Capitol Towers property is located at 1500 N Street in Sacramento on Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004. These three parcels encompass 10.13 acres and constitute the study area for this report.<sup>4</sup> This report examines the potential for historic architectural and landscape resources and does not identify or evaluate archaeological resources. The steps taken to identify possible historical resources and potential impacts the project may have on historical resources follow CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)-(b).

JRP examined the standard sources of information that list and identify known and potential historical resources to determine whether any buildings, structures, objects, districts or sites had been previously recorded or evaluated in or near the study area. JRP reviewed the NRHP, CRHR, Office of Historic Preservation Determinations of Eligibility for the NRHP, California Inventory of Historic Resources, California Historic Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (Sacramento Register). The review of the NRHP listed or determined-eligible properties was necessary because these properties are automatically listed in the CRHR and would be considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. One nearby historical resource is the NRHP, CRHR, and Sacramento Register-listed Heilbron House, located at 704 O Street across 7<sup>th</sup> Street from the Capitol Towers' parking garage. None of the registers or lists identified listed, determined-eligible, or potential historical resources in the study area.<sup>5</sup>

JRP discussed project public outreach efforts with AECOM relating to historical resource concerns. Public outreach included public meetings held on December 16, 2013 at the Southside Park Clubhouse (2051 6th Street, Sacramento) and on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at the California Museum (1020 O Street, Sacramento). Each meeting included a presentation of the project by the project applicant followed by discussion and questions from members of the public who attended the meetings. In both meetings, some attendees raised concerns about the potential for the project to affect historical resources. A Notice of Preparation ("NOP") of a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment was also circulated by the City of Sacramento for public comment between April 10, 2014 and May 12, 2014. AECOM sent the

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<sup>4</sup> There are two other properties that share the "super-block" with Capitol Towers. These properties are not part of Capitol Towers and are not part of the study area. These properties are on the condominiums Bridgeway Towers (built in 1980) at 500 N Street on APN 006-0300-007 and the nursing home Pioneer Towers (built in 1978) at 515 P Street on APN 006-0300-005.

<sup>5</sup> National Park Service, National Register Information System, online database: <http://www.nr.nps.gov/> and <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/research/> (accessed April 2014); Office of Historic Preservation, Directory of Properties in the Historic Data File for Sacramento County (4/2012); Department of Parks and Recreation, *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, March 1976; Office of Historic Preservation, *California Historical Landmarks* (Sacramento, California State Parks, 1996); Office of Historic Preservation, *California Points of Historical Interest* (Sacramento, California State Parks, May 1992).

NOP to the Cultural Landscape Foundation, California Preservation Foundation (CPF), Sacramento Old City Association (SOCA), Sacramento Modern (SacMod), Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, and Crocker Museum. In response to the NOP, the City received comments addressing historical resources issues, including comment letters from SacMod, SOCA, CPF, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's San Francisco Field Office (NTHP). Each of these responses also raised issues related to other environmental areas of concern and the CEQA compliance process for the project. SacMod's letter included assessment that the Capitol Towers is a historical resource under CEQA and provided a "Fact Sheet" that provided data regarding the property's history, including lists of Capitol Towers' designers, contractors, and awards, along with some historic photographs / images. The SacMod letter provided some appraisal of the property's potential historic significance, but did not include evaluation of the property under NRHP, CRHR, or Sacramento Register criteria. Responses from SOCA, CPF, and NTHP included reference to SacMod's response, repeating some of the same information and assertions. The CPF letter referred directly to SacMod's "Fact Sheet" and acknowledged JRP's 2008 report regarding Capitol Towers, requesting that there be further review of the earlier report's findings. The NTHP letter reiterated the claim that Capitol Towers is a historical resource and noted that the Northern California Chapter of Docomomo supports this conclusion. NTHP also presented specific CEQA compliance process issues as they pertain to the identification of Capitol Towers as historical resource. Information presented in and issues raised from the NOP response letters, as they relate to the eligibility of Capitol Towers as a historical resource, are addressed in this report.

JRP conducted fieldwork in the study area and research in Sacramento on April 18, 2014, and inventoried the Capitol Towers property for recordation on DPR 523 forms. JRP prepared a historic context to address the themes and background for the property and evaluated the property under the CRHR, Sacramento Register, and NRHP criteria on DPR 523 forms; the latter criteria applied because properties that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP are automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR. Historical research was conducted at the California State Library, University of California, Berkeley Environmental Design Library, University of California, Davis Shields Library, Center for Sacramento History (CSH), Sacramento Public Library, and the Sacramento County Assessor's Office. The description and historical evaluation of the Capitol Towers property are summarized in Sections 4 and 5. Refer to the references in Section 6 for a complete list of materials consulted, and to Section 7 for preparers' professional qualifications. The DPR 523 forms are included in Appendix A.

## 4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following section provides historical background for the development and construction of the Capitol Towers Apartments and provides the historic context in which to evaluate the potential historical significance of this property.

### 4.1. Early Sacramento

Permanent non-native settlement in the Sacramento Valley began when Spanish and Mexican governors issued large land grants to various individuals, often in return for military or other services rendered to the government. One of the grantees was Swiss immigrant John Augustus Sutter who first settled the Sacramento area in 1839, upon receipt of a land grant from Mexican Governor, Juan Alvarado. Sutter established a fort on a knoll away from the low-lying area along the Sacramento and American rivers, and from 1839 until January 1848, Sutter's Fort served as an agricultural station and destination for immigrants into California. In conjunction with his fort, Sutter also recognized the value of a riverfront location, laying out the town of Suttersville in 1844, several miles south of his fort.<sup>6</sup>

The early development of the City of Sacramento is directly attributable to the onslaught of gold seekers in 1849 and the early 1850s, who were rushing to the slopes of the Sierra Nevada after discovery of gold. The little riverside settlement and entrepot that served Sutter's holdings in the area quickly took on the role of a gold rush port, as ocean going ships and riverboats used the Sacramento to bring goods and passengers to the mines. Sutter's son, John Jr., who had joined his father in September 1848, laid out a grid of streets extending from the waterfront, and named the nascent town Sacramento. His plan established numbered streets running north to south, and lettered streets running east to west. Each block was divided into eight, 80' x 150' lots, four lots on either side of a central alley. The town plan was adopted in December 1848, and after a survey by Captain Warner the town grew rapidly. By June 1849, there were 100 buildings, and by October the town had 2,000 permanent residents with up to another 5,000 passing through. The new town was centered on the embarcadero, or Front Street, and inland to the east along J Street. The area now known as "Old Sacramento," a historic district north of Capitol Towers, represents a small fraction of the wharfs, warehouses, saloons and retail shops that once crowded along the waterfront and J Street, the main avenue to the mines. Only in the years that followed

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<sup>6</sup> W. Turrentine Jackson, Rand F. Herbert, Stephen R. Wee (Jackson Research Projects), "The Old Courthouse Block: H-I-6-7 Streets, Sacramento, 1848-1983" (Sacramento County Department of Public Works, 1983), 1; Mildred B. Hoover, Hero E. and Ethel G. Rensch, *Historic Spots in California* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 298-302; Walton Bean, *California, an Interpretive History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 67-68; John W. Reys, *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 195.

did more specialized businesses replace the “general merchants” and shopkeepers of the early years.<sup>7</sup>

As the city center developed, important local businesses and other government entities erected impressive edifices to house their offices and serve the public. The state capitol was located at Sacramento in 1854. After relocating temporarily due to floods, the capitol came permanently to Sacramento as the city constructed extensive levees and raised its street levels. In 1860 the city granted the state the land between L and N Streets and 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets for a new capitol building. The building was constructed between 1869 and 1874, with the legislators beginning their work in the building in 1869.<sup>8</sup>

The study area at Capitol Towers is located in the formerly mixed use portion of Sacramento referred to historically as the West End. Although the West End did not have clearly defined boundaries, the area was roughly located between the Sacramento River to the west and the State Capitol building to the east, the Southern Pacific Railroad yard to the north and Y Street (now Broadway) to the South. **Illustration 1** is a 1916 map of Sacramento showing the approximate location of the West End.

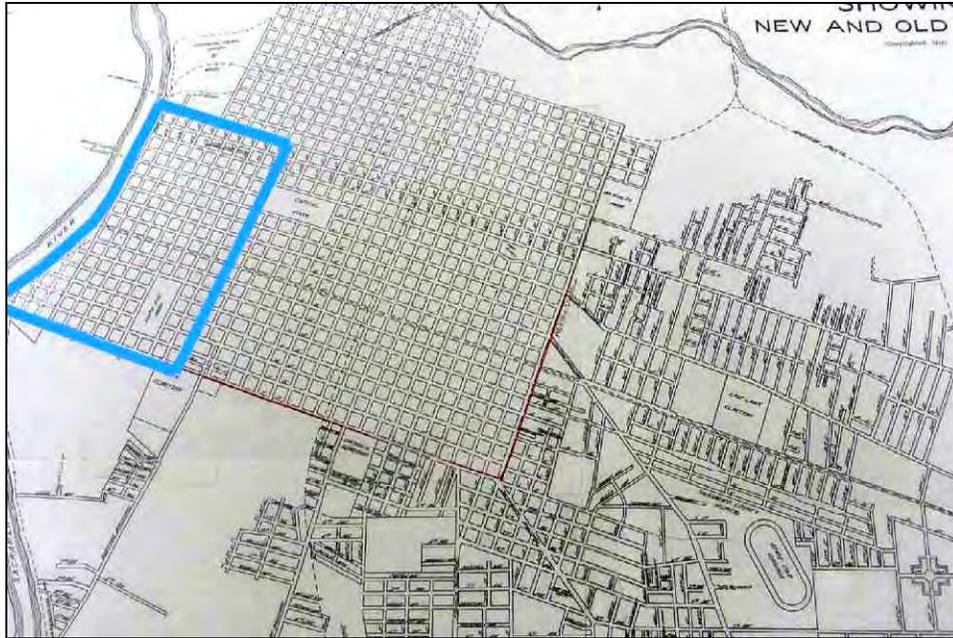
By the turn of the twentieth century, the West End had entered a period of economic and physical transition. Up until that time, the area had been the focus of Sacramento’s river transportation, local economy, and residential growth. By the 1910s, the area had evolved into a predominantly working-class quarter and home to hundreds of itinerant laborers. A demarcation arose between the West End and other neighborhoods to the east and south. As the city expanded eastward and more immigrants entered Sacramento, wealthier residents left the West End or did not settle in the West End, but rather took up residence in the middle-and upper middle-class residential areas developing in the eastern and southern portions of the city that were generally following the development of new streetcar lines. This shifted the West End’s population. Property owners and speculators in the West End subdivided parcels, constructed shanties along the alleys, and converted single family residences into multi-unit rentals, “flophouses,” flats, and boardinghouses.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hoover et al., *Historic Spots*, 303; Sacramento, “Assessor’s Map Book,” 1849, Center for Sacramento History (CSH); Capt. William Horace Warner *Map of Sacramento, Plan of Sacramento City, 1848* (Ithaca, NY: Historic Urban Plans, 1969); Brienens, West, and Schultz, “Overview of Cultural Resources in the Central Business District, Sacramento, California,” n.p., 1981, 46-47.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Lagomarsino, “Early Attempts to Save the Site of Sacramento by Raising its Business District,” Master’s Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1969, 117-118; Steven M. Avella, *Sacramento Indomitable City* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 42; Jackson, et al., “The Old Courthouse Block,” 28.

<sup>9</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment: Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento: SCPC 1960), 15; Ernesto Galarza, *Barrio Boy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 199.



**Illustration 1:** 1916 map showing the general location of the West End.<sup>10</sup>

Multiple factors contributed to the West End's economic and physical decline in the 1920s and 1930s, and eventually lead to the redevelopment projects in the post World War II era. The physical relationship of the river, railroad, and local industry had shifted since this area developed in the nineteenth century and the city's commercial and industrial focus had widened and moved elsewhere, away from the river and outward in newly developed areas. Like in many cities, Sacramento's growing suburbs were depleting the central city's property tax revenue. The West End's sales revenue had become largely dependent upon hotels, restaurants, and bars.<sup>11</sup> As a result, property value in the West End dropped precipitously in the first half of the twentieth century, decreasing by nearly half from the late 1930s to the late 1940s.<sup>12</sup> City officials recognized the decreasing tax revenue as a problem because the West End contributed only 12 percent of all city tax revenues in 1950, yet it received 41 percent of police expenditures and 50 percent of the city's health services budget. Absentee landlordism grew during the early twentieth century and by 1950, 82 percent of West End residences were not owner occupied.

<sup>10</sup> Warren McClaskey Collection, CSH.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: Business, Vol. I, Retail Trade: 1939, Part 3*; Unites States Census of Business: 1948, *Vol. III, Retail Trade: Area Statistics*; United States Census of Business: 1954, *Vol. III, Retail Trade: Area Statistics, Part I*; Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," M.A. Thesis (California State University, Sacramento, 1985), 16; Harold F. Wise, *Survey of Business in Sacramento's West End* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1951); Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 19.

<sup>12</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission (SCPC), *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment: Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento, 1950), 28; Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 16.

The decline of the area gave property owners little incentive to attend to their mostly nineteenth century built West End properties and city enforcement efforts had minimal impact.<sup>13</sup>

The West End became a focal point for city planning officials and municipal reformers after World War II. As state and federal agencies initiated “urban renewal” in cities across the state and nation, the West End gained media attention and the attention of city planners for the next several years as an area of low-income workers and an “asylum” for “elements” not accepted by “higher neighborhoods.”<sup>14</sup> The *Sacramento Union* derided the area’s “overcrowding, dingy surroundings, hodge-podge use of buildings, poor sanitation, and floating panhandlers” and considered the district a “breeding place for tuberculosis, a strong-arm robbery and dope sale district and wino-hunting grounds for the police paddy wagon.”<sup>15</sup>

During the early twentieth century, the West End continued as a point of entry for immigrants entering Sacramento during the early twentieth century, reflecting larger trends in U.S. immigration with the entry of Mexican, Japanese, Filipinos, Portuguese, Italians, Poles, and Croatians into the city. A combination of economics and discrimination confined African Americans, Asians, and other immigrants to the West End, which included ethnic enclaves such as Sacramento’s “Japanese Quarter.”<sup>16</sup> Restrictive covenants in residential neighborhoods, racial intolerance, and economic conditions limited housing options for many Blacks, Mexicans, and Asians living in the city.<sup>17</sup> Transients also made up a large proportion of West End residents. A 1953 survey of the West End residents revealed that only one-third of the population regarded themselves as year-round residents. As a result, the population varied depending on the season, peaking during periods of agricultural labor demand. The West End had one of the largest concentrations of the region’s agricultural laborers in the West – in 1950 alone, fifteen percent of all of California’s farm labor came from the West End.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1950 census, Vol. III, *Selected Population and Housing Characteristics, Ch. 46, Sacramento, California*; SCPC, *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment*, 4, Table 14, 29-30; Lastufka, “Redevelopment of Sacramento’s West End, 1950-1970,” 17.

<sup>14</sup> Western Real Estate Research Corporation, *Analysis of the Sacramento Labor Market Area* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1958) 10; Lastufka, “Redevelopment of Sacramento’s West End, 1950-1970,” 20.

<sup>15</sup> “West End: Action Due on Face-Lifting,” *Sacramento Union*, April 13, 1952.

<sup>16</sup> Galarza, *Barrio Boy*, 200; Wayne Maeda, *Changing Dreams and Treasured Memories: Japanese Americans in the Sacramento Region* (Sacramento: Japanese American Citizen’s League, 2000), 117. The 1930 census noted that just over 8,100 Japanese lived in Sacramento County, with about 3,350 living in the city itself. The Japanese Quarter reached its height that same decade, having developed a strong community with deep social and economic ties. United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, (Washington D.C.: Government Publishing Office, 1931).

<sup>17</sup> Davis McEntire, *Relocation Plans: Slum Area Labor Market* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1959), 5. In 1959, the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency (SRA) stated that African Americans and other minorities were “customarily rejected as neighbors because of their race or nationality.”

<sup>18</sup> Catherine Bauer and Davis McEntire, *Report #5: Relocation Study, Single Male Population* (Sacramento: SRA, 1953) 1; Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, 1959), 5.

Planning efforts to alter Sacramento's urban fabric began in the early twentieth century. City Beautiful supporters and early urban planners Charles Zueblin and Charles Mulford Robinson studied Sacramento and touted what other cities had done to beautify and help rectify urban problems created by the rapid urbanization of the period. However, only a few modest improvements, such as City Plaza (now Cesar Chavez Plaza), were ever realized based on the City Beautiful studies of Sacramento from that period.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.2. West End Redevelopment

The West End became the subject of the first post-World War II redevelopment project in California and eventually three redevelopment phases were carried out in the area with the support of the federal government. In addition to redevelopment, the West End was subject to zoning changes and transportation improvements as the City Planning Department redesigned the M Street corridor to create a monumental approach to the Capitol that came to be known as "Capitol Mall." The final redevelopment project was also intertwined with the modernization of state and interstate highway development that brought freeway Interstate 5 through the West End.

The movement to address dilapidated conditions in the West End was part of a nationwide campaign to eliminate "slums" in major metropolitan areas during the mid-twentieth century. Prior to the Great Depression in the 1930s, states and municipalities had the responsibility of responding to deteriorating urban conditions, but as the Depression continued, it became evident that state and local governments did not have the resources needed to deal with worsening "slum" conditions. Federal Housing Acts in 1934 and 1937 were created to help eliminate deficient housing and provide "decent, safe, and sanitary" dwellings for low-income people. The acts created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), but had little direct impact on Sacramento's urban core.<sup>20</sup> During the 1940s, and early 1950s, the city constructed several public housing facilities on the outskirts of downtown. These were constructed for low-income families, defense workers, and World War II veterans. They included projects such as New Helvetia (1942) and Callaghan Homes (1946) on Broadway and 8<sup>th</sup> Street (the latter of which is where O'Neil Park is now located), and Dos Rios (1942) located on Richards Boulevard.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Irvin Kreisman, "Capitol Mall Firm Dream of Planners for 40 Years," *Sacramento Union*, February 20, 1949; Charles Mulford Robinson, "Improvement in City Life: Aesthetic Progress" *Atlantic Monthly* 83 (June 1899), 771-185 reprinted at [http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/robin\\_01.htm](http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/robin_01.htm) accessed March 2014; Charles Zueblin, "The 'White City' and After" *A Decade of Civic Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), 59-82, reprinted at <http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/zueblin.htm> accessed March 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford, 1975), 106; Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht, "Urban Renewal: A Historical Overview," in *Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning* (New York, 1967), 4.

<sup>21</sup> Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 53. The New Helvetia housing development has been submitted to the Keeper of the National Register for listing as a historic district as of February 8, 2014.

The federal Housing Act of 1949 put in motion urban renewal efforts across the country during the 1950s and 1960s. The act called for removal of “substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of a goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.” This act was a departure from previous legislation because it emphasized the elimination of substandard housing along with construction of large-scale residential and commercial development in blighted areas.<sup>22</sup> In response, Sacramento’s municipal leaders took its first step toward redeveloping the West End. In February 1950, the Sacramento City Council passed the ordinance that outlined the boundaries of Urban Redevelopment Area Number 1, which included most of the West End. Later that year, the city conducted a survey of the West End’s 223 blocks and announced that over 8,600 downtown occupied dwellings were substandard, concluding that the West End was in “desperate need for slum clearance and low rent housing for families of moderate income.”<sup>23</sup> In accordance to the Community Redevelopment Act of 1945, the city council created the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency (SRA) to coordinate redevelopment projects. The SRA exercised wide powers including acquiring and clearing blighted properties and judging project proposals by private developers. The plan for the redevelopment zone called for the demolition of many older buildings, and construction of high-rise public housing facilities among other new commercial and industrial buildings in the redevelopment zones.<sup>24</sup>

The city brought in architects Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander to consult on Sacramento’s redevelopment efforts and unveiled their work in 1950. The extensive plan, a portion of which is shown in **Illustration 2**, included broadening M Street / Capitol Avenue and lining the street with new government and private office buildings while reserving the first two blocks off Capitol Avenue for major hotel developments. The plan also included a “cross-mall” located between L Street and the Southern Pacific Railroad Station; restaurants and shops located at the base of several proposed 100-foot deep buildings along 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets bordering the Mall; bachelor apartments and dormitories for single state workers whose stability would “provide an attractive and stable rental market.” The residential component included plans for family housing situated between N Street and the alley south of Q Street roughly the area that would later include the Capitol Towers. The plan recommended the construction of “Tower Apartments” “as conveniently as possible to the Capitol,” originally proposed for the two blocks bounded by 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, N, and P streets.<sup>25</sup> The proposed residential component of the project focused on providing

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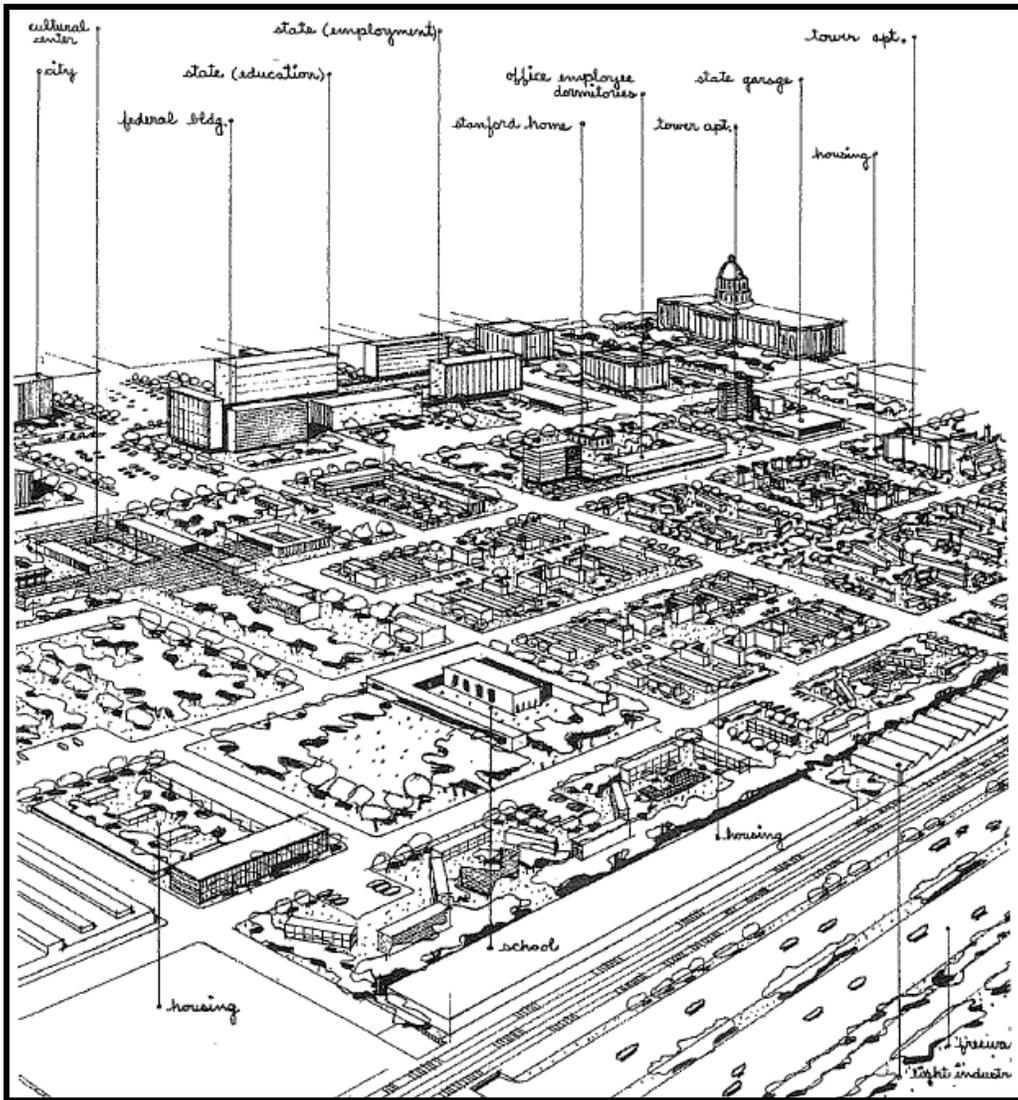
<sup>22</sup> National Planning Association, *The Scope and Financing of Urban Renewal and Development* (Washington, D.C., 1963), 7; Lastufka, “Redevelopment of Sacramento’s West End, 1950-1970,” 9.

<sup>23</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento: SCPC, 1950), 8; Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report and Recommendation: Redevelopment Ideas for California’s Capital* (Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, 1950), 11; *Sacramento Bee*, November 3, 1950.

<sup>24</sup> “Further Steps Are Taken in City’s Redevelopment Plan,” *Sacramento Bee*, October 7, 1950; Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 53.

<sup>25</sup> Harold F. Wise, *Analysis of Potential Commercial Expansion: A Study of present and future needs for land to permit central area commercial development in Sacramento’s West End* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1953), 10.

middle-class housing to boost tax revenues and to serve the growing number of state employees during the post-war period. Despite the need for housing of the West End’s existing residents, including the numerous single men in the area, this report made no mention of public or subsidized housing, an early sign that redevelopment officials did not identify housing the displaced West End residents as a priority.<sup>26</sup> By focusing on “families” rather than “individuals” living in the West End, redevelopment officials found a convenient way to limit the construction of public housing units and thus avoid any obligation toward providing accommodations to thousands of transients living that had been living in the redevelopment area.<sup>27</sup>



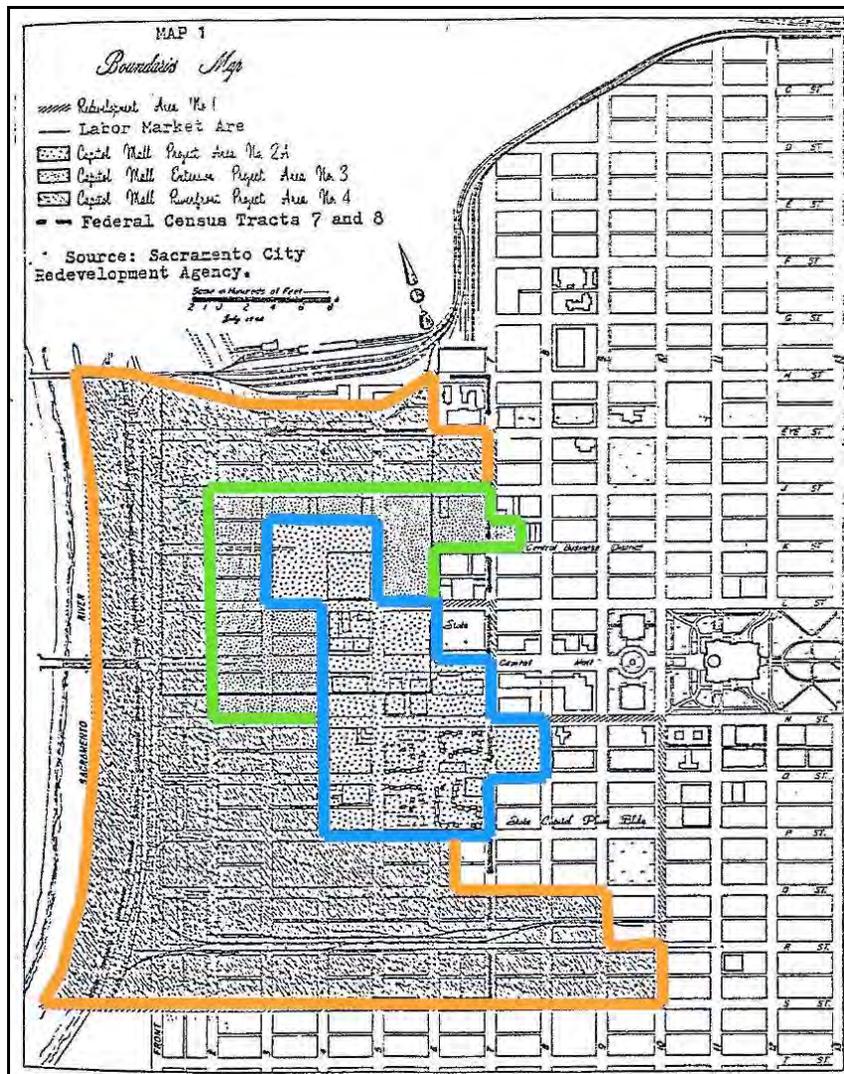
**Illustration 2:** Diagram of Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander’s redevelopment plan.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report and Recommendation: Redevelopment Ideas for California’s Capital*, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Roberts, “Redevelopment at the Crossroads,” 7.

<sup>28</sup> SCPC, *Preliminary Report and Recommendations: Redevelopment Ideas for California’s Capital* (1950), CSH.

Following this and other planning efforts in the early 1950s, the city tabled the large Urban Redevelopment Area Number 1 in 1953 in part because of challenges in funding the city's grand schemes. The city then reconsidered its plans into smaller areas, shown in **Illustration 3**.



**Illustration 3:** Map showing the location of the three redevelopment projects in Sacramento. Capitol Mall Project, No. 2-A is outlined in blue. Capitol Mall Extension Project, No. 3 is outlined in green, and Capitol Mall Riverfront Project, No. 4 is outlined in orange.<sup>29</sup>

In the mid 1950s Sacramento reconsidered its redevelopment prospects as federal urban policy shifted, influencing implementation of redevelopment projects in cities like Sacramento. Federal requirements and coordination increased, along with increased funding for urban renewal. The federal Housing Act of 1954 required localities to adopt a long-range “workable plan” to relocate

<sup>29</sup> Ken Lastufka, “Redevelopment of Sacramento’s West End, 1950-1970,” (M.A. Thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1985).

people displaced by redevelopment activities, adhere to a housing code consisting of minimum standards for all dwelling units, and provide a program for citizen participation during each phase of a renewal project in order to receive federal funding. It also established funding schemes whereby localities were responsible for one third of the funding for redevelopment projects.<sup>30</sup>

Federal support for public housing decreased during this period, with the emphasis shifting to fostering greater economic growth in cities. Consequently, federal funding was directed away from public housing to non-residential redevelopment projects or middle income residential projects, and federal policies empowered local governments to implement business developments without having to build new affordable residential housing.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4.2.1. Capitol Mall Project

Encouraged by federal funding and prominent planning concepts of the period, Sacramento city officials pushed forward with the plan to redevelop the West End. In 1953 and 1954, the Sacramento City Planning Commission endorsed SRA's plans for a redevelopment program dubbed Project Area No. 2A, or the "Capitol Mall Project," in a 15-block area near the Capitol, as shown in **Illustration 3** (outlined in blue) and **Illustration 4**, which included the residential development that came to be known as Capitol Towers Apartments.<sup>32</sup>

The basic elements of the tentative plan for the Capitol Mall Project included the acquisition of real and personal property through eminent domain if necessary; clearance of all or most of the buildings and structures on the acquired land; relocation of area occupants; rehabilitation of existing structures in the area in accordance with redevelopment goals; and abandonment of the historical street grid around eight blocks to create superblocks for new development and for other new public purposes. The plan also included off-street parking, street closures, and the conversion of Capitol Avenue (formerly M Street) into a widened "parkway type facility limited to passenger and light commercial vehicles" with a landscaped center dividing strip.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Scott Greer, *Urban Renewal and American Cities* (Indianapolis, 1965), 32; National Planning Association, 7; Bellush, "Urban Renewal: A Historical Overview," 15; William L. Slayton, "The Operation and Achievement of the Urban Renewal Program," in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, 1966), 193; Robert Goodman, *After the Planners* (New York, 1971).

<sup>31</sup> Richard M. Flanagan, "The Housing Act of 1954: The Sea Change in National Urban Policy," *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (November 1997), 265-286; *Sacramento Bee*, July 1, 1954; Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 128.

<sup>32</sup> "Planning Board Okehs Area for Redevelopment," *Sacramento Bee*, July 15, 1953; "Council Adds to Area for Redeveloping," *Sacramento Bee*, January 20, 1954.

<sup>33</sup> "Council Oks Redevelopment of West End Slum," *Sacramento Union*, July 23, 1954; NAACP West Coast Region, "Memorandum, January 18, 1965," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People West Coast Region I Papers, 1945-1977, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; "Tentative West End Slum Plan Is Approved by City Council," *Sacramento Bee*, July 23, 1954.

Apprehensive about the city's redevelopment plans and potential use of eminent domain to acquire properties, West End residents and business owners organized opposition to the city's proposition to fund redevelopment plans, particularly following San Francisco real estate developer Ben Swig's 1954 redevelopment proposal that consisted entirely of a new shopping and business district, including a pedestrian mall along K Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>34</sup> The opposition's defeat of the city's funding proposition was a temporary impediment to Sacramento's redevelopment agenda and the city council authorized SRA to issue its own bonds to fund redevelopment, payable by the anticipated increased values of redeveloped land. FHA approved the city's redevelopment plans in May 1955. The following October, the SRA purchased the first parcel in the Capitol Mall Project area, and by 1960, all 310 parcels within the project had been acquired.<sup>35</sup> By the end of 1961, all buildings located within the fifteen block "Capitol Mall Project" area (the smallest of the three areas outlined in **Illustration 3** in blue and shown in **Illustration 4**) subject to demolition had been razed.

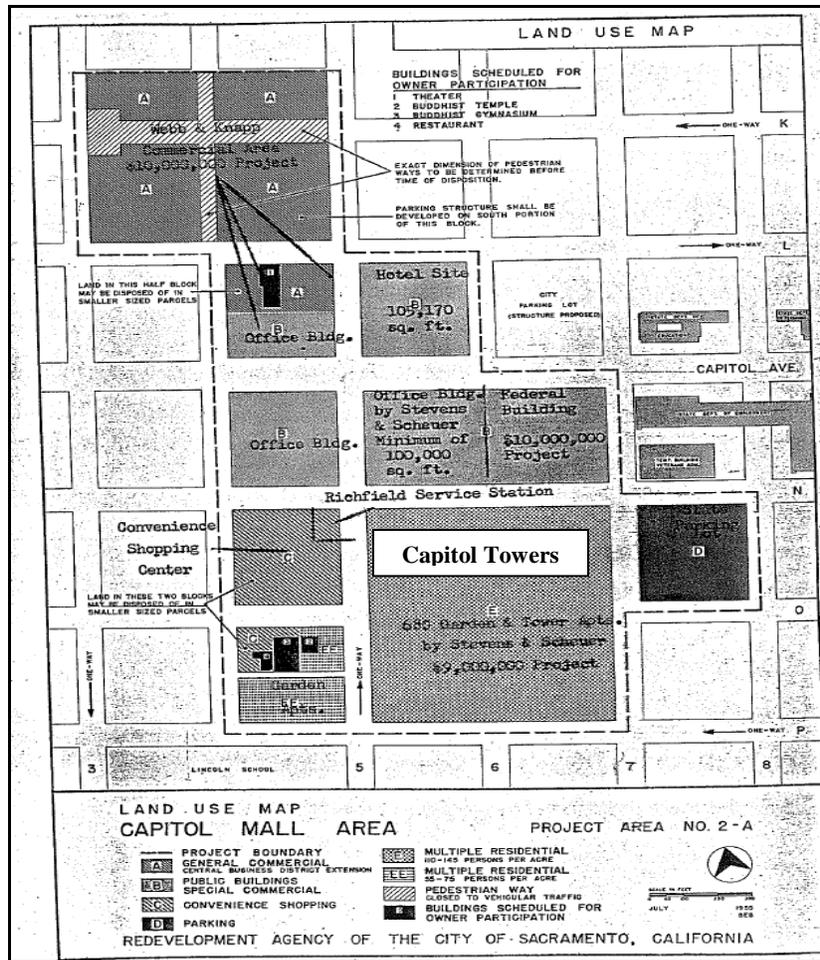
The first major construction of the project was the Federal Building on Capitol Avenue (formerly M Street), designed by well-known Sacramento architect Harry Devine. Besides the federal building, other buildings erected in the project area included the Macy's Department Store, occupying the block bounded by K, L, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> streets; Crocker National Bank, located on Capitol Mall between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets; Capital Plaza Hotel (later the Holiday Inn), a 375-room, 15-story, \$9 million building situated at the edge of the project area on K Street, between 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and J streets; and Capitol Towers Apartments located on the new four-block square superblock between 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, N and P streets. During the twenty-year period between 1960 and 1980, 25 new buildings were constructed in the 15-block project area.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> "Redevelopment of Whole Capital Business District Is Offered by S.F. Investor," *Sacramento Bee*, July 1, 1954; "Proposals to Redevelop Fit City Plan," *Sacramento Bee*, July 5, 1954.

<sup>35</sup> Roberts, "Redevelopment at the Crossroads;" Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, 1959), 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970: A Historical Overview with an Analysis of the Impact of Relocation," (California State University, Sacramento, 1985), 40-42; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 22.



**Illustration 4:** Land Use Map for Capitol Mall Project Area No. 2-A (1955), (Courtesy of CSH).

#### 4.2.2. Capitol Mall Extension Project and Capitol Mall Riverfront Project

The SRA initiated the second phase of the West End redevelopment in 1960 with the Capitol Mall Extension Project (Project No. 3), outlined in green in **Illustration 3**.<sup>37</sup> The SRA acquired all but a few of the properties within the ten and one-quarter block project area by the mid-1960s and relocation of all residents was completed by 1970. The Division of Highways (which became Caltrans in 1973) acquired three blocks in the Old Sacramento area, which would eventually be used as a right-of-way for the new Interstate 5 (I-5) and began the freeway project in 1961. The SRA agreed to create a historical zone in Old Sacramento in return for receiving funding for the freeway construction. Project No. 3's first building was the 117,000 square foot Sacramento Union building, designed by the well-known Sacramento architectural firm of Dreyfuss & Blackford, located at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and L Streets just north of Capitol Mall, and completed

<sup>37</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Final Relocation Report: Project No. UR Calif. 5-1, Capitol Mall* (Sacramento: SRA, 1963), 24.

in 1967 (since demolished). The Downtown Plaza, a \$60 million, six-block development that took over ten years to complete, followed.<sup>38</sup> In 1963, SRA began the fourth phase of redevelopment in the West End, known as the Capitol Mall Riverfront Project (Project No. 4), outlined in orange in **Illustration 3**. The project plan gained full city council approval in 1966.<sup>39</sup> The Old Sacramento Historic District portion of the project was considered the area's grandest redevelopment undertaking, as well as "one of the largest and most ambitious historical preservation projects" undertaken in the nation.<sup>40</sup> The SRA required buildings bordered by the river, 2<sup>nd</sup>, I, and L streets (28 acres) be restored or reconstructed to reflect the 1849-1870 period of the city's Embarcadero.<sup>41</sup> Other Project No. 4 superblock developments included the Chinatown comprising two blocks of J Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets, and the Governor's Square apartment / townhouse complex located on the blocks bordered by 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, N, and P streets, all of which further compromised the city's historical grid street pattern.

By 1972 all West End structures within all four redevelopment project areas that the SRA had originally labeled "undesirable" in the 1950s had been demolished. Although original occupants within the West End project areas had been given some opportunities to rehabilitate their houses or businesses in the late 1960s all had been relocated by 1980.<sup>42</sup> The Sacramento City Council became the governing body of SRA in 1973, assuming responsibility for the direction of urban renew in the city. This action, combined with assumed responsibility for the City Housing Authority, led to the establishment of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission (SRHC) in 1974 which advised the Sacramento City Council and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on redevelopment and public housing issues.<sup>43</sup>

### 4.3. Capitol Towers Apartments

#### 4.3.3. Development of Capitol Towers

The Capitol Towers Apartments was the single residential development in the fifteen-block Capitol Mall Project. In December 1958, SRA sold the four-block area bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, N Street, and P Street to the Renewal and Development Corporation of New York owned by developers James H. Scheuer and Roger Stevens, following submittal of competitive bids and

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<sup>38</sup> "Agency Okehs Capitol Mall Rebuilding," *Sacramento Union*, April 12, 1960; "Second Slum Clearing Is Approved," *Sacramento Bee*, March 20, 1961; Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (May 1959), 15; SRA, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (May 1961), 15; SRA, *Final Relocation Report*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 47; SRA, "Redevelopment Plan, Capitol Mall Riverfront Project and Rules for Developers," (Sacramento: SRA, May 23, 1966), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 49.

<sup>41</sup> SRA, "Redevelopment Plan, Capitol Mall Riverfront Project and Rules for Developers," 9; Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report and Recommendations, Redevelopment Ideas for California's Capitol* (Sacramento: SRA, June 1950).

<sup>42</sup> Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 52.

<sup>43</sup> Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 19.

initial plans. The initial plans for the Capitol Towers project included three 15-story apartment towers and 208 low-rise garden apartments for a total of 680 units. As discussed below, the design of the project went through considerable changes from the initial designs prepared in 1958 to when the project was constructed between 1960 and 1965. The terms of the sale included purchase of the property in multiple stages, and because FHA was going to guarantee the project's mortgages, acquisition of each parcel dependent on FHA approval of building plans, financing, and rental schedules. This review and scrutiny delayed commencement of nearly all phases of construction as the developers and FHA negotiated various details of the project. The proposed construction date for the first garden apartment units for October 1958 was delayed because of financing problems. Construction on the first garden apartment units began in February 1960, under contract with the Lawrence, Erickson, Campbell and Western Enterprises construction firms. The project was split into three parts: Trust I for the garden apartment units situated north of what is now the O Street axis on the property, Trust II for garden apartment units south of the O Street axis, and Trust III for the 203-unit 15-story high-rise apartment building and its parking garage.<sup>44</sup>

James H. Scheuer (1920-2005) was a real estate developer, attorney, and a 13 term U.S. Representative from New York known as a strong liberal democrat who was part of the New York Democratic post-World War II party reformers. Scheuer served in a variety of public positions whereby he could promote his support of civil rights, preservation of rent controls, and improved middle-income housing.<sup>45</sup> Scheuer was involved with many large scale housing developments across the country during the 1950s and 1960s that were built as part of redevelopment projects in urban renewal areas of various cities. Capitol Towers was among seven large residential developments he worked on across the country before he was elected to the US Congress in 1964. Following his election, Scheuer transferred his ownership of the property into the Capitol Towers Trust, for his family's benefit, which owned the property for over 30 years. By the early 1960s, Scheuer's Renewal and Development Corporation had produced projects in Washington, New York, Cleveland, St. Louis, Marin City, and Sacramento.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "Mall Land Sale Brings \$874,000," *Sacramento Union*, December 17, 1958; Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1959), 13; "O.K. On Sale of West Side Blocks Near," *Sacramento Union* December 15, 1958; "Local Group May Bid On Tower Job," *Sacramento Union*, November 10, 1959; "Start Nears On First Mall Towers Unit," *Sacramento Union*, November 23, 1959; "Capitol Towers Mall Apartment Work Begins," *Sacramento Bee*, December 7, 1959; "Capitol Towers Financing Plan Wins Approval," *Sacramento Bee*, February 16, 1960.

<sup>45</sup> "Washington Slum to be Replaced," *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16; James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," in letters to the Times, *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26; "A Man of Convictions: James Hass Scheuer," *New York Times*, June 4, 1964, 23; Jennifer Lee, "James H. Scheuer, 13-Term New York Congressman, Is Dead at 85," *New York Times*, August 31, 2005; "Scheuer, James Hass," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*, available online: <http://bioguide.congress.gov> (accessed March 2014). Scheuer was a government economist and attorney. His variety of positions over time included: President of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, chairman of the executive committee of the City and Suburban Homes Company, chairman of the Housing Advisory Council of New York State Commission for Human Rights, and president of the National Alliance for Safer Cities, president of the National Housing Alliance.

<sup>46</sup> Planning Dynamics Group, "Capitol Towers Development Concept Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report," prepared for the City of Sacramento Department of Planning & Development, 1996, 3-1; Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers

One the most well known of Scheuer's projects was the Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C., located near the US Capitol Building. This project was seen as having international importance. Prior to the redevelopment project, completed in 1959, the Soviet Union publicized a photograph of the slum where the project was to be built. The photograph had the Capitol Building in the background and was used as propaganda as evidence of how Americans lived.<sup>47</sup> Capitol Park was one of the earliest residential complexes constructed in the Washington D.C.'s Southwest section, which underwent major redevelopment in the late 1950s and 1960s. The project included five high-rise apartment buildings in Capitol Park and nearly 400 units in two-story townhouses organized around small courtyards. The units included balconies and private exterior spaces that faced communal landscaped areas. The Washington D. C. architectural firm of Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associates designed the property with landscape architect Dan Kiley. The property included amenities such a swimming pool and pavilion featuring a polychrome glass tile mosaic mural.<sup>48</sup>

Scheuer had similar projects, of varying scale, in other cities across the country. He worked with local developers in Cleveland for the Longwood Village project, which was a 300-unit family garden apartment, situated around courtyards, completed in 1957. It was one of fourteen redevelopment projects the city was conducting at that time. The design included a community center and apartments of various heights, designed to avoid visual monotony. Both the Capitol Park and Longwood Village projects were touted at the time for successfully combining beauty and profitability in residential redevelopment projects.<sup>49</sup> In St. Louis, Scheuer developed Laclede Town in Mill Creek Valley, which was an area of the city subject to extensive redevelopment and slum clearance in the 1950s and 1960s. Chloethiel Woodard Smith, who also designed Capitol Park for Scheuer, designed the 656-unit townhouse Laclede Town. Although initially considered a successful socially and racially integrated residential redevelopment project following its completion in 1962, the project deteriorated starting in the 1970s and was demolished in 1995. Scheuer was also the developer for the complete redevelopment of Marin City, in Marin County, in the late 1950s.<sup>50</sup>

Roger L. Stevens was a New York theatrical producer who was involved with the development of Lincoln Center in New York City and who operated the Empire State Building. He had the

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Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; "Eastern Builders Eye Acorn Project," *Oakland Tribune*, November 1, 1961, 21; Sacramento County Assessor Records, APNs 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004.

<sup>47</sup> "Washington Slum to be Replaced," *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16.

<sup>48</sup> District of Columbia, Historic Preservation Review Board, "Capitol Park Apartments, 800 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Case #03-04, ANC 6-D (formerly 2-D), Designation," 2003, available with the Washington D.C. Planning Department.

<sup>49</sup> "Cleveland Razes Slum for Project," *New York Times*, November 24, 1957, 308; Alexander L. Crosby, "Redeveloping New York," letters to the Times, *New York Times*, June 19, 1959, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Neal R. Pierce, *The Great Plains States of America: People, Politics, and Power in the Nine Great Plain States* (New York: WW Norton & Co., Inc., 1973), 53; Eric Mumford, ed, *Modern Architecture in St. Louis: Washington University and Postwar American Architecture, 1948-1973* (St. Louis: Washington University, 2004), 3 and 58.

nickname of “Mr. Broadway” during the 1950s when he produced dozens of shows in a single season and operated seven New York theaters. He also had real estate interests across the country, and was considered to be one of the biggest real estate financiers in the country during the late 1950s and early 1960s. He served as chairman of the National Council on the Arts in the 1960s. In addition to his investments in Sacramento’s West End, he also obtained for the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theater the rights to produce one of his Broadway shows in 1958 while it was still in its initial run in New York. Stevens dropped out of the project soon after it was completed.<sup>51</sup>

Overtime Scheuer brought in several prominent financial backers for this project. These investors included William Casey who had been chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and undersecretary of the State Department (and became director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Reagan administration), Oakley Hunter, who was a US Congressman from Fresno and general counsel of the US Housing and House Finance Agency (predecessor of the Housing and Urban Development [HUD] agency), and executive Richard Prentice Ettinger of Prentice-Hall publishers.<sup>52</sup>

Capitol Towers’ opening and dedication ceremonies for the project’s initial 92 garden apartment units took place on December 6, 1960 with the participation of federal, state, and city officials. At the time, the local newspaper hailed the project as the first in the western U.S. to erect a major residential development as part of an assisted slum clearance program.<sup>53</sup> By the end of 1961, most of the garden apartments completed under Trust I were occupied. Negotiations continued for development of the second phase of garden apartments (Trust II) and the first of the three towers that were to be built (Trust III).<sup>54</sup> The second phase of garden apartments was completed in 1962, and only the first of the three intended towers, and its adjacent parking garage, was built as part of Capitol Towers. Scheuer released the revised design of the tower in May 1962. The Capitol Towers 15-story high-rise apartment building was opened in 1965. The parking garage was completed in early 1965 with its elevator added in 1966.<sup>55</sup> The tower’s early commercial tenants included, at various points, a restaurant, cocktail lounge, barber shop, beauty salon, dry cleaners, and a travel agency. State workers, legislators, various professionals, and some families

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<sup>51</sup> “Washington Slum to be Replaced,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16; William Glover, “Mr. Broadway in NY Blends Realy, Theater,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 31, 1958, A-10; Joyce Terhaar, “Project backers wield clout,” *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>52</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, “Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level,” *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; “Capital Suit Accuses CIA Boss of Fraud,” *Sacramento Bee*, August 5, 1982, A1 and A24; Joyce Terhaar, “Project backers wield clout,” *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>53</sup> “First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>54</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1961), 11-12.

<sup>55</sup> “Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1; “Tower Condos Planned,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 14, 1977, B3; City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, Record Card, Building Permits E-3179, F-1083; Sacramento County Assessor Record, APN: 006-0300-004.

lived in Capitol Towers Apartments.<sup>56</sup> As discussed below, Scheuer's firm never developed the other two high rise apartment towers on the property. Consequently, the property's name, Capitol Towers, is a misnomer, considering the other towers located on the property's superblock were not developed as part of this project and they were never directly associated with it.

#### 4.3.4. Capitol Towers' Initial Design

The Capitol Towers developers had an interesting and award-winning plan conceived for the project in 1958. As with other similar redevelopment projects across the country, James Scheuer hired a collection of well-known and experienced designers and planners for the Capitol Towers project, all of whom are discussed further below. The lead design company was the San Francisco architectural firm of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), which worked in collaboration with New York architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, fellow Bay Area architectural firm DeMars & Reay, and the landscape architectural firm of Lawrence Halprin & Associates. In addition to the three primary architectural/landscape firms, additional consultants were hired including architectural consultants Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass and Dreyfuss & Blackford; Carl Feiss as a Planning Consultant; Nathaniel S. Keith as a Housing Consultant; and Alexander Girard, AIA as color consultant.<sup>57</sup>

The SRA approved of the project's mix of garden apartments and high-rise towers, which were proposed to provide lower population density and be more aesthetically pleasing than an all high-rise tower project. The multi-unit garden apartments featured a staggered footprint site plan, intended to avoid uniformity and monotony seen in earlier housing projects, such as New Helvetia on Broadway. The plan promised large private exterior spaces with balconies and walled patios, along with proposed amenities such as a swimming pool, a sunken garden, and a tree shaded "guest court" (that was later redesigned as the central plaza). Barnes designed the garden apartments to maximize privacy and include an outdoor space for each unit. Ground level apartments were designed with enclosed garden patios on one side, while the unit above

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<sup>56</sup> City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, Record Card, Building Permits, F-2916, F-3848; Sacramento City Directories, 1966-1970. California's first female African American Congressman (1973-1979) and long time Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke lived in Capitol Towers for a year after she first was elected to the state assembly in 1966. See "New Arenas of Black Influence: Yvonne Brathwaite Burke," oral history conducted by Steven Edington, Department of Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982, available online at: <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

<sup>57</sup> The historic records examined for this report did not provide detail regarding the contributions these additional firms, or individuals within these firms, had on the project. See "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122. Other consultants that participated in the project included Civil Engineer Joseph Spink, Structural Engineer William B. Gilbert of Gilbert-Forsberg-Diekman-Schmidt, and Mechanical Engineers G.L. Gendler & Associates. See "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107 and Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., "Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library.

had a balcony on the opposite site to assure privacy of the patios from the units above. While the garden apartments were similar to the original 1958 design, other features of the Capitol Towers property were modified prior to construction or never realized.<sup>58</sup>

The Capitol Towers project, as initially designed in 1958, won the first place design award in the sixth annual *Progressive Architecture (P/A)* Design Awards Program in 1959.<sup>59</sup> *P/A*'s jurors selected winning designs, as rendered by designer Helmut Jacoby, by looking for a "compelling esthetic experience" and a "clear architectural expression; something that contributes to development of this expression," in examining qualities of projects beyond their function. The jury liked the plans and concepts for Capitol Towers, in its initial design, because of the project's informal, yet orderly interplay of vertical and horizontal building masses and for the design of the low-rise units. They concluded that there was to be an "excellent use of the grounds" and they were pleased at the economic and livable qualities of the project, including its solution for automobiles that included both surface and multi-story garage parking. The jury considered the project to be "highly sensitive" and that it stood out in the competition for qualities that went beyond "mere function." The initial proposal for the site had been for an all-high-rise project, which was changed prior to submittal of the plans to *P/A*, to include the mixture of low-rise and high-rise buildings, as shown in **Illustration 5**. The *P/A* jury identified this shift as providing greater emphasis to intensive ground activities and increased the demand for separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which in turn stressed the importance of shaping exterior spaces in the development. The design of the pedestrian circulation for the project was intended to take advantage of shopping that planned for the blocks just west of the development. There were also to be three high-rise towers, along with three multi-story parking garages and a variety of landscaped courtyards. Scheuer stressed to the SRA that he was determined to build Sacramento's first apartment tower and garden apartment community complete with amenities such as pools, landscaping, ample parking, and play areas. With such a lofty vision for this project, Scheuer knew Capitol Towers' initial design would be costly and likely exceed the mortgage limits FHA would guarantee. He also knew that the ambitious project would exceed what private investors had previously funded in Sacramento. Both FHA and private investment expectations were based on the very moderate prevailing rental rates in Sacramento at the time. The city agreed to the apartments to be built with the expectation of a rising rental market as

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<sup>58</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1959), 13; "First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone," *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>59</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107. *Progressive Architecture (P/A)* was a prominent architecture magazine during the mid-twentieth century; its publishers touted the magazine in the journal's subtitle as "The World's Largest Architectural Circulation." The journal *Architecture*, the official magazine of the American Institute of Architects, purchased *P/A* in 1996, scraped the journal but preserved the Design Awards Program which had become one of the more venerated design awards programs in architecture. *Architect* magazine purchased *Architecture* magazine in 2006 and again retained the *P/A* design awards program. See "Death to Architecture," *The Architects Newspaper*, October 20, 2006, available online at [www.archpaper.com](http://www.archpaper.com) (accessed April 2014).

redevelopment increased populations of workers and residents in the city over the next several decades.<sup>60</sup>

As mentioned and as discussed below, these initial designs were considerably modified prior to construction or were never realized. Yet even following construction of the project's redesigned initial garden apartment units and landscape features in 1960-62, P/A continued to hold on to the promise and potential of Capitol Towers. Without analysis of the changes that occurred in the project's redesign, and before any of the three proposed high rise towers had been built, P/A claimed Capitol Towers was a "herald of new directions in redevelopment planning."<sup>61</sup>

The Capitol Towers design also won awards from other publications and organizations: an Honorable Mention for *House & Home*, Homes for Better Living Awards Program (1962); Award of Merit for the Northern California Chapter A.I.A. Honor Awards Program (1963); First Honor Award, Urban Renewal Administration (Residential), Housing and Home Finance Agency Awards Program (1964); and Certificate of Excellence Governor's Design Awards Program (1966). As discussed below, these awards and other praise Capitol Towers received during its design and in the period immediately following its construction were in reaction to the well-known designers and developers and their collaborative effort. The project was admired, in great part, because of its potential to help successfully redevelop Sacramento's West End. The honorable mention in the 1962 Homes for Better Living Awards, for example, illustrates some of the restrained commendation for the project, wherein the development was praised for its site plan, but the unit plans for the garden apartments were considered "unimaginative." The 1966 Governor's Design Award was given to 77 projects in 14 categories across the state for design, beauty, and outstanding contributions to architecture, planning, and conservation. The context for these awards was an effort at the end of the Edmund G. (Pat) Brown administration to highlight the need for greater attention to aesthetics in public works and architecture / design that was a reaction to the deleterious effects of the state's rapid growth and development during the 1950s and 1960s. Award winning projects were built in the early to mid 1960s, including many buildings, as well as other structures such as a fireplug, an Orange Julius stand, and the Cold Spring Canyon Bridge in Santa Barbara.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone," *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>61</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 105-111; "First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone," *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960; "Diversifying the Redevelopment," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143.

<sup>62</sup> Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., "Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library; ; "Awards Programs: HHFA's Household Cities Design Excellence, *AIA Journal* (November 1964): 11, 16; "Good Environment Starts with Good Site Planning," *House and Home* (July 1962): 14; "Awards: Farewell Gifts," *Architectural Forum* (January/February 1967): 49; "Governor Presents 15 Design Awards," *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1967, H2. These so-called annual awards appear to have only been given out once at the end of the Brown administration. The Reagan administration, nor other subsequent administrations that followed, do not appear to have pursued recognition architectural or structures in this manner.

In July 1958, James Scheuer described in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* his thoughts on how residential redevelopment projects could be more beautiful and thus would help ensure public support for such efforts. In this letter he described elements that were included in the initial design for Capitol Towers. These elements, some of which were employed in Scheuer's Capitol Park project in Washington D.C. for example, included combining tower apartment buildings with two-to-three-story garden apartments, that had an informal layout created by stepping their facades and using a variety colors. He also suggested including swimming pools, reflecting pools, playgrounds, fountains, shrubs, and trees to add to the attractiveness of such developments.<sup>63</sup> While the concepts Scheuer expressed were in contrast to, or not well realized in, many mid-twentieth century multi-unit housing projects being built at the time, including public housing and private, or semi-private, residential developments, the garden apartment residential type and high-rise tower already had a fairly extensive history by the late 1950s.



**Illustration 5:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial 1958 design (detail), proposed southwest corner of the project.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26.

<sup>64</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 110.

Garden apartment complexes like Capitol Towers, including those with high-rise towers, have their origins in community planning concepts that developed in the early twentieth century. Englishmen Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwind, and Patrick Geddes conceived of Garden City planning around the turn of the twentieth century, advancing concepts to combine the advantages of city and country living and that promoted economic self-sufficiency; concepts that trickled down to, and influenced, individual projects like Capitol Towers. Among the Garden City concepts, small cities were to be built surrounded by green belts, using strict controls on building speculation. Some early twentieth century towns built in England using Garden City's principles attracted American planners and architects. The Garden City ideals influenced the growing regional planning movement of the 1920s and had an impact on some multi-family housing built during and after World War I in the United States as well as on some Depression-era federally sponsored housing developments. Mid-twentieth century architects and planners also were influenced by Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier's 1920s towers-in-the-park concept that promoted a reorganization of the urban landscape into superblock developments with high-rise apartment towers. Large-scale combinations of open spaces, cluster housing, and tower apartments were conceived for individual development projects for both private development and in publicly sponsored redevelopment projects of the mid-twentieth century, many of which had less than stellar outcomes in contrast to the conceptual planning designs, models, and prototypes.<sup>65</sup>

Landscape architect Henry Wright and architect Clarence S. Stein were among the most highly influential designers promoting the Garden City ideals and large-scale professional urban / regional planning in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. They designed individual developments and entire towns. Their 70-acre Sunnyside garden city type suburb was built in 1924-1928 in the Borough of Queens in New York. The clustered housing units of Sunnyside were situated on superblocks and included enclosed communal parks. The Garden City concepts were put into wider application with Wright and Stein's design for the town of Radburn in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, built in 1928. Although the depression of the 1930s retarded its full realization, Radburn's character and layout inspired later planning efforts, including elements of the Capitol Towers project. The town had superblocks where the clustered living units and community centers were on the periphery around communal landscaped areas. Planning for this town took automobiles into account, segregating vehicle traffic and parking from housing and park areas by use of arterial roadways, cul-de-sac streets, and grade separations. The following year Wright and Stein, along with architects Ingham & Boyd, designed a 197-unit garden apartment complex in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania called Chatham Village. Built in the early 1930s, Chatham Village included two-to-three story grouped houses

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<sup>65</sup> Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 265-271; G.E. Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 366; Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988), 165-170.

in staggered rows on landscaped park strips on three superblocks. The development, which was surrounded by a green belt, also included a market building and communal clubhouse. The success of the Wright and Stein developments influenced the Depression-era federal town development program that came to be known as the “Greenbelt” towns. Although only five Greenbelt towns came to fruition, they too were influential in promoting the use of superblocks, cluster housing units, communal pedestrian areas, parks, and community buildings among the housing, combined with or connected to commercial development.<sup>66</sup>

Private and government-sponsored developments applied some of the Garden City and tower-in-park concepts in California during the 1940s. Clarence Stein teamed with architects Reginald D. Johnson and Wilson, Merrill & Alexander to develop Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles (later known as Village Green), built with FHA funding in 1940-1941. This development segregated vehicles and pedestrians, layout on superblocks with garage courts facing outward around low-density row housing that face inward towards the communal landscaped areas. Many of the units were built with enclosed private patios and the property was originally developed with community facilities and shopping (many of which were later replaced with additional housing units). Baldwin Hills, along with Chatham Village, provided a human scale and village design to urban development. During World War II, Architect Richard Neutra designed the government-sponsored Channel Heights in San Pedro, built in 1943. The mass-produced housing units had varied orientation and were built in response to the terrain. The development provided adequate parking separated from the living and landscaped areas. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company employed the New York architectural firm of Leonard Schultze Associates, Inc. to design Parkmerced in the southwest corner of San Francisco, along with San Francisco landscape architect Thomas Church. Parkmerced, built in the early and late 1940s, combined garden apartment units among refined landscaping with multiple tower apartments.<sup>67</sup>

By the late 1950s, many of the flaws of design and planning executed in various urban renewal projects – some of which were based on Garden City or tower-in-the-park concepts – were becoming evident to government officials, planners, and citizens. This included negative criticism about bleak Modernist towers and utilitarian box-like buildings constructed for housing, commercial development, or government institutions. Some criticism noted that the new buildings were no better than the slums they replaced, and urban renewal supporters raised

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<sup>66</sup> Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture*, 265-271; Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*, 366; Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, 163-170.

<sup>67</sup> Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*, 366 and 394; Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, 164; Samuel M. Green, *American Art: A Historical Survey* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1966), 512-514; Chandler McCoy, “The Case for Preservation at Parkmerced,” *Preservation Notes* (Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Winter 2008), 3; Gebhard et al, *Architecture in San Francisco*, 111; LaBounty, “Parkmerced,” accessed online at <http://www.outsidelands.org/parkmerced.php> (accessed March 2014)

concerns that without facing the persisting criticism public support for investing in urban renewal would decrease.<sup>68</sup> Combining low-rise and high-rise buildings together gained support during this period, allowing garden apartments to be designed in a manner that corresponds with a more human scale and informality, such as stepping their facades or altering building heights. There was also a growing awareness of projects needing to retain some relationship with their neighborhood and that redevelopment projects should strive to include residents at various income levels and family types.

The Capitol Towers Apartments was among a growing trend of garden apartments and was part of the increased development of apartments across the country during the 1950s and 1960s. Both land use development pressures and increased demand for such housing fueled this growth. At the end of the 1960s, nearly half of the housing starts in the country were for apartments. During the mid-twentieth century apartment design became more varied in response to various market demands based on setting, consumer demand, and financing. Developers responded to specific components of residential market demand. Many garden apartments included social and recreational facilities and often catered to specific age groups or family types. These types of apartment complexes developed during this period to encompass a growing number of amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, art galleries, clubhouses, and playgrounds. Developers sought out market data to respond to various age groups, including young single people, young families, and older people whose children had left home, in order to build properties that would have features appealing to targeted groups. Besides the common issues of apartment design related to appealing exterior appearances and ensuring privacy and proper sound-proofing, for example, there was increased design response to demands for private outdoor space to supplement the public open space between buildings, along with individual access to units. Designers varied exterior spaces and building footprints to increase openness and to avoid monotony in the layout of complexes. Parking was often scattered throughout developments intermixed with landscaped spaces with trees and open space. There was also an increased interest and demand during the 1950s and 1960s for including high-rise tower apartments in complexes with low-rise units.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to its place within the general context of increased apartment construction with improved amenities during the 1950s and 1960s, Capitol Towers was also among the growing number of residential and commercial properties of the period where art work was installed as part of the project. Jacques Overhoff produced an eight panel set of concrete relief for Capitol Towers in 1961 which are installed on the wall by the pool facing west towards the property's central plaza. These panels do not appear to have been part of the project's initial design in 1958,

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<sup>68</sup> James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," in letters to the Times, *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26; Charles Grutzner, "Title I Developer to Try Again Here," *New York Times*, September 6, 1959, 76.

<sup>69</sup> Elisabeth Kendal Thompson, "Garden Environments for Apartment Living," *Architectural Record*, September 1969, 183; "Boom is Forseen in Tall Buildings," *New York Times*, January 15, 1961, R1.

but were added to the project prior to, and along with, construction of the initial garden apartment units and swimming pool. The trend to add art work to residential and commercial projects was an effort to find meaningful ornamentation in architecture and was, in part, a reaction to the abstract and rigid qualities of mid-twentieth century geometric patterns of buildings and the ascension of “machine-age” design Modernism. The inclusion of art work was part of architectural trends seeking to transcend the dominance of International Style Modernism in public, commercial, and institutional architecture. There were also a lot of new buildings being constructed at the time, and art work was included to enrich and provide individuality to the Modernists designs, many of which had similar aesthetic qualities. Collaboration between architect and artist usually sought compatibility wherein sculpture, painting, or mosaic would provide a visual and aesthetic enhancement without hampering the essential form of the building. There was a growing demand for public art intended to enliven public spaces and enhance a property’s setting. In residential properties, the effort was partly seen as a way to hopefully inspire children and young people to appreciate art as part of their everyday life. Art work in architecture included superficial applications, such as stand-alone pieces, like Overhoff’s concrete relief panels at Capitol Towers, which could be placed effectively in many properties, and fully integrated pieces specifically designed to be part of its surrounding architecture, as seen in some lobby installations in large office towers of the period. In Sacramento an example of this is the applied adobe tile murals at the Downtown Plaza Shopping Center (1970-1971) attributed to Albert Sanchez, AIA, in collaboration with John S. Bolles & Associates. Overhoff’s concrete relief at Capitol Towers was also part of a trend in the increased use of concrete in art, along with the use of board form concrete installed to enrich wall surfaces.<sup>70</sup>

#### 4.3.5. Capitol Towers’ Architectural and Landscape Designers

As noted, Scheuer hired a collection of well-known and experienced designers and planners for the Capitol Towers project. The lead design company was the San Francisco architectural firm of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), which worked with architects Edward L. Barnes, the architectural firm DeMars & Reay, and the landscape architectural firm of Lawrence Halprin & Associates.<sup>71</sup>

William Wurster (1895-1973) started his own architectural practice in 1926 and formed WBE with Theodore Bernardi (1903-1993) and Donn Emmons (1910-1997) in 1945, the latter of

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<sup>70</sup> Louis G. Redstone, *Art in Architecture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co, 1968), viii, 77, 85; David Van Dommelen, *Walls: Enrichment and Ornamentation* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., Inc., 1965), 41-42 and 79; Mary Douglass Foreman and Emma Lila Fundaburk, *Art in the Environment in the United States: A Book of 600 Photographs of Art in Architectural, Natural, Historic, and Modern Settings Across the Nation* (Luverne, AL: Fundaburk, 1975), 188-189; “Twenty Tenants Have Space in New Downtown Plaza,” *Sacramento Bee* June 18, 1972; JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, “Historical Resources Impact Analysis Report: Sacramento Entertainment and Sports Complex Project,” prepared for Environmental Science Associates, October 2013, 39.

<sup>71</sup> Saul Bass assisted Halprin as a street furniture consultant. See San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122.

whom he had worked with since 1938. WBE was one of the best know architectural firms in California during the 1950s and 1960s. It was noted not only for individual residential work, but also for projects in the areas of redevelopment / urban renewal, multiple-unit residential, commercial / institutional / governmental work, and master planning. Capitol Towers was among many of WBE's redevelopment / urban renewal projects, which also included San Francisco's Gold Gateway Redevelopment project along the Embarcadero, the Woodlake Planned Community in San Mateo, Northpoint Residential and Commercial Complex in San Francisco, and the California State Exposition and Fair in Sacramento. Donn Emmons served as principal-in-charge for many of the firm's redevelopment projects, including Capitol Towers. It does not appear that either Wurster or Bernardi contributed in a considerable manner to the Capitol Towers project. WBE Associate Architect Karl Treffinger served as project manager until he left to open his own firm in 1960. From project correspondence it appears that Donn Emmons was the lead architect from WBE for Capitol Towers and architect Edward Barnes devised the garden apartment fenced patio and opposite facing balcony design. WBE was the primary design firm for Capitol Towers and was specifically responsible for the design of the towers, but also was in charge of the overall master planning and coordination. WBE's approach was heavy influenced by Wurster's affinity to Northern California, blending Modernist elements with demands of a project's site, client, and funding. There was also the use of unpretentious, sometimes inexpensive, and ordinary building materials used in firm's residential designs. WBE had a reputation for designing understated residences that took advantage of Northern California's temperate climate when possible. As seen in the Capitol Towers Apartments, WBE residential designs of the 1950s minimized a public façade in favor of optimizing private garden space. While they had some common elements to designs, such as the box-like form of the Capitol Towers garden apartment with their wide overhanging roofs, WBE designs were more noted for pursuing their clients' demand rather than providing a WBE mark in their final design, like other architectural firms of the period did.<sup>72</sup>

Emmons received his education from Cornell University and University of Southern California. In addition to leading WBE's work on the redevelopment / urban renewal projects noted above, Emmons' other major works concurrent with Capitol Towers included the Bank of American

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<sup>72</sup> "Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc.," Architects, company brochure, 1967 (available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library); *Edward Larrabee Barnes*, 18; Alan R. Michelson, "Bernardi, Emmons – and Wurster: Focus on the Younger Partners," in Marc Treib, *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster* (Berkeley: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 204-225; H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 16, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 392; J.L. Pimsleu, "Karl Treffinger," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 6, 1999; American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1970), 927. Treffinger left WBE in 1960 to open his own firm, Karl Treffinger and Associates, AIA. His later firm, now known as TWM/Architects and Planners, is credited with award winning designs including the Shakespeare Seating Pavilion in Ashland, Oregon among many others.

World Headquarters Building in San Francisco; Mill Valley Public Library; and the redevelopment of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. Among the WBE works in Sacramento that Emmons is credited with leading include the Bank of American Building at 730 I Street (across from the Sacramento County Administration Center) and the California State Exposition and Fair (CalExpo). He also designed many of the firm's single family residences situated around the Bay Area.<sup>73</sup>

Edward L. Barnes (1915-2004) was among the influential architects and designers that graduated from Harvard University's design school in the 1940s as that school's education shifted to focus on Modernist design under the influence of European architects Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. Like WBE, Barnes was noted for his responsive designs where his buildings expressed the variety of factors placed on them, responding to site and program, and less on the signature that of the architect or client as was the case with some prominent designers of the mid to late twentieth century. He worked for a short time with William Wurster in San Francisco before working for industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss in Los Angeles where he worked on designs for mass-produced housing for the military during World War II. He established his own firm in New York in the late 1940s and proceeded with his pragmatic, direct, and varied approach to residential, commercial, and institutional designs, including office towers and campuses, built throughout the country and internationally. Barnes' approach, noted for its crisp geometric designs, corresponded well with WBE, which included Capitol Towers. Barnes contributed concepts for the layout and design of the Capitol Towers' garden apartments, including the reversal orientation of the first floor units facing towards their private patio and the second floor units facing the other direction towards the common park areas. His other work in Sacramento included contributions to the 1979 Crocker Art Museum Master Plan. Among his best work, designed around the same time as Capitol Towers, was the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, initially completed in 1961. This vernacular type village complex used Modernist angular shapes with natural materials integrated into its setting in the woods.<sup>74</sup>

The firm of DeMars & Reay had a limited role in developing the design for Capitol Towers. Vernon DeMars (1908-2005) contributed to the planning and overall design integrating the low-rise garden apartments with the towers. The firm, however, was not involved in the execution of

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<sup>73</sup> American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: American Institute of Architects by R.R. Bowker, 1962), 195; American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1970), 254; Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc." Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library; Allan Temko, "Sacramento's Second Gold Rush," *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 194; Alan R. Michelson, "Bernardi, Emmons – and Wurster: Focus on the Younger Partners," in *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*, edited by Marc Treib, 204-225 (Berkeley: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995).

<sup>74</sup> *Edward Larrabee Barnes* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1994) 10-13, 18, and 248; Russell Boniface, "Edward Larrabee Barnes, FAIA, Selected for 2007 AIA Gold Medal," *AIArchitect This Week*, December 8, 2007. The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

the project.<sup>75</sup> DeMars was one of the San Francisco Bay Area's best-known social housing designers, having worked in the Farm Security Administration during the New Deal on farm workers housing, public housing like Easter Hill Village in Richmond built in the early 1950s (with Lawrence Halprin landscape design), and the Marin City redevelopment project of the late 1950s (also with Halprin and Scheuer). DeMar's many collaborations included his partnership from 1955-1965 with British architect Donald Reay (1914-2002), who had been involved in new town design in England following World War II before coming to California. Their firm's other work included several buildings on the UC Berkeley campus, where they both taught, contributions to the Golden Gateway Project in San Francisco, and the redevelopment scheme for Old Sacramento.<sup>76</sup>

Involvement of Lawrence Halprin & Associates in the development of Capitol Towers was part of a growing trend in the mid-twentieth century to creating a fully integrated design of buildings and landscape. The landscape design for Capitol Towers illustrates some aspects of contemporary landscape architecture of its period, taking into account pedestrian uses, recreational facilities, and landscape features that would complement the buildings. The design retains some formal elements of traditional Beaux-Art design with hierarchal axes, but modestly includes components that incorporate newer trends in landscape design of the mid-twentieth century. These elements include the design's site specific layout, informality, and human-scale features that both direct and enhance pedestrian experience of the space. Specifically, Capitol Towers' limited execution of Halprin's stylistic hallmarks included the patterned concrete plaza with neatly arranged trees and a small fountain, the axial pedestrian plan, and smaller organized garden areas in the project's various courtyards. The constructed project did not include the striking water features, concrete walkways reminiscent of his best known work, and sculpture depicted in the development's original plans from 1958.<sup>77</sup>

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was one of the most well-known landscape architects in the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century. He came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s with his innovative designs for urban environments, planned communities, and individual

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<sup>75</sup> Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 391.

<sup>76</sup> Roger Montgomery, "Mass Producing Bay Area Architecture," in Sally Woodbridge, ed, *Bay Area Houses*, (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1988), 231 and 238; Gebhard, et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 211, 240, 361, and 411; Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 319; Kathleen Maclay, "Noted Architect Vernon DeMars dies at age 97," UC Berkeley Press Release, May 3, 2005, available online at: [http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/05/03\\_demars.shtml](http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/05/03_demars.shtml) (accessed April 2014); "In Memoriam: Donald P. Reay, Professor of Architecture, Emeritus, Berkeley, 1914-2002," available online at: <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/inmemoriam/DonaldP.Reay.htm> (accessed April 2014).

<sup>77</sup> William, A. Mann, *Landscape Architecture: An Illustrated History in Timelines, Site Plans, and Biography* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993), 78-80.

gardens. He was also among the influential architects and designers that graduated from Harvard University's design school in the 1940s as that school's education shifted to focus on Modernist design under Gropius and Breuer. Halprin settled in San Francisco and worked for a short time in the landscape architecture office of Thomas Church, who was one of California's most innovative landscape designers of the period. He began his own practice in 1949. Integration of concrete and water became hallmarks of many Halprin designs, such as can be seen in his most well-known urban plazas such as Lovejoy Plaza (1965-1966) in Portland, Oregon and Seattle's Freeway Park (1970-1976). Halprin was an important advocate and theoretician, publishing several influential studies in the 1960s and 1970s that examined human spatial experience and how people moved in natural and urban landscapes. He emphasized a commitment to making cities more livable by bringing people into direct contact with the designed spaces, for example. He was also involved in the reuse of former industrial spaces, such as in the renovation of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco (1962-1968), and helping integrated planned communities into their environment, the most prominent of which was his work at Sea Ranch in Marin County (1962-1967).<sup>78</sup>

WBE collaborated with Halprin & Associates on multiple projects, including many high-profile projects and several multi-unit residential projects. WBE and Halprin worked on the Marin City redevelopment, Ghirardelli Square, and the California Exposition and Fair in Sacramento. Their residential projects included Woodlake Apartments in San Mateo and Northpoint Apartments in San Francisco, both of which were designed for developer Gerson Bakar. The Woodlake Apartments in San Mateo, completed in 1966, was a 994-unit complex on a thirty acre suburban site. The inward facing design situated the housing units towards a large communal open landscaped area and included a shopping center, recreational facility, and private landscaped courtyards. This project was more fully realized than Capitol Towers, and included much more intricate and integrated landscape features than the Sacramento project. The following year, the Northpoint Apartments resulted in an urban execution of design principles employed at Woodlake. The project incorporated landscaped courtyards with units at various setbacks to the exterior spaces. Each unit has an enclosed patio or balcony, as semi-private outdoor space, the multiple lobbies help convey a more intimate setting, and parking is segregated from living spaced (in this case below ground). WBE used similarly cube forms with wide roof overhangs, and paneled balcony railings. The landscape included swimming pools, decorative concrete, fountains, trees, and landscaped areas. Different than Capitol Towers, the developers of Northpoint Apartments constructed commercial development on the adjacent block to serve residents.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mann, *Landscape Architecture: An Illustrated History in Timelines, Site Plans, and Biography*, 334; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122; *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64.

<sup>79</sup> Elisabeth Kendall Thompson, editor, *Apartments, Townhouses, and Condominiums* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, An Architectural Record Book, 1975), 14-15; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places*, 128 and 130.

Jacques Overhoff (born in 1933) produced the multi-pane concrete relief wall that is situated at the property's central courtyard and the west side of the pool. The wall includes his name in relief and date of installation "1961" on the southern most panel. The Dutch-born Overhoff is a San Francisco Bay Area sculptor. He has many works permanently exhibited publicly include the sculpture at 1 Maritime Plaza in San Francisco "In Honor of the United Nations Charter," installed in 1965, and the "Standing Figure on Knife Edge," in the San Francisco Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project, installed in 1967. He also has work at City College of San Francisco and is responsible for the sculpture in front of the Bayview Branch Library in San Francisco. Elsewhere in Northern California, Overhoff has permanent work displayed at public locations, such as "Lost in the Mail" at the Walnut Creek City Hall, installed in 1985 and "Torque" at the Auto Plaza Hill Top in Richmond, installed in 1982. Overhoff's concrete relief panels at Capitol Towers were noted in several publications in the 1960s, as part of the larger media attention that the project and Sacramento redevelopment, were receiving at the time. The Capitol Towers work was an added enhancement to the project, but did not become one of his better know works of art, especially compared with his larger works in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4.3.6. Capitol Towers' Design Changes, Alterations, and Development Proposals

As noted, the design of the project changed considerably from the initial designs in 1958 and to construction between 1960 and 1965. The layout of the project, design of the buildings, and landscape features were changed. The design of the pedestrian circulation for the project was intended to take advantage of shopping that was to be sited on the blocks just west of the development, but such shopping never emerged. Some features of the project as redesigned in 1960 project were never realized, and Scheuer's firm never developed two of the three high rise apartment towers on the property. **Illustration 6**, **Illustration 7**, and **Illustration 8** show the project's initial design, the revised plans, and changes made to the property over time, the last of which annotated showing areas that were either never realized as part of the redesigned project or that were altered over time.

Construction estimates in 1959 exceeded expectations and the project team went to enormous effort to reduce costs so the project would align better with available funding and mortgage

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<sup>80</sup> Redstone, *Art in Architecture*, 91; Van Dommelen, *Walls: Enrichment and Ornamentation*, 80; "VLN: Bay Area Public Art," [www.verlang.com](http://www.verlang.com) (accessed April 2014); Bedford Gallery, "Public Art in Walnut Creek," and "Walnut Creek Public Art Walking Tour," Bedford Gallery website: <http://bedfordgallery.org/publicart/docs/PublicArtMap.pdf> and <http://bedfordgallery.org/publicart/docs/PublicArtBrochure.pdf> (accessed April 2014); "Torque," City of Richmond, CA website: <http://ca-richmond.civicplus.com/index.asp?NID=608> (accessed April 2014); San Francisco Public Library, "Bayview/Anna E. Waden Branch Library History," San Francisco Public Library website: <http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000016001> (accessed April 2014).

guarantees. In May 1959, Scheuer received construction estimates from his four local contractors for the first 92 units of the garden apartments and found the cost to be \$200,000 over the maximum FHA allowance.<sup>81</sup> As a result, Scheuer's local contractors and the architect firm of WBE conferred to find ways to reduce construction costs without impairing the quality of construction. WBE held separate meetings with the contractors and the FHA. Scheuer's team and WBE pressured the contractors to explore every possibility for reduce their construction estimates. WBE reconsidered the building and landscape drawings for the possibility of reduction. However, it was understood at the time that if landscape and building designs were marginalized by too much cost reduction, then the FHA would also reduce their commitment figure to the project. The contractors determined they could reduce costs to \$180,000 if the architects at WBE would approve a "considerable" number of changes, much coming out of site utilities and landscaping. WBE made the point to inform Scheuer, "that this reduction would be almost entirely at the expense of the project and could not help but make it less good if adopted." By the end of June 1959, WBE compiled a list of changes for Scheuer including changes in exterior building trim, appliances for the units, and in plumbing for the buildings. The most extensive changes suggested were in the project's landscaping. All garden walls were to be changed to wood, all brick was to be changed in favor of colored concrete, the pool was to be poured concrete instead of cast stone, the landscape design's sunken pool was eliminated, all proposed shrubs and vines within private patio areas were eliminated, trees were to be reduced in size from 5 to 1-gallon, and the elaborate play structures in Play Area #2 were to be changed out for a standard swing set.<sup>82</sup> Many of the cost saving suggestions were, or appear to have been, adopted during this period and were integrated into the final design that was built.

Some characteristics of the original design that were published in *P/A* in 1959 came to fruition, but many aspects of the project changed following receipt of the *P/A* award and prior to the commencement of construction in 1960, as shown in **Illustration 6** and **Illustration 7**. Most striking, the project's layout changed from the original design, shifting the main axis of the property from an east-west orientation to a north-south orientation, reorganizing the combination of small and large sets of garden apartment units strung together under continual roofs, and decreasing the size and scale of the landscaped courtyards. Among the reasons for the reorientation of the buildings, the WBE project architects convinced the redevelopment

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<sup>81</sup> The general contracts for the Capitol Towers garden apartments were Lawrence Construction Co., Campbell Construction Co., Erickson Construction Co., and Western Enterprises, Inc. Barrett Construction Co. built the single high-rise in the project. See "Capitol Towers Financing Plan Wins Approval," *Sacramento Bee*, February 16, 1960; H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 3, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>82</sup> Communication from Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency to the Sacramento City Council, Regular Meeting Sacramento City Council, June 10, 1959; Memo from WBE to James H. Scheuer et al, June 12, 1959, folder 824-2 Capitol Towers 1959, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

authorities that light coming from the north was preferable in the tower apartments over light from the west.<sup>83</sup>

The project's landscape design was scaled down prior to the start of construction in 1960. Wide courtyards with distinct geometrical architectural design shown in the 1958 renderings, as shown in **Illustration 9**, were removed from the plan and replaced by the more modest central plaza situated at the middle of **Illustration 7** and shown in **Illustration 10**. This plaza's current condition is in **Illustration 11**, which shows that original street furniture, planters, and kiosks have been removed and banner poles, boxwood hedges, and new lampposts have been added. Other landscape features that were part of the 1958 design, but not constructed in 1960 included a "water motif" courtyard and courtyard with a grove of palm trees. **Illustration 12** shows the sunken lawn that was installed at the north end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis in place of the intended reflecting pool shown at this location in **Illustration 7**.<sup>84</sup> **Illustration 12** shows one of the secondary landscape courtyards tucked between buildings that has a grid pattern of small trees. This same courtyard is shown in **Illustration 13** with the original trees removed, replaced by new plantings that do not reflect the orderly layout of Halprin's design. Changes to the landscape design between the initial design and what was built are further shown in **Illustration 14** and **Illustration 15**, the former displaying a wide raised landscape median and the latter showing a more modest walkway design that was built adjacent to a wide flat lawn.

The basic form of the wood-frame garden apartment units remained unchanged between the initial design and construction of those units in 1960 and 1962, as shown in **Illustration 17** and **Illustration 18**. These units retained their stepped footprints, breezeways between the units, cube forms with wide roof overhang under a continuous roof, vertically ornamented fenestration, and the basic layout of their outdoor spaces whereby the upper story balconies face one direction and the first floor enclosed patio / gardens face the other. The execution of these units, however, prompted some dismay as being more modest than had been intended. During construction of the garden apartment units *Architectural Record* noted that the new buildings "scarcely appear to be the elegant units depicted in the architectural renderings" and placed the fault for this change on lowered allowable structural costs under FHA rules.<sup>85</sup> In addition, the enclosed patio / garden area for first floor units were altered to all be similar in size, rather than having some be much larger than others. Also "clumsy" concrete-block fire walls were added between the garden apartment units "marring the original design."<sup>86</sup> More windows were added to the low-rise units

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<sup>83</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 105-111; "Diversifying the Redevelopment," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143-147.

<sup>84</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 105-111; "Diversifying the Redevelopment," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143-147.

<sup>85</sup> Allan Temko, "Sacramento's Second Gold Rush," *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 129.

<sup>86</sup> Temko, "Sacramento's Second Gold Rush," *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 129. This comment is not clear as to whether this refers to interior or exterior features. Correspondence in the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077 at the Center for Sacramento History suggests that changes in the garden apartments were largely interior finishes and appliances.

and the variety of colors intended for the various courtyards was minimally realized with only some detail features, such as railings, eaves, and stairways, receiving varied colors. Design features and detailing of the garden apartment units have been removed or altered over time, including replacement of the balcony railings, as shown in **Illustration 15** and **Illustration 16**. Also, the breezeways throughout the property had open risers in the stairs and were originally enclosed by vertical square wood slates within almost the entire area, deck to ceiling, of the second level opening, and the second floor balconies had wood frame railings with wood panels. The stair risers have been enclosed and the landing enclosures and railings have now been changed to standard metal railings, as shown in **Illustration 19**.

The exterior appearance of the apartment tower design was altered considerably for a variety of reasons between the initial plans and construction of the single high-rise tower in 1965. In January 1961 Donn Emmons of WBE decided that the appearance of high-rise would be “more distinguished” if there were two penthouse floors with wrap around terraces, which was agreed to by Scheuer’s Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation.<sup>87</sup> As Emmons undertook the redesign for the penthouse floors, new seismic recommendations were introduced into the California Building Code (CBC), forcing a change of construction of the proposed 20-story concrete high-rise to steel frame. The Renewal & Development Corporation concluded that switching the structural design of the building from concrete to steel was economically impossible given the FHA cost constraints and other factors. In May 1961 the Sacramento Building Code Board of Appeals agreed to amend the adoption of the CBC to remove the limitation of 13-story concrete buildings and allow the construction of a 15-story reinforced concrete tower. The agreed upon 15-story height of the reinforced concrete building required a redesign because the base of the building had to be increased to meet new CBC requirements. WBE spent three and a half months redesigning the high-rise to meet the objectives of the new code and produce a building that would be economically viable. WBE also wanted the redesigned apartment building to meet the “high design standards of our over-all plan.”<sup>88</sup> However, increasing the size of the foundation alone cost an additional \$150,000 in direct building costs. The redesign required Scheuer to secure an extension of FHA commitment for the tower. Sketch plans of the tower redesign from WBE were sent to FHA in June and November 1961, but were rejected as not detailed enough for FHA approval. Additional plans were sent in February 1962. As the FHA had no previous experience in Sacramento high-rise residential projects, multiple delays occurred as a detailed cost analysis was undertaken before FHA would back the redesigned high-rise. Final architectural drawings for the 203-unit high-rise were released in May 1962 with one penthouse floor, not two as Emmons designed in early 1961, and the ground floor was converted from

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<sup>87</sup> H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 16, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>88</sup> James H. Scheuer, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, May 23, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

residential to commercial space. Construction of the tower began in late summer/early fall 1962 by the Barrett Construction Company, two years after the original agreement to initiate tower construction following completion of the project's first garden apartment units.<sup>89</sup>

As shown in **Illustration 20**, the original International Style design had a raised tower on a recessed base, solid wall concrete cantilevered balconies on all sides, and a diminutive penthouse at the top. One of the proposed towers entrances was to have a wide slender hood adjacent to enclosed courtyards. **Illustration 21** and **Illustration 22** shows some of the ways in which the tower design was altered in 1962. Vertical banding replaced the balconies to provide vertical division of the tower and both the base and top of the tower were changed for heavier-looking designs, including the projecting top floor. Also, the solid balconies were replaced by those with metal railings. **Illustration 23** shows the altered front entrance of the tower. This entrance has none of the prominence or design emphasis of the initial design. Historic photographs of the property also show that the property's entrance along 7<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the tower originally had a tall concrete wall with the property's name on it, which has been removed, and that the tower's ground floor was inset on all four corners. The southeast corner of the tower, visible in **Illustration 24**, has now been modified to including the property's leasing office.<sup>90</sup>

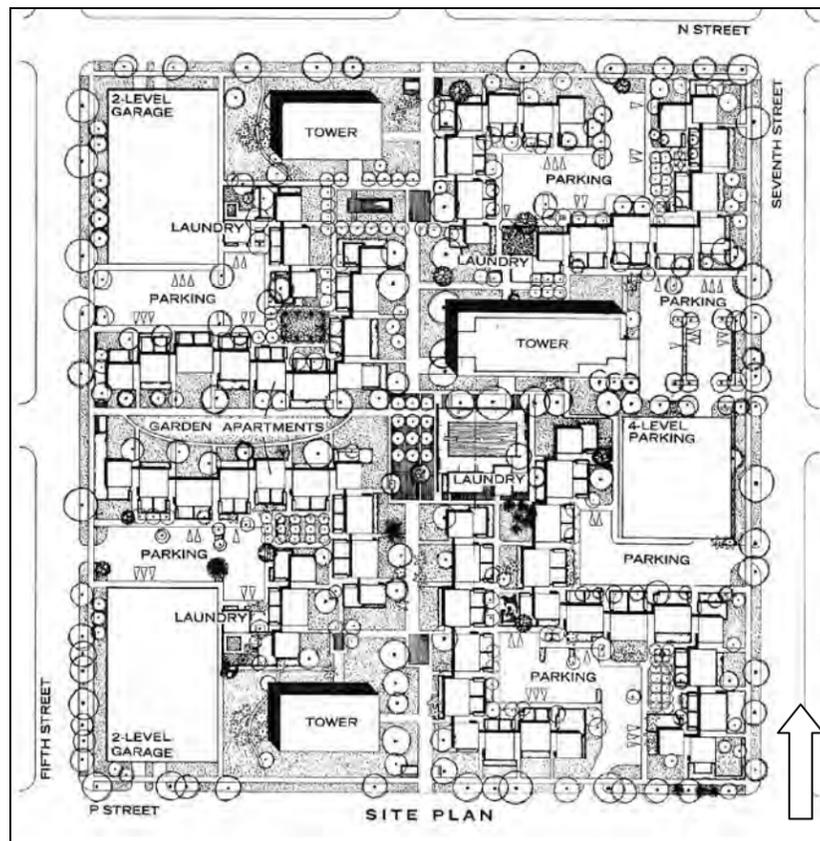
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<sup>89</sup> James H. Scheuer to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency, May 23, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, December 8, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 3, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; "Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1.

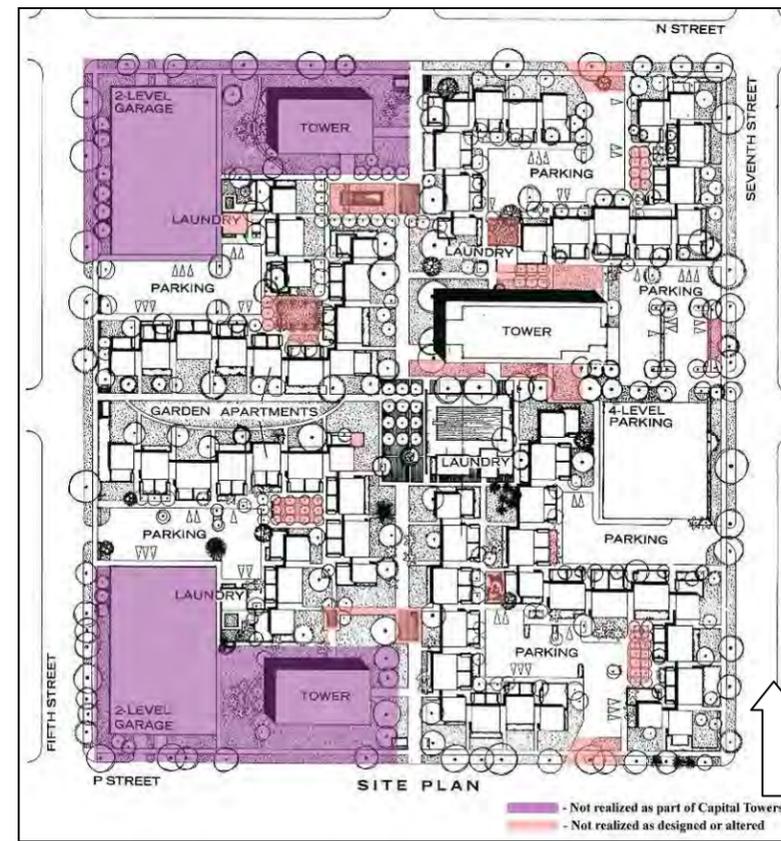
<sup>90</sup> The William W. Wurster collection and Vernon De Mars collection at the University of California Berkeley Environmental Design Archives includes photographs from the early to mid-1960s taken of the property. The collections includes photos by Morley Baer, Jerry Stoll, Phil Palmer, and Karl Riek. Additional photos of Capitol Towers soon after its construction are available at CSH.



**Illustration 6:** Capitol Towers Apartments, initial design model 1958, view facing north.<sup>91</sup>



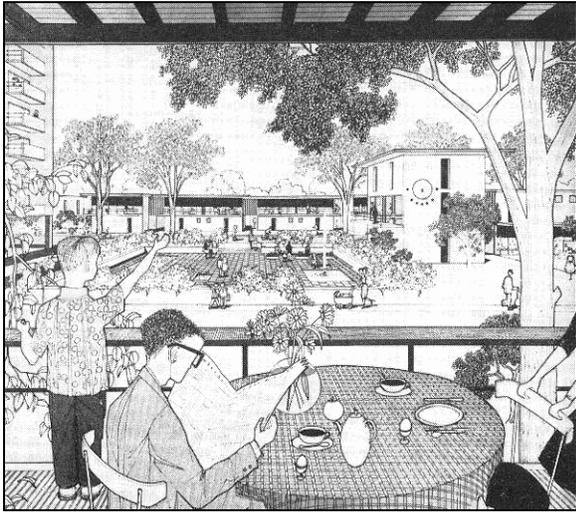
**Illustration 7:** Capitol Towers Apartments, revised design 1960 (north arrow added).<sup>92</sup>



**Illustration 8:** Capitol Towers Apartments, revised design 1960 (north arrow added), with annotations regarding unrealized or altered components.

<sup>91</sup> *Architectural Forum*, October 1960, 128

<sup>92</sup> *Architectural Forum*, October 1960, 128



**Illustration 9:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial design, 1958 (detail).<sup>93</sup>

**Illustration 10:** Capitol Towers Apartments, central courtyard, 1962.<sup>94</sup>

**Illustration 11:** Capitol Towers Apartments, central courtyard on 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, 2014.



<sup>93</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 111

<sup>94</sup> Samuel Paul, *Apartments; Their Design and Development* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1967), 142.



**Illustration 12:** Capitol Towers Apartments, northwest corner of property, view facing southwest, 1962.<sup>95</sup>



**Illustration 13:** Capitol Towers Apartments landscape courtyard at northwest corner of property, 2014.

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<sup>95</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 144. Photo credit: Karl H. Reik.



**Illustration 14:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial design, pedestrian walkway, 1958 (detail).<sup>96</sup>

**Illustration 15:** Capitol Towers Apartments, 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, 1962.<sup>97</sup>

**Illustration 16:** Capitol Towers Apartments, 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, 2014.



<sup>96</sup> *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64-2.

<sup>97</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 146. Photo credit: Jerry Stoll.



**Illustration 17:** Capitol Towers garden apartments initial design, 1958.<sup>98</sup>



**Illustration 18:** Capitol Towers garden apartments at southwest corner of property, April 18, 2014.

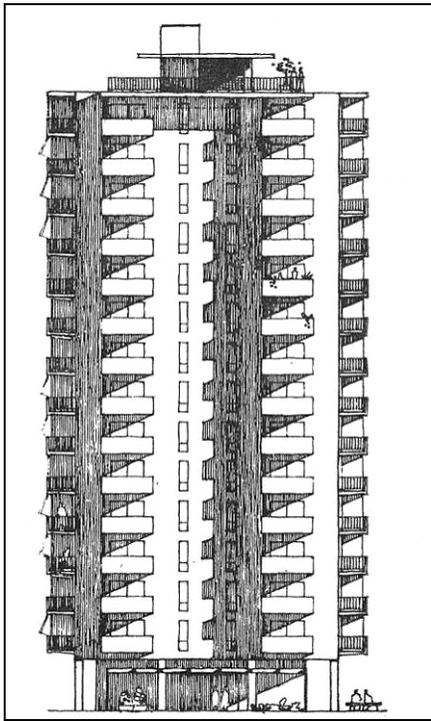
<sup>98</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 111. Rendering by Helmut Jacoby.



**Illustration 17:** Capitol Towers Apartments, typical garden apartment breezeway entrances, 1962 and 2014.<sup>99</sup>  
Historic photo credit: Karl H. Reik.

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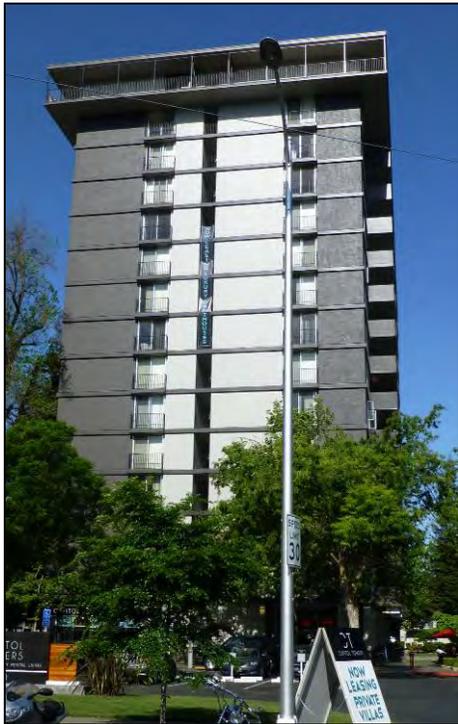
<sup>99</sup> The 1962 view is from *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143.



**Illustration 20:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial high-rise design 1958.<sup>100</sup>



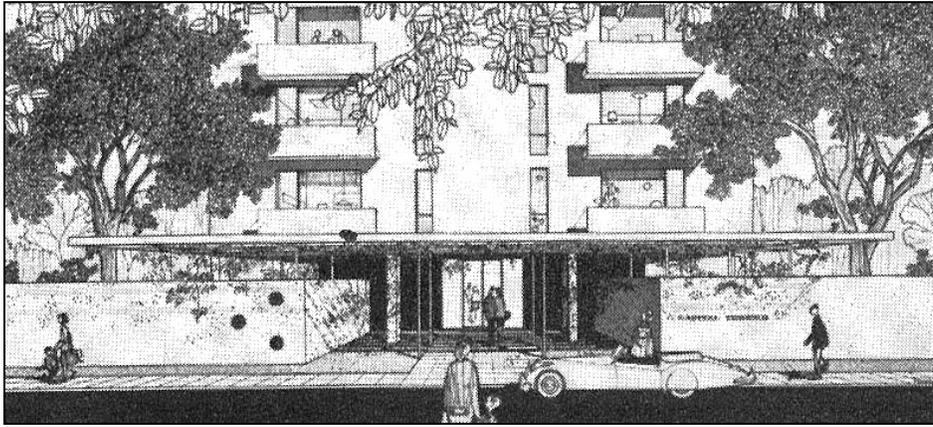
**Illustration 21:** Revised high-rise tower plan to conform to CBC standards, 1962.<sup>101</sup>



**Illustration 22:** Capitol Towers Apartments high-rise tower, 2014.

<sup>100</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 109.

<sup>101</sup> "Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released," *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1.



**Illustration 18:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial high-rise design entrance detail, 1958.<sup>102</sup>



**Illustration 24:** Capitol Towers Apartments high-rise tower entrance south side, 2014.

Historic photographs of the property show various other portions of the property that were either built differently than originally designed or that have been altered since initial construction. The pool area included a sun deck situated on top of the pool house building. This deck was accessed by a small flight of exterior stairs on the north side of the building and was enclosed by a metal frame railing with canvas panels. The pool house building was smaller and had different doors and windows. Also, the wall on the west end of the pool had a pebble stone finish on the back of the west facing concrete relief. Some of the first floor patio areas immediately adjacent to the property's central plaza were not originally enclosed by wood fencing. The laundry buildings have been modified with new windows and doors. The western laundry building was converted to a clubhouse, which included a south facing sliding glass door that has since been removed. There were also metal frame jungle gym play structures in the children play areas situated

<sup>102</sup> *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64-3.

adjacent to the laundry buildings that have been removed. The property's original exterior lighting and exterior signage has been modified. The original pole lampposts with orb fixtures have been replaced with similarly designed light fixtures. The orb wall sconces adjacent to the garden apartment unit doors have been replaced by vertical fixtures with metal framing. There were also some light fixtures hanging from some of the larger trees that have since been removed.<sup>103</sup>

The main impediments to approvals and construction of Capitol Towers were the problems encountered in project funding and revenue. Scheuer and the project team repeatedly had problems with estimating and dealing with the operating costs, real estate taxes, and rents. Funding and revenue uncertainties caused problems for FHA approval of the project, which was necessary for its viability. For example, when FHA prepared the tax burden analysis for the first 92 garden apartment units, the estimated tax bill was \$174 per unit. While in 1960-1961 the average tax bill for new apartment buildings in Sacramento was \$160-\$175 per unit, Scheuer's company was taxed at \$206 per unit. This high cost was because of tax formulas that were based construction costs, rather than actual revenue generated by the property at the time. The very goals of the project, including low population density, high design standards, and enhanced amenities, as well as rigid fire and building codes, led to the high construction costs. Increased construction costs and taxes meant the project was under pressure to have higher rents; however, increases in rents had the potential for FHA to reduce financial support of the project. Scheuer's company was frustrated that the City was not more cooperative in helping lock in a reasonable tax rate for the project so that they did not have to pay higher taxes than competitive apartment housing in the city. Problems such as this plagued the project for many years, ultimately leading to the SRA terminating the development agreement for the northwest and southwest corners of the property that had been planned for the other high-rise apartment buildings.<sup>104</sup>

During construction of the high-rise tower, Scheuer was concerned about the viability and future of the development. The unit density of the high-rise tower was necessary for the economic feasibility of the project and thus suggestions to reduce or eliminate the tower were near impossible for Scheuer to approve. Scheuer had already spent \$760,000 of his company's money to complete 400 of the 800 proposed garden apartment and high-rise units that Scheuer attributed to the "pioneering" effort of the redevelopment project. Much of the cost went into extensive and costly landscaping and apartment amenities to create an attractive environment that, as the developers asserted, would overcome the adverse conditions surrounding the project, including

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<sup>103</sup> Photographs in the William W. Wurster collection and Vernon De Mars collection at the University of California Berkeley Environmental Design Archives and at CSH. The laundry building was converted to a clubhouse in 1965, under city building permit F2537.

<sup>104</sup> H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome Lipp, Executive Director, Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, November 22, 1960, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1960, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; Response to Request for Tract V to Remain as Open Space, Southeast Corner 5<sup>th</sup> and N Streets, Capitol Mall Project 2-A, August 10, 1977, folder 828-2f Capitol Towers, Box 73, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

uncleared deteriorating buildings and vacant land, as well as the heavy truck traffic that traversed this area of the city prior to construction of Sacramento's freeways. In 1962 H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company wrote to the SRA lamenting, "We are badly hurt by the slums around us...we are making substantial rent cuts. We are getting full schedule rents in the interior of the project, but we cannot seem to get it on the perimeter." The slow pace of redevelopment in Sacramento's West End led Scheuer's company to realize in 1964 that the area has not yet developed to the point of attractiveness that would give their investment a sound economic base. Occupancy rates for the garden apartments remained low for several years, and even when garden apartments experienced up to 97% occupancy rate, rents that could be charged under FHA requirements could not economically support the project and pay city taxes. The apartment towers appeared to be necessary. Scheuer concluded that this was true not only for his project, but also for the Capitol Mall development, which he said would remain an 'unfinished symphony' economically and architecturally speaking pending completion of the second and third high-rise towers. Funding challenges inherent in this project are essentially why by September 1964 the FHA suggested to Scheuer that "maybe it's time to recognize the fact that the project is unsound," and that he should sell it at its write-down value.<sup>105</sup>

Capitol Towers Apartments gained state-wide and national attention as academics, planners, and architects assessed the redevelopment trends in the late 1950s and 1960s that were quickly altering many of the nation's urban environments. Sacramento was one of many cities with highly active redevelopment strategies that were reshaping their built environment. Planners and others were hopeful that high profile projects, such as Capitol Towers, would prove to be successful in reversing urban decay and creating positive urban environments. Capitol Towers received awards and praise during its design and in the period immediately following its construction. Many of the accolades were in reaction to the well-known designers and developers and their collaborative effort. The project was also admired, in great part, because of its potential for success. Such endorsement was given, however, without any passage of time to assess positive outcomes and without perspective to where this property fit into the historical lineage of such community developments.<sup>106</sup> Although critics raised concerns regarding the

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<sup>105</sup> H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento, May 28, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; James H. Scheuer to Roy Pinkerton, August 29, 1963, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento, September 25, 1964, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>106</sup> Capitol Towers Apartments received awards such as the design award from *P/A* in 1959, an honorable mention in the 1962 AIA / *House and Home* "Homes for Better Living Awards Program," award of merit in 1963 from the AIA Northern California Chapter, and an award from the Urban Renewal Administration in 1964. Architectural and design journals such as *Architectural Record*, *Architect and Contractor*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *House and Home* featured or discussed Capitol Towers in articles between 1958 and 1965. Samuel M. Green, who was an art history professor at Wesleyan University in the 1960s, for example, cited Capitol Towers as among the most "satisfactory" recent examples of urban housing in his 1966 book on American art and architecture, *American Art: A*

success of urban renewal redevelopment and superblock garden apartment / high-rise tower residential development even as many were designed and built in the 1950s and 1960s, the acclaim that Capitol Towers received largely occurred before the project had had time to be fully realized and before symbolic disasters of mid-century urban planning emerged, such as the 1972 demolition of the ill fated Pruitt-Igoe apartment complex in St. Louis which had been hailed as a model for urban housing when it was completed in 1955. With historical perspective, Capitol Towers can be seen as neither an outstanding example of urban residential development, nor as an extraordinary failure of urban planning from its time period. Rather, it was an early example of its type in Sacramento that was an earnest collaborative attempt by well meaning urban planners, well-known designers, and supportive developers to affect the city's environment, albeit with modest results. Challenges in funding and constructing this portion of the West End's urban renewal resulted in a property that did not realize considerable components of its original design and intent. Although Capitol Towers was the first garden apartments with a tower on a superblock in Sacramento, its design and construction fits within a broader historic context, and thus within that context it can be seen as lacking distinctive characteristics that would have illustrated traits making it important in the evolution of urban redevelopment or garden apartment / tower apartment complexes. The redesigned landscape was scaled down from the original design, only one of three towers was realized, and changes to the architecture decreased the impact the project had made in its original award-winning designs. Additionally, it is possible that a property like this could gain historical importance if it were to have been influential within its local or regional context, but the historical evidence does not support a conclusion that this project was influential in subsequent designs in Sacramento or elsewhere in Northern California, many of which followed similar design trends used during this period and that are evident in Capitol Towers.

Capitol Towers was among the early projects in Sacramento of its type and the multiple garden apartment complexes developed in the city during the 1960s and 1970s. Hundreds of small apartment buildings were built in Sacramento from the 1950s to the 1970s replacing single-family homes and increasing the number of units from 4,000 to 23,910.<sup>107</sup> Robert C. Powell was among the most prominent developers of such complexes in Sacramento during this period. Powell was responsible for the Governor's Square Apartments located on blocks west and south of the Capitol Towers Apartments, built in 1970 and 1971, Woodside Apartments off Howe Avenue at Northrup Avenue, built in the late 1960s, and Campus Commons located just east of California State University Sacramento, built in the 1970s. Woodside, for example, was noted for its cluster planning, sympathetic landscaping, generous open spaces, and various community facilities. The complex included varied building footprints laid out in an offset manner to increase privacy and included private patio / garden open spaces. Redwood and cedar trimming

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*Historical Perspective*, praising its organized yet informal layout and noting its "interesting" design to ensure the privacy of its residents (page 515).

<sup>107</sup> William Burg, *Sacramento Renaissance: Art, Music and Activism in California's Capital City* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 21.

and siding accented the stucco exteriors, used to complement the landscaping. Powell later developed upscale garden apartments and condominiums such as Selby Ranch and Wyndgate, both located on American River Drive, just east of Watt Avenue. Another prominent garden apartment complex in Sacramento was the Colletown married student housing built in 1970, designed by Neill Smith & Associates with landscape architecture by Lawrence Halprin & Associates. The project was built with landscaped open spaces, courtyards, and sunken and heavily landscaped parking areas segregated from the living units. Each unit has an enclosed patio and the exterior of the buildings were originally exposed cedar siding.<sup>108</sup>

The Capitol Towers project was not financially successful until the late-1970s, having experienced higher than expected vacancy rates and some deferred maintenance. During the project's first two decades, HUD assisted with the property's mortgage when it was slipping into default. The Trust I and Trust II components of the property were placed into a payment agreement with HUD from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. HUD later had to assist with the Trust III mortgage for a time during the mid-1970s. The financial difficulties were largely responsible for the project's other tower units not being constructed, which led SRA to terminate the property's development agreement for the northwest and southwest parcels on the Capitol Towers' superblock. The property's financial difficulties continued into the early 1980s as the Scheuer family was unable to collect property management fees from some of its investors. By the late 1980s, although vacancy rates on the property were below average for the city, the property owners had started work to redevelop the property into an office and commercial complex.<sup>109</sup>

Capitol Towers struggled in part because of the lack of services in the neighborhood, such as the commercial development to the blocks west of the property that was never fully realized. Despite the city's continued attention to its redevelopment areas in the West End, commercial development and services were slow to grow and difficult to sustain. Chain grocery stores, for instance, could not sustain their required business level and moved out of the area in the late 1970s even after several residential developments had been completed.<sup>110</sup>

The Scheuer Family Trust, also referred to as the Capitol Towers Trust, attempted to further develop the Capitol Towers property in the late 1980s and 1990s, but was unable to do so. The

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<sup>108</sup> Elisabeth Kendal Thompson, "Garden Environments for Apartment Living," *Architectural Record*, September 1969, 66-67 and 192-193; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 45; Robert D. Davila, "Obituary: Robert Powell was influential developer in capital," *Sacramento Bee*, November 6, 2007; Gebhard, et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 417.

<sup>109</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, "Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level," *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; Lou Thelen, "Capital Skyline on the Rise," *Sacramento Union*, September 15, 1988, 1 and 23; Joyce Terhaar, "Project backers wield clout," *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>110</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, "Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level," *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; "Grocery Store for Capitol Towers," *Sacramento Bee*, October 12, 1978, A8.

plan was to lease office space, mostly to the State of California, in multiple towers that would have replaced the garden apartment units, but left in place the property's high-rise tower. The initial four 26-to-27-story towers plan was reduced to two 24-to-25-story towers. The project, which would have been phased over five to ten years, would have also included commercial development, parking, and several new mid-rise apartment buildings. It was planned to be built as market conditions warranted.<sup>111</sup> This effort dissipated by the end of the 1990s, but in 2000, Post Properties, an Atlanta-based developer, proposed another development that did not come to realization. The Capitol Towers Trust sold to the property in 2002 to Fowler and Flannagan, a development firm based in Larkspur in Marin County at the time. The firm became F & F Capitol Towers Associates, LLC and moved their operations to Lake Forest in Orange County. This owner renovated the property in 2005-2006, remodeling both interiors and exteriors of the property. Various partnerships under the control of Bond Companies purchased the Capitol Towers apartments in 2007, but redevelopment of the project did not come to fruition. Kennedy Wilson purchased the property in 2012.<sup>112</sup>

Completion of the Pioneer II tower in 1978 and Bridgeway Tower in 1980 completed the two other towers originally considered for the superblock on which Capitol Towers sits. As noted, SRA tried unsuccessfully for years to get Scheuer to complete the three tower plan. The Retirement Housing Foundation built the twelve story Pioneer II tower at the northeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and P streets for elderly housing across 5<sup>th</sup> Street from its previous high-rise facility Pioneer House that it built in 1966. SRA was only able to attract a developer for the southeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and N streets when it agreed to give the land away in hopes of capturing sufficient property taxes to make up the lost sales revenue. Bridgeway Tower was among the first condominium projects in the city's redevelopment area, built at the same time as the Riverfront Plaza Associates' development at 3<sup>rd</sup> and P streets, just south of the Crocker Art Gallery adjacent to I-5.<sup>113</sup>

Redwood Construction, Inc. was the prime contractor for Fowler and Flannagan's remodeling of the Capitol Towers Apartments in 2005-2006. The project involved renovating some features of building exteriors, upgrading the interiors of all units, and improving the property's amenities. The effort, in general, was to provide the property with a more contemporary design appearance and to upgrade old features. Exterior alterations to the tower includes installation of slate cladding at the base of the columns, faux slate corners extending to the top of the building, and a

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<sup>111</sup> Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; Lou Thelen, "Capital Skyline on the Rise," *Sacramento Union*, September 15, 1988, 1 and 23; "Capitol Towers Plan Retains Campus Setting," *Sacramento Bee*, September 18, 1988, J1; George Kostyrko, "City Council gets look at new Capitol Towers," *Sacramento Bee*, June 16, 1992, A3; Planning Dynamics Group, "Capitol Towers Development Concept Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report," prepared for the City of Sacramento Department of Planning & Development, 1996, 3-1

<sup>112</sup> Mary Lynne Vellinga, "Five New Towers Envisioned Downtown," *Sacramento Bee*, March 28, 2008; Redwood Construction, Inc., Close-Out manual, provided to JRP by Bond Companies; Sacramento County Assessor files, APNs: 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004.

<sup>113</sup> "Tower Condos Planned," *Sacramento Bee*, July 14, 1977, B3; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980."

new paint scheme that accents the building's horizontal banding. Alterations to the property's buildings include a 500-square-foot addition to the pool house to accommodate a new fitness center, installation of a new spa near the pool, and replacement of the pool's wrought iron fence with a new metal frame and glass panel fence. The property's buildings have been repainted at least twice in the past decade. Redwood had new signage installed throughout the property, including unit numbers and four monument signs installed at the four corners of the property at 5<sup>th</sup>, 7, N, and P streets. Unit interior upgrades included marble entries, wood flooring, granite countertops, new appliances, and new fixtures. The leasing office and public areas of the ground floor and basement of the tower were remodeled. The owners converted a fitness center into a social room, improved laundry facilities, redecorated the lobby, and added a new canopy at the tower's entrance. Changes in the landscape and site work included installation of approximately 1000-linear feet of ledgerstone at the edges of planting beds, installation of a new waterfall / sign / planter at the tower's parking lot on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, replacing the swimming pool west wall's non-original Mondrian-inspired colored rectangle design with stone tiles, returning the Overhoff sculpture wall to its original monochromatic color, removal of trees from some unit's enclosed gardens, replacement and alteration / addition of lampposts, and replacement of various small plantings throughout the property.<sup>114</sup>

The Capitol Towers Apartments are now upgraded and occupied, further remodeled since the changes made in 2005-2006. The property functions well with residents using the amenities and its communal landscape areas are well maintained, updated to appeal to the increasing number of urban dwellers seeking upscale amenities in a location convenient to downtown offices and state buildings. The property houses some families and still does not have sufficient commercial services in the immediate area.

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<sup>114</sup> Redwood Construction, Inc., Close-Out manual, provided to JRP in 2008 by Bond Companies; City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, multiple building permits.

## 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The Capitol Towers Apartments is a 10-acre property on three county assessor parcels, situated on a “superblock” that combines the four block area bounded by N Street, P Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The property includes garden apartment units and a single high-rise apartment building. There is no vehicle traffic allowed through the property. Parking is restricted to surface lots at the four corners of the property and in the multi-level parking garage along 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The property’s main pedestrian axes are along the original alignments of 6<sup>th</sup> and O Streets through the property. There is a plaza at the center of the property with a grid of trees, concrete fountain, and a concrete relief panel on the adjacent wall. The tower is northeast of the plaza and sits adjacent to the swimming pool. There are landscaped areas in various courtyards, including the sunken garden at the north end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis and along the O Street axis. Some newer landscape features are located on the edge of the property, such as at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and N Street. The following provides a summary description of the Capitol Towers Apartments. The property is fully described on DPR 523 forms, accompanied by additional photographs, in **Appendix A**.

The two-to-three story garden apartment units are clustered in eight groups of paired units separated by breezeways and under continuous roofing. The buildings, constructed between 1960 and 1962, are wood frame construction with stucco siding. They have concrete foundations, flat roofs with composition sheeting, and concrete block walls that vertically divide the buildings with two pairs of units. The roofs have wide four-foot overhangs with exposed rafters. The units have staggered setbacks to the property’s landscaped areas and parking lots. The garden apartments have casement windows above glazed or panel spandrels and units have either large aluminum frame sliding glass doors or pairs of sliding glass doors. There are also box frame windows on some of the first floor units. Entrance to the garden apartment units are through metal doors at the breezeways, the upper units accessed via wooden steps. The first floor units have enclosed patios that face one direction and the second story units have balconies that face the other direction. The patio enclosures are wood frame six foot tall slat fencing with open framed tops. The second story balconies have metal railings that match the second story railings and hand railings in the breezeways.

There are four single-story buildings on the property. They are the two laundry buildings at the northeast and southwest portion of the property, the lounge (formerly laundry / club house and office) in the northwest corner of the property, and pool building next to the tower (discussed below). The laundry buildings have concrete frames on concrete foundations, with stucco exteriors, and flat roofs with composition roofing. The lounge at the northwest corner of the property was converted from a laundry facility to a clubhouse in 1965, which included the addition of a small kitchen. The laundry buildings were originally accompanied by small playgrounds, which are now vacated. The area adjacent to the laundry building is now a dog park.

The property's designed landscape has multiple courtyards and strips. The landscape is mostly organized by rectilinear forms for walkways and for plant beds. There is a mixture of old trees that predate the Capitol Towers project, trees that appear to have been planted when the project was first built, and newer shrubs and trees. Most of the walkways are straight and provide access along the major axes, through the breezeways, to the various amenities, and to the parking areas. There is one long curved walkway along the O Street axis. There are several small courtyards with grids of small trees, some of which have been removed over time, and now include other small plantings. The sunken garden at the north end of the property includes small bushes and there are various small plantings along the garden apartments under the roof overhangs. While the layout of the property is similar to when it was first constructed, and some of the original plantings remain, there are some new additions to the landscape. There are banner poles along the major pedestrian walkways, new light posts with orb fixtures, some of which are in new locations to where similar style lampposts originally sat on the property. There are short boxwood shrubs at the base of the trees in the central plaza, new non-rectilinear plant beds, some of which are surrounded by newly installed ledgestone.

The property's 15-story tower is a concrete frame high-rise apartment building that was completed in 1965 and is 141-feet tall. It has a concrete foundation, shops / restaurants on the ground floor, and apartment units on the upper stories with a penthouse at the top. The tower's first floor is mostly recessed below the upper stories which appear to rest on wide rectangular piers and the east and west ends of the building. The tower exterior is divided horizontally by concrete banding, punctuated by groups of balconies facing north and south. Its top floor balcony surrounds the entire building and projects out over the other floors, above which is a large enclosure for the elevator shaft projecting out of the roof. The building has metal frame windows, including large plate glass windows at the ground floor and casement windows at the apartment units. The balconies have metal railings, which are repeated at the openings at the stairwells at the east and west ends of the building. The exterior of the building includes a concrete chevron finish formed by alternating grains of the wood board form in which it was set. More recently, the exterior corners and first story piers have been clad in gray slate. The commercial tenants on the west and north side of the tower are situated adjacent a landscaped courtyard and are in un-remodeled facilities. The tower's first floor includes a remodeled southeast corner where the property's leasing office and a remodeled lobby adjacent to a new lounge. The lobby entrance on the south side of the tower is marked by a small marquee and semi-circular paving. The property's parking garage, also built in 1965, is located southeast of the tower. The garage is a reinforced concrete structure with a three to four story split level design. Its elevator shaft is located on the north side of the structure.

The swimming pool is situated immediately south of the tower. It is surrounded by a metal frame and glass panel fence on the north, east, and south with the concrete relief panel wall on the outer west wall. The flat roof wood frame stucco sided pool house was expanded circa 2005. It includes a middle passage entry way with a sauna on the west end and a gym on the east end. The remodeled gym has large plate glass windows and doorways facing north and south.

## 6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. Evaluation Criteria

JRP used the NRHP, CRHR, and Sacramento Register criteria to evaluate the historic significance of the Capitol Towers property at 1500 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Sacramento. The criteria for listing properties in the CRHR are in Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which provide the criteria from Section 20524.1 of the California Public Resources Code. The CRHR is in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 11.5. According to this code, properties eligible for listing in the NRHP are automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR. The CRHR criteria are largely based on the NRHP which are codified in 36 CFR Part 60 and explained in guidelines published by the Keeper of the National Register.<sup>115</sup> The Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources is in Sacramento City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)-(2).

#### 6.1.1. NRHP Criteria of Significance

Eligibility for listing in the NRHP rests on the twin factors of significance and integrity. A property must have both significance and integrity to be considered eligible. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, will overwhelm historical significance a property may possess and render it ineligible. Likewise, a property may retain integrity, but if it lacks significance, it is ineligible for listing.<sup>116</sup>

#### Significance

Historic significance is judged by applying the NRHP criteria.<sup>117</sup> The NRHP guidelines direct that a historic resource's "quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture" be determined by meeting at least one of the four main criteria. Properties may be significant at the local, state, or national level under the following NRHP criteria:

- Criterion A: association with events or trends significant in the broad patterns of our history;
- Criterion B: association with the lives of significant individuals;
- Criterion C: a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values;
- Criterion D: has yielded, or is likely to yield information important to history or prehistory

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<sup>115</sup> The most widely accepted guidelines are contained in the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, "Guidelines for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing, 1991, revised 1995 through 2002).

<sup>116</sup> The most widely accepted guidelines are contained in the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: Guidelines for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing, 1991, revised 1995 through 2002).

<sup>117</sup> The NRHP criteria are in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60.4.

In general, Criterion D is used to evaluate prehistoric sites and archaeological resources. Although buildings and structures can occasionally be recognized for the important information they might yield regarding historic construction or technologies, the buildings within the study area for this project are of building types that are generally very well documented in primary and secondary sources, and are not themselves the primary source of this information.<sup>118</sup>

Certain property types are usually excluded from consideration for listing in the NRHP, but can be considered if they meet special requirements in addition to meeting the regular criteria. The following are the seven Criteria Considerations that deal with properties usually excluded from listing in the NRHP:

- Consideration A: Religious Properties
- Consideration B: Moved Properties
- Consideration C: Birthplaces and Graves
- Consideration D: Cemeteries
- Consideration E: Reconstructed Properties
- Consideration F: Commemorative Properties
- Consideration G: Properties that have Achieved Significance within the Past Fifty Years

None of these considerations are applicable for evaluation of Capitol Towers. While portions of Capitol Towers are currently 49 years old, it does not appear necessary to apply Criteria Consideration G because it is likely that those elements of the property will be 50 years old when project demolition and construction activities commence.

### Integrity

The evaluation process requires application of the significance criteria followed by analysis regarding historic integrity. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. Assessment of integrity includes review of extant physical features of resources that are historically significant and of resources that are not historically significant. The assessment of the latter group illustrates that the physical features of those resources have been considered in the conclusions regarding NRHP eligibility. As noted above, a resource must have both significance and integrity to be considered eligible. A resource may retain integrity, but if it lacks significance, it is ineligible for listing.

There are seven factors of integrity: location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association, and these seven can be roughly grouped into three types. Location and setting relate to the relationship between the property and its environment. Design, materials, and workmanship of historic properties relate to their construction methods and architectural / engineering details. Feeling and association are the least objective of the seven aspects and pertain to the overall ability of the property to convey a sense of historical time and place. As

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<sup>118</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Federal Program Regulations*, Title 36: Parks, Forests, and Public Property, Part 60 National Register of Historic Places, 60.4 Criteria for evaluation, available at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/regulations.htm> (accessed April 2014).

noted by the National Park Service guidelines, assessment of integrity can sometimes be a subjective judgment, but it is always be grounded in an understanding of a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance in terms of where, why and when a property is significant. Only those properties that retain most of these aspects of integrity – and also have historic significance – are eligible for listing in the NRHP.<sup>119</sup>

### 6.1.2. CRHR Criteria of Significance

The criteria for listing properties in the CRHR are in Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which provide the criteria from Section 20524.1 of the California Public Resources Code. The CRHR is in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 11.5. Properties that are formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP are automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR. The CRHR criteria are largely based on the NRHP.<sup>120</sup>

- Criterion 1: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- Criterion 2: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;
- Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values;
- Criterion 4: Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

The CRHR definition of integrity and its special considerations for certain properties are slightly different than those for the NRHP. Integrity is defined as “the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance.” The CRHR further states that eligible resources must “retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance,” and it lists the same seven aspects of integrity used for evaluating properties under the NRHP criteria. The CRHR’s special considerations for certain properties types are limited to: 1) moved buildings, structures, or objects; 2) historical resources achieving significance within the past fifty years; and 3) reconstructed buildings.

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<sup>119</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: Guidelines for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44.

<sup>120</sup> California Office of Historic Preservation, Technical Assistance Series #6, “California Register and National Register: A Comparison (for purposes of determining eligibility for the California Register)” (available at the OHP website: [http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=1069](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1069)) specifically directs use of *National Register Bulletin 15* when applying the CRHR criteria.

As with the NRHP criteria, none of the CRHR special considerations are applicable for evaluation of Capitol Towers. While portions of Capitol Towers are currently 49 years old, it does not appear necessary to apply the special consideration pertaining to properties achieving significance within the past fifty years because it is likely that those elements of the property will be 50 years old when project demolition and construction activities commence.

### 6.1.3. Sacramento Register Criteria of Significance

The criteria and considerations for listing a landmark, historic district or contributing resource in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources is in Sacramento City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)-(2). The Sacramento Register criteria are:

- A. Listing on the Sacramento Register—Landmarks. A nominated resource shall be listed on the Sacramento Register as a landmark if the city council finds, after holding the hearing(s) required by this chapter, that all of the requirements set forth below are satisfied:
  - 1. Requirements.
    - a. The nominated resource meets one or more of the following criteria;
      - i. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, the region, the state or the nation,
      - ii. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in the city's past,
      - iii. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction,
      - iv. It represents the work of an important creative individual or master,
      - v. It possesses high artistic values, or
      - vi. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the city, the region, the state or the nation;
    - b. The nominated resource has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Integrity shall be judged with reference to the particular criterion or criteria specified in subsection (A)(1)(a) of this section;
    - c. The nominated resource has significant historic or architectural worth, and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate and necessary to promote, protect and further the goals and purposes of this chapter.

2. Factors to be Considered. In determining whether to list a nominated resource on the Sacramento register as a landmark, the following factors shall be considered:
  - a. A structure removed from its original location is eligible if it is significant primarily for its architectural value or it is the most important surviving structure associated with a historic person or event.
  - b. A birthplace or grave is eligible if it is that of a historical figure of outstanding importance and there is no other appropriate site or structure directly associated with his or her productive life.
  - c. A reconstructed building is eligible if the reconstruction is historically accurate, if the structure is presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan; and if no other, original structure survives that has the same association.
  - d. Properties that are primarily commemorative in intent are eligible if design, age, tradition or symbolic value invest such properties with their own historical significance.
  - e. Properties achieving significance within the past fifty (50) years are eligible if such properties are of exceptional importance.

## 6.2. Historic Evaluation

The Capitol Towers Apartments has been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(4) of the CEQA Guidelines outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code and City of Sacramento Municipal Code. The property does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historic Places (CRHP), or the Sacramento Register (City Code Chapter 17.604). The property lacks sufficient historical significance and historic integrity to be eligible.

The evaluation herein presents application of NRHP and CRHR criteria first followed by application of the Sacramento Register criteria.

### NRHP / CRHR Criteria

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have sufficient importance within the context of historical events and trends to be significant under NRHP Criterion A or CRHR Criterion 1. This property is associated with Sacramento's redevelopment urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed the urban environment of the city's West End. While Capitol Towers was a prominent project within the early phase of the city's urban renewal and among the multiple well-known projects conceived as part of the Capitol Mall redevelopment, this

association is not significant because, as discussed in the historic context, this housing development was one of several elements of the overall plan of the area and it was secondary to the commercial and institutional aspects of the project being built on Capitol Avenue and further north. The property also has association with the broader state-wide and national historic contexts of community planning concepts being employed in urban renewal projects. Capitol Towers lacks significance in this area too. Although it was first of its kind in Sacramento, its original inventive planning concept was not fully realized and its execution represents a modest incremental step in the evolution. It did not play a demonstrably important role in urban renewal at either the state or national levels, and had only moderate results in helping “renew” downtown Sacramento.

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have significance under NRHP Criterion B or CRHR Criterion 2. There are no known historically significant individuals that lived in or are associated with this property and whose activities and contributions can be directly tied to this property. This property’s rental units had hundreds of tenants over the years and research did not indicate that any significant individuals lived in Capitol Towers and contributed significantly to local, regional, state, or national history while in residence here. The property is also not significant for its association with any of the developers, including James Scheuer, because their contributions to American history are wide and varied and this modest residential property does not illustrate their places in history. Scheuer had little direct association with the Capitol Towers after its initial construction. Scheuer’s contributions to residential redevelopment, for example, would likely be more significantly illustrated through the more prominent and more fully realized Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C.

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have sufficient importance in architecture / planning, or association with prominent designers to be significant under NRHP Criterion C or CRHR Criterion 3. Examined at the local, state, and national levels of significance, the property does not embody sufficient distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction, it is not an important work of a master, and it does not possess high artistic value. The Capitol Towers is associated with the application of Garden City planning principals, as well as the urban tower-in-the-park residential concepts that were promulgated during much of the twentieth century. The property followed earlier multi-unit housing projects in Sacramento that had buildings set among communal landscape areas, and was among the many residential redevelopment projects built in Northern California at the time. Although it was the first residential developments in Sacramento’s urban renewal area and it is representative of its type of design from this period, the property does not achieve significance within its architectural context because its striking initial building and landscape design was never realized and its contributions to garden apartment / tower apartment design are modest, particularly in comparison with later projects in Sacramento and elsewhere in Northern California.

Furthermore, the Modern architecture aesthetic of the property is modest. The garden apartments design with traditionalist influences and International Style influenced tower do not illustrate important qualities of this type of architecture. The garden apartments were intentionally unassuming and include an interesting design to ensure privacy of exterior spaces, but they lack the refined lines, remarkable use of geometric form, and structural honesty associated with other Modernist designs. The apartment tower's overall design impact is more utilitarian than elegant, as some International Style high-rise buildings can be. Its raised base does not appear to rise above the surface, but rather is bound firmly by the large piers, and the horizontality of the upper stories is broken by the balconies. The standard construction methods, finishes, and fixtures used on this property did not provide the constructed project a high artistic appearance. In addition, the Jacques Overhoff concrete panels located at the center plaza are an interesting original design feature, but they do not bolster the importance to the overall design of Capitol Towers as they were not an integrated component of the property's design and were a supplemental feature added to the complex.

Under NRHP Criterion C / CRHR Criterion 3, a property like Capitol Towers has potential significance for its association with its prominent designers, as the work of a master. As stated, this property does not have such significance. WBE, Edward L. Barnes, DeMars & Reay, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates all could be, or are, considered master designers of the mid-twentieth century. For all these designers, however, the Capitol Towers Apartments does not illustrate the best qualities of their work, all of whom have other more important residential redevelopment designs, or their important work is in other types of projects. WBE has many other fully realized and more refined residential redevelopment projects along with many other important works that demonstrate their significance within the field of architecture. The Capitol Towers high-rise designed by Donn Emmons is not an exceptional example of his work, and Emmons himself did not consider the high-rise as one of his principle works, either during its construction or years afterwards.<sup>121</sup>

Barnes is noted for many other types of work besides residential redevelopment projects, most of which have more striking geometric and visual qualities than the Capitol Towers garden apartment units. DeMars & Reay have little association with Capitol Towers beyond assisting with the project's initial designs. They too have other more important and fully realized residential redevelopment projects that better illustrate their contributions to architecture. Similarly, Capitol Towers presents only modest qualities of Lawrence Halprin's contributions to landscape architecture. Again, his initial designs were not fully realized at Capitol Towers, and those that were implemented were modest. Halprin's other works in Sacramento and Northern California, besides Capitol Towers, demonstrate his ability to provide interesting interplay between natural and man-made features and better integrate water and views into a project.

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<sup>121</sup> See, for example, American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: American Institute of Architects by R.R. Bowker, 1962), 34; American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1970), 44.

The Capitol Towers Apartments, as a historic architectural resource, has not, nor will likely, yield important information for history. Criterion D / Criterion 4 is typically used to evaluate historic sites and archaeological resources. Although buildings and structures can occasionally be recognized for the important information they might yield regarding historic construction or technologies, the buildings at Capitol Towers are of building types that are well documented through written and photographic sources from when they were constructed, and thus, the property is not a principal source of important information in this regard.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to the property's insufficient historical significance, the collective impact of the minor changes made to the property over time have diminished the property's historic integrity. The property retains integrity of location with no buildings or structures moved on to or off the property since construction, but the property's integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association have all been altered and impacted to various degrees. The property had simple finishes and features, many of which have been modified in some way. The garden apartment wood breezeway enclosures and balcony railings have been replaced with metal railings, for example, and all the exterior light fixtures have been replaced. The pool house was expanded and the small courtyard landscaping throughout the property has been heavily altered. The tower's first floor is greatly altered and the slate cladding is not in keeping with the building's original design intent. While one can get a sense of the property's original appearance and some of the designers' original intent, providing some sense of integrity of feeling and association, one has to ignore too many small modifications in order to comprehend aspects of the project's original design, setting, materials, and workmanship.

### Sacramento Register Criteria

The Sacramento Register Criteria are similar to the NRHP Criteria, the former enumerated differently, as listed in City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)(a) i to vi and 17.604.210 (A)(1)(b).

The Capitol Towers Apartments are not important for their association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, the region, the state or the nation (Sacramento Register Criterion i). As discussed under NRHP / CRHR criteria, this property is associated with Sacramento's redevelopment urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed the urban environment of the city's West End. While Capitol Towers was a prominent project within the early phase of the city's urban renewal and among the multiple well-known projects conceived as part of the Capitol Mall redevelopment, this association is not significant because, as discussed in the historic context, this housing development was one of several elements of the overall plan of the area and it was secondary to

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<sup>122</sup> As noted in Section 3, this report does not address the potential for archaeological resources that may be present at the site and which may be impacted during construction of this project. The sensitivity of historic archaeological, as well as prehistoric and Native American archaeological resources, is addressed in the environmental document for this project. There may be requirements for additional research and testing prior to excavation or construction on the property in order to address issues related to archaeological resources.

the commercial and institutional aspects of the project being built on Capitol Avenue and further north. The property also has association with the broader state-wide and national historic contexts of community planning concepts being employed in urban renewal projects. Capitol Towers lacks significance in this area too. Although it was first of its kind in Sacramento, its original inventive planning concept was not fully realized and its execution represents a modest incremental step in the evolution. It did not play a demonstrably important role in urban renewal at either the state or national levels, and had only moderate results in helping “renew” downtown Sacramento.

The Capitol Towers Apartments are not associated with the lives of persons significant in the city’s past (Sacramento Register Criterion ii). As discussed for the NRHP/CRHR above, there are no known historically significant individuals that lived in or are associated with this property and whose activities and contributions can be directly tied to this property. This property’s rental units had hundreds of tenants over the years and research did not indicate that any significant individuals lived in Capitol Towers and contributed significantly to local, regional, state, or national history while in residence here. The property is also not significant for its association with any of the developers, including James Scheuer, because their contributions to American history are wide and varied and this modest residential property does not illustrate their places in history. Scheuer had little direct association with the Capitol Towers after its initial construction. Scheuer’s contributions to residential redevelopment, for example, would likely be more significantly illustrated through the more prominent and more fully realized Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C.

The Capitol Towers Apartments do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction (Sacramento Register Criterion iii). As discussed under NRHP / CRHR criteria, this property’s architectural design was examined at the local, state, and national levels of significance. The Capitol Towers is associated with the application of Garden City planning principals, as well as the urban tower-in-the-park residential concepts that were promulgated during much of the twentieth century. The property followed earlier multi-unit housing projects in Sacramento that had buildings set among communal landscape areas, and was among the many residential redevelopment projects built in Northern California at the time. Although it was the first residential development in Sacramento’s urban renewal area and it is representative of its type of design from this period, the property does not achieve significance within its architectural context because its striking initial building and landscape design was never realized and its contributions to garden apartment / tower apartment design are modest, particularly in comparison with later projects in Sacramento and elsewhere in Northern California.

Furthermore, the Modern architecture aesthetic of the property is modest. The garden apartments design with traditionalist influences and International Style influenced tower do not illustrate important qualities of this type of architecture. The garden apartments were intentionally unassuming and illustrate an interesting design to ensure privacy of exterior spaces, but they lack

the refined lines, remarkable use of geometric form, and structural honesty associated with other Modernist designs. The apartment tower's overall design impact is more utilitarian than elegant, as some International Style high-rise buildings can be. Its raised base does not appear to rise above the surface, but rather is bound firmly by the large piers, and the horizontality of the upper stories is broken by the balconies. The standard construction methods, finishes, and fixtures used on this property did not provide the constructed project a high artistic appearance. In addition, the Jacques Overhoff concrete panels located at the center plaza are an interesting original design feature, but they do not bolster the importance to the overall design of Capitol Towers as they were not an integrated component of the property's design and were a supplemental feature added to the complex.

The Capitol Tower Apartments do not represent the work of an important creative individual or master (Sacramento Register Criterion iv). As a collaborative effort, Edward Barnes is attributed to the garden apartments design, Donn Emmons for WBE to the high-rise, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates to the landscape design. WBE, Edward Barnes, DeMars & Reay, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates all could be, or are, considered master designers of the mid-twentieth century. For all these designers, however, the Capitol Towers Apartments does not illustrate the best qualities of their work, all of whom have other more important residential redevelopment designs, or their important work is in other types of projects. WBE has many other fully realized and more refined residential redevelopment projects along with many other important works that demonstrate their significance within the field of architecture. Barnes is noted for many other types of work besides residential redevelopment projects, most of which have more striking geometric and visual qualities than Capitol Towers. DeMars & Reay have little association with Capitol Towers beyond assisting with the project's initial designs. They too have other more important and fully realized residential redevelopment projects that better illustrate their contributions to architecture. Similarly, Capitol Towers presents only modest qualities of Lawrence Halprin's contributions to landscape architecture. Again, his initial designs were not fully realized at Capitol Towers, and those that were implemented were modest. Halprin's other works in Sacramento and Northern California, besides Capitol Towers, demonstrate his ability to provide interesting interplay between natural and man-made features and better integrate water and views into a project.

The Capitol Tower Apartments do not possess high artistic value (Sacramento Register Criterion v). As a garden apartment with tower type development, this property does not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts more fully than other properties of its type.

The Capitol Tower Apartments has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the city, the region, the state or the nation (Sacramento Register Criterion vi).

In addition to the property's insufficient historical significance, the collective impact of the minor changes made to the property over time have diminished the property's historic integrity [City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)(b)] . The property retains integrity of location with no buildings or structures moved on to or off the property since construction, but the property's integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, and association have all been altered and impacted to various degrees. The property had simple finishes and features, many of which have been modified in some way. The garden apartment wood breezeway enclosures and balcony railings have been replaced with metal railings, for example, and all the exterior light fixtures have been replaced. The pool house was expanded and the small courtyard landscaping throughout the property has been heavily altered. The tower's first floor is greatly altered and the slate cladding is not in keeping with the building's original design intent. While one can get a sense of the property's original appearance and some of the designers' original intent, providing some sense of integrity of association, one has to ignore too many small modifications in order to comprehend aspects of the project's original design, setting, materials, and workmanship.

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## **7. PREPARERS' QUALIFICATIONS**

JRP Partner and Architectural Historian Christopher McMorris (MS in Historic Preservation, Columbia University) was the project manager for the preparation of this report. He conducted research and fieldwork, and prepared this report and its DPR 523 forms. Mr. McMorris has over 15 year experience and based on his education and experience qualifies as a historian/architectural historian under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (as defined in 36 CFR Part 61).

JRP Historian Chandra Miller (MA Public History, California State University, Sacramento) conducted fieldwork and research, and assisted with preparation of this updated report. She also qualifies as a historian/architectural historian under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (as defined in 36 CFR Part 61). Graphic Technician Rebecca Flores also contributed to preparation of the report.

Two other individuals assisted with preparation of the 2008 iteration of this report. Architect and Historian Christine Ottaway (MA in Landscape Architecture and MS Historic Preservation, University of Oregon) conducted a site visit and provided JRP with an analysis of the property's landscape history. Ms. Ottaway worked for JRP from 2007 to 2010 and specialized in cultural and historic landscape studies, with over 7 years experience specializing in cultural landscape preservation and restoration. Historian Damany Fisher (PhD History, University of California Berkeley) conducted research and prepared portions of the contextual statement for the 2008 report. Mr. Fisher worked for JRP from 2007 to 2009.

**APPENDIX A:**  
**DPR 523 Forms**

State of California – The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

P1. Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*a. County Sacramento

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Sacramento East and Sacramento West Date 1992 T 8N; R 4E; 1/4 of Sec. MD B.M.

c. Address: 1500 7<sup>th</sup> Street City: Sacramento Zip: 95814

d. UTM: (give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_mE/ \_\_\_\_\_mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN): 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, 006-0300-004

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Capitol Towers Apartments is a 10-acre property on three county assessor parcels, situated on a “superblock” that combines the four block area bounded by N Street, P Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and 7<sup>th</sup> Street (see **Sketch Map**). The property includes garden apartment units and a single high-rise apartment building. There is no vehicle traffic allowed through the property. Parking is restricted to surface lots at the four corners of the property and in the multi-level parking garage along 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The property’s main pedestrian axes are along the former 6<sup>th</sup> Street area, shown in **Photograph 1**, and along the former stretch of O Street. There is a plaza at the center of the property with a grid of trees, concrete fountain, and a concrete relief panel on the adjacent wall, shown in **Photographs 2 and 3**. The tower is northeast of the plaza and sits adjacent to the swimming pool. (See Continuation Sheet).

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3 (Apartment Complex)

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) **Photograph 1, 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, Capitol Tower at left rear, April 18, 2014.**

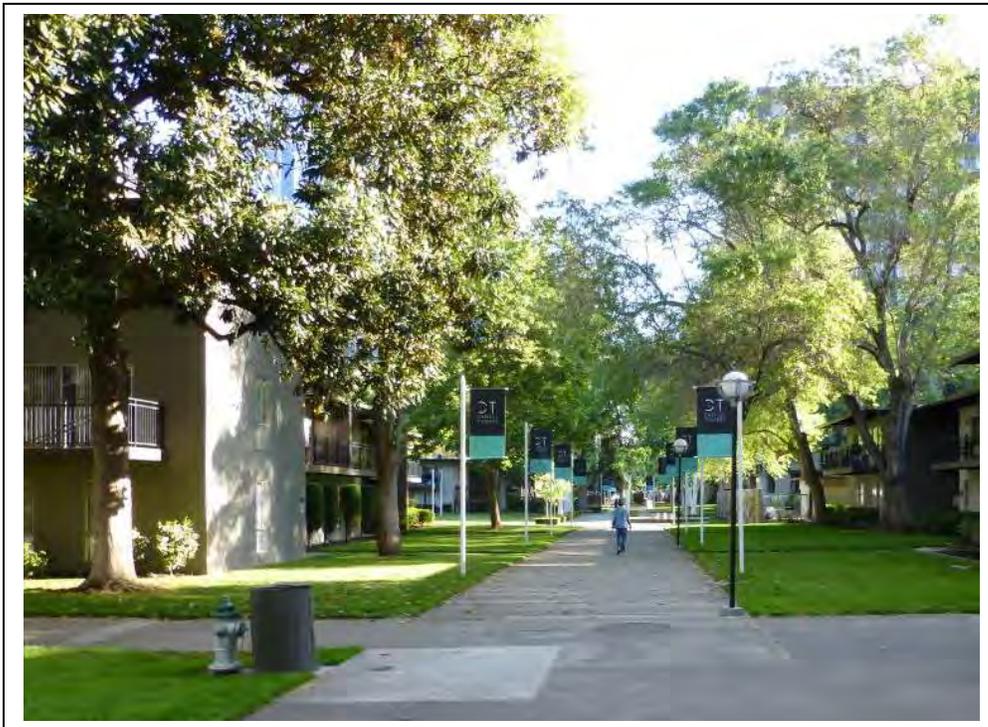
\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:  
 Historic  Prehistoric  Both  
1960-1965, Sacramento Redevelopment Agency Records / Sacramento County Assessor Records

\*P7. Owner and Address:  
KW Captowers LLC  
9701 Wilshire Blvd., #7<sup>th</sup>  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, address):  
Christopher McMorris & Chandra Miller  
JRP Historical Consulting, LLC  
2850 Spafford Street  
Davis, CA 95618

\*P9. Date Recorded:  
April 18, 2014

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive



\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter “none.”) JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, “Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report, Capitol Towers Apartments, 1500 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento,” 2014.

\*Attachments:  None  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Archaeological Record  
 District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (list)

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

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\*NRHP Status Code 6Z

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Capitol Towers Apartments

B1. Historic Name: Capitol Towers Apartments

B2. Common Name: Capitol Towers Apartments

B3. Original Use: Apartment complex B4. Present Use: Apartment complex

\*B5. Architectural Style: Modern with traditionalist and International Style influences

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) 1960-1962: construction of garden apartments and designed landscape features; 1965: tower apartment building and its designed landscape constructed; 1965: laundry (now lounge) converted to clubhouse; 2005-2006: interior remodeling / exterior alterations, pool house addition, tower first floor modifications, landscaping modifications; 2008-2014 former laundry room/office converted to lounge (see B10.)

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features:

B9. a. Architect: Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons / Edward L. Barnes / DeMar & Reay / Lawrence Halprin & Associates

b. Builder: Renewal and Development Corporation (James Scheuer) (developer) / Lawrence, Erickson, Campbell and Western Enterprises, Barrett Construction (contractors)

\*B10. Significance: Theme Residential Redevelopment Area Sacramento

Period of Significance n/a Property Type n/a Applicable Criteria n/a

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Capitol Towers Apartments has been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(4) of the CEQA Guidelines outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code and City of Sacramento Municipal Code. The property does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historic Places (CRHP), or the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (City Code Title 17.604). The property lacks sufficient historical significance and historic integrity to be eligible. (See Continuation Sheet.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) \_\_\_\_\_

\*B12. References:

NOTE: This form is based upon a previous form prepared by Christopher McMorris of JRP Historical Consulting, LLC in 2008 for previous development project on this property. JRP's previous report was prepared to administrative draft final and only received internal review by the environmental team and City of Sacramento staff. Sacramento County Assessor Records; City of Sacramento Building Permits; Sacramento City Directories; Sacramento City Planning Commission records; Sacramento Redevelopment Agency records; *Sacramento Bee*; *Sacramento Union*; *Progressive Architecture*; *Architectural Record*; Steven M. Avella, *Sacramento Indomitable City* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2003); Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," M.A. Thesis (California State University, Sacramento, 1985); Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); Louis G. Redstone, *Art in Architecture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co, 1968); David Van Dommelen, *Walls: Enrichment and Ornamentation* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., Inc., 1965); Sally Woodbridge, ed, *Bay Area Houses* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1988); Elisabeth Kendall Thompson, editor, *Apartments, Townhouses, and Condominiums* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, An Architectural Record Book, 1975; University of California Berkeley Environmental Design Library and Archives; and see footnotes.

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: Christopher McMorris

\*Date of Evaluation: April 2014

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

See Continuation Sheet.

(This space reserved for official comments.)

### P3a. Description (continued):

There are landscaped areas in various courtyards, including the sunken garden at the north end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, shown in **Photograph 4**, and along the O Street axis, shown in **Photograph 5**. Some newer landscape features are located on the edge of the property, such as at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and N Street, as shown in **Photograph 6**.

The two-to-three story garden apartment units are clustered in eight groups of paired units separated by breezeways and under continuous roofing. The buildings, constructed between 1960 and 1962, are wood frame construction with stucco siding. The units at 600-698 N Street, at the northeast corner of the property, and the units at 1417-1499 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the northern half of the west side of the property are on APN 006-0300-002. The units at 557-699 P Street, at the southeast corner of the property, and the units at 1501-1569 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the southern half of the west side of the property are on APN 006-030-004. The two-story units are 18-feet tall and the three-story units are 27-feet tall (**Photograph 4**). They have concrete foundations and have wide four-foot flat overhang roofs with composition sheeting. There are some garden apartment units that have concrete block walls that vertically divide the buildings with two pairs of units flanked by balconies and some units that have a wood divider on a shared balcony, as seen in **Photograph 7**. The units have staggered setbacks to the property's landscaped areas and parking lots, as is visible in **Photograph 8** and **Photograph 9**. The garden apartments have casement windows above glazed or panel spandrels and units have either large aluminum frame sliding glass doors or pairs of sliding glass doors. Entrances to the garden apartment units are through metal doors in the breezeways; the upper units are accessed via wooden steps. The first floor units have enclosed patios that face one direction and the second story units have balconies that face the other direction, as shown in **Photograph 10**. The patio enclosures are wood frame six-foot tall slat fencing with open framed tops. These fences sit adjacent to the occasional wood frame storage unit situated around the property, as shown in **Photograph 11**. The patios are partially covered by small wood pergolas attached to the buildings. The second story balconies have metal railings that match the second story railings and hand railings in the breezeways. The garden apartments have small frosted glass light vertical light fixtures attached near the doorways and contemporary signage for the unit numbers. The breezeways are illustrated in **Photograph 12** and **Photograph 13**. As shown in **Photograph 13**, there are also box frame windows on some of the first floor units.

There are four single-story buildings on the property, each nine feet tall. They are the two laundry buildings at the northeast and southwest portion of the property, the lounge (formerly laundry / club house / office) in the northwest corner of the property, and pool building next to the tower (discussed below). The laundry buildings, like the one shown in **Photograph 14**, have concrete frames on concrete foundations, with stucco exteriors, and flat roofs with composition roofing. The former laundry building at the northwest corner of the property was converted to a clubhouse in 1965, which included the addition of a small kitchen, and since 2008 it has been made into a lounge.<sup>1</sup> The laundry buildings were originally accompanied by small playgrounds, which are now vacated. The area adjacent to the laundry building shown in **Photograph 14** is now a "Dog Park" and is shown in **Photograph 16**.

The property's designed landscape has multiple courtyards and strips. The landscape is mostly organized by rectilinear forms for walkways and for plant beds. There is a mixture of old trees that predate the Capitol Towers project, trees that appear to have been planted when the project was first built, and newer shrubs and trees. Most of the walkways are straight and provide axis along the major axes, through the breezeways, to the various amenities, and to the parking areas. There is one long curved walkway along the O Street axis that is visible in **Photograph 17**. There are several small courtyards with grids of small trees, some of which have been removed over time, and now include other small plantings, like the courtyard shown in **Photograph 18**. The sunken garden at the north end of the property include small bushes (**Photograph 4**), and there are various small plantings along the garden apartments under the roof overhangs. While the layout of the property is similar to when it was first constructed, and some of the original plantings remain, there are some new additions to the landscape. There are banner poles along the major pedestrian walkways, new light posts with orb fixtures, some of which

<sup>1</sup> Sacramento County Assessor records, APN: 006-0300-002, permit F2537; JRP site visits April 10, 2008 and April 18, 2014.

are in new locations to where similar style lampposts originally sat on the property. There are short boxwood shrubs at the base of the trees in the central plaza, new non-rectilinear plant beds, some of which are surrounded by newly installed slate.

The property's 15-story tower has 203 units. The tower and parking garage are on APN 006-0300-003. The concrete frame high-rise apartment building was constructed in 1965 and is 141-feet tall. It has a concrete foundation, shops / restaurants on the ground floor, and apartment units on the upper stories with a penthouse at the top. The tower's first floor is mostly recessed below the upper stories which appear to rest on wide rectangular piers and the east and west ends of the building. The tower exterior is divided horizontally by concrete banding, punctuated by groups of balconies facing north and south, as shown in **Photograph 19** and **Photograph 20**. Its top floor balcony surrounds the entire building and projects out over the other floors, above which is a large enclosure for the elevator shaft projecting out of the roof. The building has metal frame windows, including large plate glass windows at the ground floor and casement windows at the apartment units. The balconies have metal railings, which are repeated at the openings at the stairwells at the east and west ends of the building. The exterior of the building includes a concrete chevron finish formed by alternating grains of the wood board form in which it was set. More recently, the exterior corners and first story piers have been clad in gray slate. The commercial tenants on the west and north side of the tower are situated adjacent a landscaped courtyard, shown in **Photograph 21**, and are in unremodeled facilities, as shown in **Photograph 22**. The tower's first floor includes a remodeled southeast corner where the property's leasing office and a remodeled lobby adjacent to a new lounge. The lobby entrance on the south side of the tower is marked by a small marquee and semi-circular paving, shown in **Photograph 23**. The property's parking garage, also built in 1965, is located southeast of the tower and is shown in **Photograph 24**. The garage is 27-feet tall and is a reinforced concrete structure with a three to four story split level design. The structure has pipe railings. Its elevator shaft is located on the north side of the structure.

The swimming pool, shown in **Photograph 25**, is situated immediately south of the tower. It is surrounded by a metal frame glass panel fence on the north, east, and south with the concrete relief panel wall on the outer west wall. The flat roof wood frame stucco sided pool house, shown in **Photograph 26**, was expanded and remodeled circa 2008. It includes a middle passage entry way with a sauna on the west end and a gym on the east end. The gym has large plate glass windows and doorways facing north and south.

## **B10. Significance (continued):**

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The following provides a historic context for the Capitol Towers Apartments. For additional historical background, please refer to the report cited in P11.

#### **Sacramento's West End and Redevelopment**

The Capitol Towers Apartments are located in the formerly mixed use portion of Sacramento referred to historically as the West End. Although the West End did not have clearly defined boundaries, the area was roughly located between the Sacramento River to the east and the State Capitol building to the west, the Southern Pacific Railroad yard to the north and Y Street (now Broadway) to the South.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the West End had entered a period of economic and physical transition. Up until that time, the area had been the focus of Sacramento's river transportation, local economy, and residential growth. By the 1910s, the area had evolved into a predominantly working-class quarter and home to hundreds of itinerant laborers. A demarcation arose between the West End and other neighborhoods to the east and south. As the city expanded eastward and more immigrants entered Sacramento, wealthier residents left the West End or did not settle in the West End, but rather took up residence in the middle-and upper middle-class residential areas developing in the eastern and southern portions of the city.

This shifted the West End's population. Property owners and speculators in the West End subdivided parcels, constructed shanties along the alleys, and converted single family residences into multi-unit rentals, "flophouses," flats, and boardinghouses.<sup>2</sup>

Multiple factors contributed to the West End's economic and physical decline in the 1920s and 1930s, and eventually lead to the redevelopment projects in the post World War II era. The physical relationship of the river, railroad, and local industry had shifted since this area developed in the nineteenth century and the city's commercial and industrial focus had widened and moved elsewhere, away from the river and outward in newly developed areas. Like in many cities, Sacramento's growing suburbs were depleting the central city's property tax revenue. The West End's sales revenue had become largely dependent upon hotels, restaurants, and bars.<sup>3</sup> As a result, property value in the West End dropped precipitously in the first half of the twentieth century, decreasing by nearly half from the late 1930s to the late 1940s.<sup>4</sup> City officials recognized the decreasing tax revenue as a problem because the West End contributed only 12 percent of all city tax revenues in 1950, yet it received 41 percent of police expenditures and 50 percent of the city's health services budget. Absentee landlordism grew during the early twentieth century and by 1950, 82 percent of West End residences were not owner occupied. The decline of the area gave property owners little incentive to attend to their mostly nineteenth century built West End properties and city enforcement efforts had minimal impact.<sup>5</sup>

The West End became a focal point for city planning officials and municipal reformers after World War II. As state and federal agencies initiated "urban renewal" in cities across the state and nation, the West End gained media attention and the attention of city planners for the next several years as an area of low-income workers and an "asylum" for "elements" not accepted by "higher neighborhoods."<sup>6</sup> The *Sacramento Union* derided the area's "overcrowding, dingy surroundings, hodge-podge use of buildings, poor sanitation, and floating panhandlers" and considered the district a "breeding place for tuberculosis, a strong-arm robbery and dope sale district and wino-hunting grounds for the police paddy wagon."<sup>7</sup>

The West End became the subject of the first post World War II redevelopment project in California and eventually three redevelopment phases were carried out in the area with the support of the federal government. In addition to redevelopment, the West End was subject to zoning changes and transportation improvements as the City Planning Department redesigned the M Street corridor to create a monumental approach to the Capitol that came to be known as "Capitol Mall." The final redevelopment project was also intertwined with the modernization of state and interstate highway development that brought Interstate 5 through the West End.

The movement to address dilapidated conditions in the West End was part of a nationwide campaign to eliminate "slums" in major metropolitan areas during the mid-twentieth century. Prior to the Great Depression in the 1930s, states and municipalities had the responsibility of responding to deteriorating urban conditions, but as the Depression continued, it

<sup>2</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment: Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento: SCPC 1960), 15; Ernesto Galarza, *Barrio Boy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 199.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: Business, Vol. I, Retail Trade: 1939, Part 3*; United States Census of Business: 1948, *Vol. III, Retail Trade: Area Statistics*; United States Census of Business: 1954, *Vol. III, Retail Trade: Area Statistics, Part 1*; Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," M.A. Thesis (California State University, Sacramento, 1985), 16; Harold F. Wise, *Survey of Business in Sacramento's West End* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1951); Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 19.

<sup>4</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission (SCPC), *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment: Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento, 1950), 28; Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 16.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1950 census, Vol. III, *Selected Population and Housing Characteristics, Ch. 46, Sacramento, California*; SCPC, *Sacramento Urban Redevelopment*, 4, Table 14, 29-30; Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 17.

<sup>6</sup> Western Real Estate Research Corporation, *Analysis of the Sacramento Labor Market Area* (Sacramento: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1958) 10; Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," 20.

<sup>7</sup> "West End: Action Due on Face-Lifting," *Sacramento Union*, April 13, 1952.

became evident that state and local governments did not have the resources needed to deal with worsening “slum” conditions. Federal Housing Acts in 1934 and 1937 were created to help eliminate deficient housing and provide “decent, safe, and sanitary” dwellings for low-income people. The acts created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), but had little direct impact on Sacramento’s urban core.<sup>8</sup> During the 1940s, and early 1950s, the city constructed several public housing facilities on the outskirts of downtown. These were constructed for low-income families, defense workers, and World War II veterans. They included projects such as New Helvetia (1942) and Callaghan Homes (1946) on Broadway and 8<sup>th</sup> Street (the latter of which is where O’Neil Park is now located), and Dos Rios (1942) located on Richards Boulevard.<sup>9</sup>

The federal Housing Act of 1949 put in motion urban renewal efforts across the country during the 1950s and 1960s. The act called for removal of “substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of a goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.” This act was a departure from previous legislation because it emphasized the elimination of substandard housing along with construction of large-scale residential and commercial development in blighted areas.<sup>10</sup> In response, Sacramento’s municipal leaders took its first step toward redeveloping the West End. In February 1950, the Sacramento City Council passed the ordinance that outlined the boundaries of Urban Redevelopment Area Number 1, which included most of the West End. Later that year, the city conducted a survey of the West End’s 223 blocks and announced that over 8,600 downtown occupied dwellings were substandard, concluding that the West End was in “desperate need for slum clearance and low rent housing for families of moderate income.”<sup>11</sup> In accordance to the Community Redevelopment Act of 1945, the city council created the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency (SRA) to coordinate redevelopment projects. The SRA exercised wide powers including acquiring and clearing blighted properties and judging project proposals by private developers. The plan for the redevelopment zone called for the demolition of many older buildings, and construction of high-rise public housing facilities among other new commercial and industrial buildings in the redevelopment zones.<sup>12</sup>

The city brought in architects Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander to consult on Sacramento’s redevelopment efforts and unveiled their work in 1950. Following this and other planning efforts in the early 1950s, the city tabled the large Urban Redevelopment Area Number 1 in 1953 in part because of challenges in funding the city’s grand schemes. The city then reconsidered its plans into smaller areas, shown on the map below.

As Sacramento reconsidered its redevelopment prospects, federal urban policy shifted in the mid to late 1950s which influenced in the implementation of redevelopment projects in cities like Sacramento. Federal requirements and coordination increased, along with increased funding for urban renewal. Congress’ 1954 housing act required localities to adopt a long-range “workable plan” to relocate people displaced by redevelopment activities, adhere to a housing code consisting of minimum standards for all dwelling units, and provide a program for citizen participation during each phase of

<sup>8</sup> Mark Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford, 1975), 106; Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht, “Urban Renewal: A Historical Overview,” in *Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning* (New York, 1967), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 53. The New Helvetia housing development has been submitted to the Keeper of the National Register for listing as a historic district as of February 8, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> National Planning Association, *The Scope and Financing of Urban Renewal and Development* (Washington, D.C., 1963), 7; Lastufka, “Redevelopment of Sacramento’s West End, 1950-1970,” 9.

<sup>11</sup> Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Existing Conditions in Blighted Areas* (Sacramento: SCPC, 1950), 8; Sacramento City Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report and Recommendation: Redevelopment Ideas for California’s Capital* (Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, 1950), 11; *Sacramento Bee*, November 3, 1950.

<sup>12</sup> “Further Steps Are Taken in City’s Redevelopment Plan,” *Sacramento Bee*, October 7, 1950; Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 53.

a renewal project in order to receive federal funding. It also established funding schemes whereby localities were responsible for one third of the funding for redevelopment projects.<sup>13</sup>

Federal support for public housing decreased during this period, with the emphasis shifting to fostering greater economic growth in cities. Consequently, federal funding was directed away from public housing to non-residential redevelopment projects or middle income residential projects, and federal policies empowered local governments to implement business developments without having to build new affordable residential housing.<sup>14</sup>



**Illustration 1:** Map showing the location of the three redevelopment projects in Sacramento. Capitol Mall Project, No. 2-A is outlined in blue. Capitol Mall Extension Project, No. 3 is outlined in green, and Capitol Mall Riverfront Project, No. 4 is outlined in orange.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Scott Greer, *Urban Renewal and American Cities* (Indianapolis, 1965), 32; National Planning Association, 7; Bellush, "Urban Renewal: A Historical Overview," 15; William L. Slayton, "The Operation and Achievement of the Urban Renewal Program," in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, 1966), 193; Robert Goodman, *After the Planners* (New York, 1971).

<sup>14</sup> Richard M. Flanagan, "The Housing Act of 1954: The Sea Change in National Urban Policy," *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (November 1997), 265-286; *Sacramento Bee*, July 1, 1954; Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 128.

<sup>15</sup> Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970," (M.A. Thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1985).

Capitol Mall Project

Encouraged by federal funding and the prominent planning concepts of the period, Sacramento city officials pushed forward with the plan to redevelop the West End. In 1953 and 1954, the Sacramento City Planning Commission endorsed SRA's plans for a redevelopment program dubbed Project Area No. 2A, or the "Capitol Mall Project," in an 15-block area near the Capitol – outlined in blue in the map on the previous page and shown in the map below – which included the residential development that came to be known as Capitol Towers Apartments.<sup>16</sup>

The basic elements of the plan included the acquisition of real and personal property through eminent domain if necessary; clearance of all or most of the structures on the acquired land; relocation of occupants; rehabilitation of existing structures in the area in accordance with redevelopment goals; and abandonment of the historical street grid around eight blocks to create superblocks for new development and for other new public purposes.<sup>17</sup> Apprehensive about the city's redevelopment plans and potential use of eminent domain to acquire properties, West End residents and business owners organized to defeat the city's proposition to fund redevelopment plans, particularly following San Francisco real estate developer Ben Swig's 1954 redevelopment proposal that consisted entirely of a new shopping and business district, including a pedestrian mall along K Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>18</sup>

The opposition's defeat of the city's funding proposition was a temporary impediment to Sacramento's redevelopment agenda and the city council authorized SRA to issue its own bonds to fund redevelopment, payable by the likely increased values of redeveloped land. FHA approved the city's redevelopment plans in May 1955. The following October, the SRA purchased the first parcel in the Capitol Mall Project area, and by 1960, all 310 parcels within the project had been acquired.<sup>19</sup> By the end of 1961, all buildings located within the fifteen block project area subject to demolition had been razed.

The first major construction of the project was the Federal Building on Capitol Avenue (formerly M Street), designed by well-known Sacramento architect Harry Devine. Besides the federal building, other buildings erected in the project area included the Macy's Department Store, occupying the block bounded by K, L, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> streets; Crocker National Bank, located on Capitol Mall between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets; Capital Plaza Hotel (later the Holiday Inn), a 375-room, 15-story, \$9 million building situated at the edge of the project area on K Street, between 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and J streets; and Capitol Towers Apartments located on the superblock between 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, N and P streets. During the twenty-year period between 1960 and 1980, 25 new buildings were constructed in the 15-block project area.<sup>20</sup>

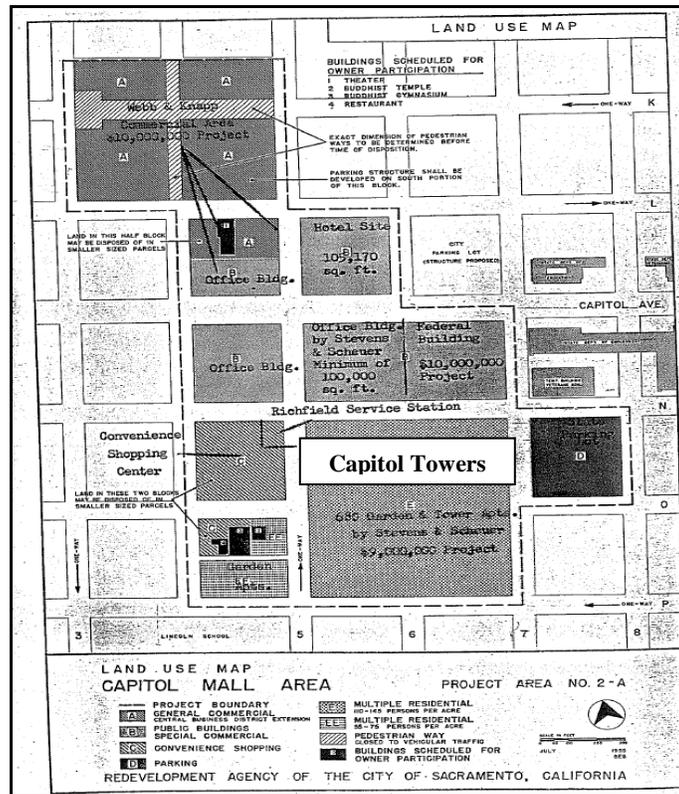
<sup>16</sup> "Planning Board Okehs Area for Redevelopment," *Sacramento Bee*, July 15, 1953; "Council Adds to Area for Redeveloping," *Sacramento Bee*, January 20, 1954.

<sup>17</sup> "Council Oks Redevelopment of West End Slum," *Sacramento Union*, July 23, 1954; NAACP West Coast Region, "Memorandum, January 18, 1965," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People West Coast Region I Papers, 1945-1977, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley;" Tentative West End Slum Plan Is Approved by City Council," *Sacramento Bee*, July 23, 1954.

<sup>18</sup> "Redevelopment of Whole Capital Business District Is Offered by S.F. Investor," *Sacramento Bee*, July 1, 1954; "Proposals to Redevelop Fit City Plan," *Sacramento Bee*, July 5, 1954.

<sup>19</sup> Roberts, "Redevelopment at the Crossroads;" Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, 1959), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970: A Historical Overview with an Analysis of the Impact of Relocation," (California State University, Sacramento, 1985), 40-42; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 22.



**Illustration 2:** Land Use Map for Capitol Mall Project Area No. 2-A (1955), (base courtesy of CSH).

## Capitol Towers Apartments

### Development of Capitol Towers

The Capitol Towers Apartments was the single residential development in the fifteen-block Capitol Mall Project. In December 1958, SRA sold the four-block area bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, N Street, and P Street to the Renewal and Development Corporation of New York owned by developers James H. Scheuer and Roger Stevens, following submittal of competitive bids and initial plans. The initial plans for the Capitol Towers project included three 15-story apartment towers and 208 low-rise garden apartments for a total of 680 units. As discussed below, the design of the project went through considerable changes from the initial designs prepared in 1958 to when the project was constructed between 1960 and 1965. The terms of the sale included purchase of the property in multiple stages, and because FHA was going to guarantee the project's mortgages, acquisition of each parcel dependent on FHA approval of building plans, financing, and rental schedules. This review and scrutiny delayed commencement of nearly all phases of construction as the developers and FHA negotiated various details of the project. The proposed construction date for the first garden apartment units for October 1958 was delayed because of financing problems. Construction on the first garden apartment units began in February 1960, under contract with the Lawrence, Erickson, Campbell and Western Enterprises construction firms. The project was split into three parts: Trust I for the garden apartment units situated north of what is now the O Street axis on the property, Trust II for garden apartment units south of the O Street axis, and Trust III for the 203-unit 15-story high-rise apartment building and its parking garage.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "Mall Land Sale Brings \$874,000," *Sacramento Union*, December 17, 1958; Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1959), 13; "O.K. On Sale of West Side Blocks Near," *DPR 523L (1/95)*

James H. Scheuer (1920-2005) was a real estate developer, attorney, and a 13 term U.S. Representative from New York known as a strong liberal democrat who was part of the New York Democratic post-World War II party reformers. Scheuer served in a variety of public positions whereby he could promote his support of civil rights, preservation of rent controls, and improved middle-income housing.<sup>22</sup> Scheuer was involved with many large scale housing developments across the country during the 1950s and 1960s that were built as part of redevelopment projects in urban renewal areas of various cities. Capitol Towers was among seven large residential developments he worked on across the country before he was elected to the US Congress in 1964. Following his election, Scheuer transferred his ownership of the property into the Capitol Towers Trust, for his family's benefit, which owned the property for over 30 years. By the early 1960s, Scheuer's Renewal and Development Corporation had produced projects in Washington, New York, Cleveland, St. Louis, Marin City, and Sacramento.<sup>23</sup>

One the most well know of Scheuer's projects was the Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C., located near the US Capitol Building. This project was seen as having international importance. Prior to the redevelopment project, completed in 1959, the Soviet Union publicized a photograph of the slum where the project was to be built. The photograph had the Capitol Building in the background and was used as propaganda as evidence of how Americans lived.<sup>24</sup> Capitol Park was one of the earliest residential complexes constructed in the Washington D.C.'s Southwest section, which underwent major redevelopment in the late 1950s and 1960s. The project included five high-rise apartment buildings in Capitol Park and nearly 400 units in two-story townhouses organized around small courtyards. The units included balconies and private exterior spaces that faced communal landscaped areas. The Washington D. C. architectural firm of Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associates designed the property with landscape architect Dan Kiley. The property included amenities such a swimming pool and pavilion featuring a polychrome glass tile mosaic mural.<sup>25</sup>

Scheuer had similar projects, of varying scale, in other cities across the country. He worked with local developers in Cleveland for the Longwood Village project, which was a 300-unit family garden apartment, situated around courtyards, completed in 1957. It was one of fourteen redevelopment projects the city was conducting at that time. The design included a community center and apartments of various heights, designed to avoid visual monotony. Both the Capitol Park and Longwood Village projects were touted at the time for successfully combining beauty and profitability in residential redevelopment projects.<sup>26</sup> In St. Louis, Scheuer developed Laclede Town in Mill Creek Valley, which was an area of the city subject to extensive redevelopment and slum clearance in the 1950s and 1960s. Chloethiel Woodard Smith, who also

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*Sacramento Union* December 15, 1958; "Local Group May Bid On Tower Job," *Sacramento Union*, November 10, 1959; "Start Nears On First Mall Towers Unit," *Sacramento Union*, November 23, 1959; "Capitol Towers Mall Apartment Work Begins," *Sacramento Bee*, December 7, 1959; "Capitol Towers Financing Plan Wins Approval," *Sacramento Bee*, February 16, 1960.

<sup>22</sup> "Washington Slum to be Replaced," *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16; James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," in letters to the Times, *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26; "A Man of Convictions: James Hass Scheuer," *New York Times*, June 4, 1964, 23; Jennifer Lee, "James H. Scheuer, 13-Term New York Congressman, Is Dead at 85," *New York Times*, August 31, 2005; "Scheuer, James Hass," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*, available online: <http://bioguide.congress.gov> (accessed March 2014). Scheuer was a government economist and attorney. His variety of positions over time included: President of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, chairman of the executive committee of the City and Suburban Homes Company, chairman of the Housing Advisory Council of New York State Commission for Human Rights, and president of the National Alliance for Safer Cities, president of the National Housing Alliance.

<sup>23</sup> Planning Dynamics Group, "Capitol Towers Development Concept Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report," prepared for the City of Sacramento Department of Planning & Development, 1996, 3-1; Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; "Eastern Builders Eye Acorn Project," *Oakland Tribune*, November 1, 1961, 21; Sacramento County Assessor Records, APNs 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004.

<sup>24</sup> "Washington Slum to be Replaced," *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16.

<sup>25</sup> District of Columbia, Historic Preservation Review Board, "Capitol Park Apartments, 800 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Case #03-04, ANC 6-D (formerly 2-D), Designation," 2003, available with the Washington D.C. Planning Department.

<sup>26</sup> "Cleveland Razes Slum for Project," *New York Times*, November 24, 1957, 308; Alexander L. Crosby, "Redeveloping New York," letters to the Times, *New York Times*, June 19, 1959, 28.

designed Capitol Park for Scheuer, designed the 656-unit townhouse Laclede Town. Although initially considered a successful socially and racially integrated residential redevelopment project following its completion in 1962, the project deteriorated starting in the 1970s and was demolished in 1995. Scheuer was also the developer for the complete redevelopment of Marin City, in Marin County, in the late 1950s.<sup>27</sup>

Roger L. Stevens was a New York theatrical producer who was involved with the development of Lincoln Center in New York City and who operated the Empire State Building. He had the nickname of “Mr. Broadway” during the 1950s when he produced dozens of shows in a single season and operated seven New York theaters. He also had real estate interests across the country, and was considered to be one of the biggest real estate financiers in the country during the late 1950s and early 1960s. He served as chairman of the National Council on the Arts in the 1960s. In addition to his investments in Sacramento’s West End, he also obtained for the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theater the rights to produce one of his Broadway shows in 1958 while it was still in its initial run in New York. Stevens dropped out of the project soon after it was completed.<sup>28</sup>

Overtime Scheuer brought in several prominent financial backers for this project. These investors included William Casey who had been chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and undersecretary of the State Department (and became director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Reagan administration), Oakley Hunter, who was a US Congressman from Fresno and general counsel of the US Housing and House Finance Agency (predecessor of the Housing and Urban Development [HUD] agency), and executive Richard Prentice Ettinger of Prentice-Hall publishers.<sup>29</sup>

Capitol Towers’ opening and dedication ceremonies for the project’s initial 92 garden apartment units took place on December 6, 1960 with the participation of federal, state, and city officials. At the time, the local newspaper hailed the project as the first in the western U.S. to erect a major residential development as part of an assisted slum clearance program.<sup>30</sup> By the end of 1961, most of the garden apartments completed under Trust I were occupied. Negotiations continued for development of the second phase of garden apartments (Trust II) and the first of the three towers that were to be built (Trust III).<sup>31</sup> The second phase of garden apartments was completed in 1962, and only the first of the three intended towers, and its adjacent parking garage, was built as part of Capitol Towers. Scheuer released the revised design of the tower in May 1962. The Capitol Towers 15-story high-rise apartment building was opened in 1965. The parking garage was completed in early 1965 with its elevator added in 1966.<sup>32</sup> The tower’s early commercial tenants included, at various points, a restaurant, cocktail lounge, barber shop, beauty salon, dry cleaners, and a travel agency. State workers, legislators, various professionals, and some families lived in Capitol Towers Apartments.<sup>33</sup> As discussed below, Scheuer’s firm never

<sup>27</sup> Neal R. Pierce, *The Great Plains States of America: People, Politics, and Power in the Nine Great Plain States* (New York: WW Norton & Co., Inc., 1973), 53; Eric Mumford, ed, *Modern Architecture in St. Louis: Washington University and Postwar American Architecture, 1948-1973* (St. Louis: Washington University, 2004), 3 and 58.

<sup>28</sup> “Washington Slum to be Replaced,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1957, 16; William Glover, “Mr. Broadway in NY Blends Realy, Theater,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 31, 1958, A-10; Joyce Terhaar, “Project backers wield clout,” *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>29</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, “Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level,” *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; “Capital Suit Accuses CIA Boss of Fraud,” *Sacramento Bee*, August 5, 1982, A1 and A24; Joyce Terhaar, “Project backers wield clout,” *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>30</sup> “First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>31</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1961), 11-12.

<sup>32</sup> “Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1; “Tower Condos Planned,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 14, 1977, B3; City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, Record Card, Building Permits E-3179, F-1083; Sacramento County Assessor Record, APN: 006-0300-004.

<sup>33</sup> City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, Record Card, Building Permits, F-2916, F-3848; Sacramento City Directories, 1966-1970. California’s first female African American Congressman (1973-1979) and long time Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke lived in Capitol Towers for a year after she first was elected to the state assembly in 1966. See “New Arenas DPR 523L (1/95)

developed the other two high rise apartment towers on the property. Consequently, the property's name, Capitol Towers, is a misnomer, considering the other towers located on the property's superblock were not developed as part of this project and they were never directly associated with it.

### Capitol Towers' Initial Design

The Capitol Towers developers had an interesting and award winning plan conceived for the project in 1958. As with other similar redevelopment projects across the country, James Scheuer hired a collection of well-known and experienced designers and planners for the Capitol Towers project, all of whom are discussed further below. The lead design company was the San Francisco architectural firm of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), which worked in collaboration with New York architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, fellow Bay Area architectural firm DeMars & Reay, and the landscape architectural firm of Lawrence Halprin & Associates. In addition to the three primary architectural/landscape firms, additional consultants were hired including architectural consultants Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass and Dreyfuss & Blackford; Carl Feiss as a Planning Consultant; Nathaniel S. Keith as a Housing Consultant; and Alexander Girard, AIA as color consultant.<sup>34</sup>

The SRA approved of the project's mix of garden apartments and high-rise towers, which were proposed to provide lower population density and be more aesthetically pleasing than an all high-rise tower project. The multi-unit garden apartments featured a staggered footprint site plan, intended to avoid uniformity and monotony seen in earlier housing projects, such as New Helvetia on Broadway. The plan promised large private exterior spaces with balconies and walled patios, along with proposed amenities such as a swimming pool, a sunken garden, and a tree shaded "guest court" (that was later redesigned as the central plaza). Barnes designed the garden apartments to maximize privacy and include an outdoor space for each unit. Ground level apartments were designed with enclosed garden patios on one side, while the unit above had a balcony on the opposite site to assure privacy of the patios from the units above. While the garden apartments were similar to the original 1958 design, other features of the Capitol Towers property were modified prior to construction or never realized.<sup>35</sup>

The Capitol Towers project, as initially designed in 1958, won the first place design award in the sixth annual *Progressive Architecture (P/A)* Design Awards Program in 1959.<sup>36</sup> *P/A's* jurors selected winning designs, as rendered by designer Helmut Jacoby, by looking for a "compelling esthetic experience" and a "clear architectural expression; something that contributes to development of this expression," in examining qualities of projects beyond their function. The jury liked the plans and concepts for Capitol Towers, in its initial design, because of the project's informal, yet orderly interplay of vertical

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of Black Influence: Yvonne Brathwaite Burke," oral history conducted by Steven Edington, Department of Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982, available online at: <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

<sup>34</sup> The historic records examined for this report did not provide detail regarding the contributions these additional firms, or individuals within these firms, had on the project. See "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122. Other consultants that participated in the project included Civil Engineer Joseph Spink, Structural Engineer William B. Gilbert of Gilbert-Forsberg-Diekman-Schmidt, and Mechanical Engineers G.L. Gendler & Associates. See "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107 and Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., "Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library.

<sup>35</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, *Sacramento Redevelopment* (Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, 1959), 13; "First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone," *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>36</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 107. *Progressive Architecture (P/A)* was a prominent architecture magazines during the mid-twentieth century; its publishers touted the magazine in the journal's subtitle as "The World's Largest Architectural Circulation." The journal *Architecture*, the official magazine of the American Institute of Architects, purchased *P/A* in 1996, scrapped the journal but preserved the Design Awards Program which had become one of the more venerated design awards programs in architecture. *Architect* magazine purchased *Architecture* magazine in 2006 and again retained the *P/A* design awards program. See "Death to Architecture," *The Architects Newspaper*, October 20, 2006, available online at [www.archpaper.com](http://www.archpaper.com) (accessed April 2014).

and horizontal building masses and for the design of the low-rise units. They concluded that there was to be an “excellent use of the grounds” and they were pleased at the economic and livable qualities of the project, including its solution for automobiles that included both surface and multi-story garage parking. The jury considered the project to be “highly sensitive” and that it stood out in the competition for qualities that went beyond “mere function.” The initial proposal for the site had been for an all-high-rise project, which was changed prior to submittal of the plans to *P/A*, to include the mixture of low-rise and high-rise buildings, as shown in **Illustration 3**. The *P/A* jury identified this shift as providing greater emphasis to intensive ground activities and increased the demand for separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which in turn stressed the importance of shaping exterior spaces in the development. The design of the pedestrian circulation for the project was intended to take advantage of shopping that planned for the blocks just west of the development. There were also to be three high-rise towers, along with three multi-story parking garages and a variety of landscaped courtyards. Scheuer stressed to the SRA that he was determined to build Sacramento’s first apartment tower and garden apartment community complete with amenities such as pools, landscaping, ample parking, and play areas. With such a lofty vision for this project, Scheuer knew Capitol Towers’ initial design would be costly and likely exceed the mortgage limits FHA would guarantee. He also knew that the ambitious project would exceed what private investors had previously funded in Sacramento. Both FHA and private investment expectations were based on the very moderate prevailing rental rates in Sacramento at the time. The city agreed to the apartments to be built with the expectation of a rising rental market as redevelopment increased populations of workers and residents in the city over the next several decades.<sup>37</sup>



**Illustration 3:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial design (detail), proposed southwest corner of the project.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned and as discussed below, these initial designs were considerably modified prior to construction or were never realized. Yet even following construction of the project’s redesigned initial garden apartment units and landscape features in 1960-62, *P/A* continued to hold on to the promise and potential of Capitol Towers. Without analysis of the changes that

<sup>37</sup> “First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960.

<sup>38</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 110.

occurred in the project's redesign, and before any of the three proposed high rise towers had been built, P/A claimed Capitol Towers was a "herald of new directions in redevelopment planning."<sup>39</sup>

The Capitol Towers design also won awards from other publications and organizations: an Honorable Mention for *House & Home*, Homes for Better Living Awards Program (1962); Award of Merit for the Northern California Chapter A.I.A. Honor Awards Program (1963); First Honor Award, Urban Renewal Administration (Residential), Housing and Home Finance Agency Awards Program (1964); and Certificate of Excellence Governor's Design Awards Program (1966). As discussed below, these awards and other praise Capitol Towers received during its design and in the period immediately following its construction were in reaction to the well-known designers and developers and their collaborative effort. The project was admired, in great part, because of its potential to help successfully redevelop Sacramento's West End. The honorable mention in the 1962 Homes for Better Living Awards, for example, illustrates some of the restrained commendation for the project, wherein the development was praised for its site plan, but the unit plans for the garden apartments were considered "unimaginative." The 1966 Governor's Design Award was given to 77 projects in 14 categories across the state for design, beauty, and outstanding contributions to architecture, planning, and conservation. The context for these awards was an effort at the end of the Edmund G. (Pat) Brown administration to highlight the need for greater attention to aesthetics in public works and architecture / design that was a reaction to the deleterious effects of the state's rapid growth and development during the 1950s and 1960s. Award winning projects were built in the early to mid 1960s, including many buildings, as well as other structures such as a fireplug, an Orange Julius stand, and the Cold Spring Canyon Bridge in Santa Barbara.<sup>40</sup>

In July 1958, James Scheuer described in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* his thoughts on how residential redevelopment projects could be more beautiful and thus would help ensure public support for such efforts. In this letter he described elements that were included in the initial design for Capitol Towers. These elements, some of which were employed in Scheuer's Capitol Park project in Washington D.C. for example, included combining tower apartment buildings with two-to-three-story garden apartments, that had an informal layout created by stepping their facades and using a variety colors. He also suggested including swimming pools, reflecting pools, playgrounds, fountains, shrubs, and trees to add to the attractiveness of such developments.<sup>41</sup> While the concepts Scheuer expressed were in contrast to, or not well realized in, many mid-twentieth century multi-unit housing projects being built at the time, including public housing and private, or semi-private, residential developments, the garden apartment residential type and high-rise tower already had a fairly extensive history by the late 1950s.

Garden apartment complexes like Capitol Towers, including those with high-rise towers, have their origins in community planning concepts that developed in the early twentieth century. Englishmen Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwind, and Patrick Geddes conceived of Garden City planning around the turn of the twentieth century, advancing concepts to combine the advantages of city and country living and that promoted economic self-sufficiency, concepts that trickled down to and influenced individual projects like Capitol Towers. Among the Garden City concepts, small cities were to be built surrounded by green belts, using strict controls on building speculation. Some early twentieth century towns built in England using Garden City's principles attracted American planners and architects. The Garden City ideals influenced the growing regional planning movement of the 1920s and were influential in some of the multi-family housing built during and after World War I in the United States as well as on some Depression-era federally sponsored housing developments. Mid-

<sup>39</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 105-111; "First in the West: Mall Apartment Dedication Will Be Milestone," *Sacramento Bee*, November 29, 1960; "Diversifying the Redevelopment," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143.

<sup>40</sup> Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., "Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library; ; "Awards Programs: HHFA's Household Cities Design Excellence, *AIA Journal* (November 1964): 11, 16; "Good Environment Starts with Good Site Planning," *House and Home* (July 1962): 14; "Awards: Farewell Gifts," *Architectural Forum* (January/February 1967): 49; "Governor Presents 15 Design Awards," *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1967, H2. These so-called annual awards appear to have only been given out once at the end of the Brown administration. The Reagan administration, nor other subsequent administrations that followed, do not appear to have pursued recognition architectural or structures in this manner.

<sup>41</sup> James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26.

twentieth century architects and planners also were influenced by Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier's 1920s towers-in-the-park concept that promoted reorganizing the urban landscape into superblock developments with high-rise apartment towers. Large-scale combinations of open spaces, cluster housing, and tower apartments were conceived for individual development projects for both private development and in publicly sponsored redevelopment projects of the mid-twentieth century, many of which had less than stellar results than the planning models, concepts, and prototypes.<sup>42</sup>

Landscape architect Henry Wright and architect Clarence S. Stein were among the most highly influential designers promoting the Garden City ideals and large-scale professional urban / regional planning in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. They designed individual developments and entire towns. Their seventy acre Sunnyside garden city type suburb was built in 1924-1928 in the Borough of Queens in New York. The clustered housing units of Sunnyside were situated on superblocks and included enclosed communal parks. The Garden City concepts were put into wider application with Wright and Stein's design for the town of Radburn in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, built in 1928. Although the depression of the 1930s retarded its full realization, Radburn's character and layout inspired later planning efforts, including elements of the Capitol Towers project. The town had superblocks where the clustered living units and community centers were on the periphery around communal landscaped areas. Planning for this town took automobiles into account, segregating vehicle traffic and parking from housing and park areas by use of arterial roadways, cul-de-sac streets, and grade separations. The following year Wright and Stein, along with architects Ingham & Boyd, designed a 197 unit garden apartment complex in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania called Chatham Village. Built in the early 1930s, Chatham Village included two to three story grouped houses in staggered rows on landscaped park strips on three superblocks. The development, which was surrounded by a green belt, also included a market building and communal clubhouse. The success of the Wright and Stein developments influenced the Depression-era federal town development program that came to be known as the "Greenbelt" towns. Although only five greenbelt towns came to fruition, they too were influential in promoting the use of superblocks, cluster housing units, communal pedestrian areas, parks, and community buildings among the housing, combined with or connected to commercial development.<sup>43</sup>

Private and government-sponsored developments applied some of the Garden City and tower-in-park concepts in California during the 1940s. Clarence Stein teamed with architects Reginald D. Johnson and Wilson, Merrill & Alexander to develop Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles (later known as Village Green), built with FHA funding in 1940-1941. This development segregated vehicles and pedestrians, layout on superblocks with garage courts facing outward around low-density row housing that face inward towards the communal landscaped areas. Many of the units were built with enclosed private patios and the property was originally developed with community facilities and shopping (many of which were later replaced with additional housing units). Baldwin Hills, along with Chatham Village, provided a human scale and village design to urban development. During World War II, Architect Richard Neutra designed the government-sponsored Channel Heights in San Pedro, built in 1943. The mass-produced housing units had varied orientation and were built in response to the terrain. The development provided adequate parking separated from the living and landscaped areas. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company employed the New York architectural firm of Leonard Schultze Associates, Inc. to design Parkmerced in the southwest corner of San Francisco, along with San Francisco landscape architect Thomas Church. Parkmerced, built in the early and late 1940s, combined garden apartment units among refined landscaping with multiple tower apartments.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 265-271; G.E. Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 366; Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988), 165-170.

<sup>43</sup> Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture*, 265-271; Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*, 366; Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, 163-170.

<sup>44</sup> Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*, 366 and 394; Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, 164; Samuel M. Green, *A Historical Survey* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1966), 512-514; Chandler McCoy, "The Case for Preservation at Parkmerced," *Preservation Notes* (Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Winter 2008), 3; Gebhard et al, *Architecture in San Francisco*, 111; LaBounty, "Parkmerced," accessed online at <http://www.outsidelands.org/parkmerced.php> (accessed March 2014)

By the late 1950s, many of the flaws of design and planning executed in various urban renewal projects – some of which were based on Garden City or tower-in-the-park concepts – were becoming evident to government officials, planners, and citizens. This included negative criticism about bleak Modernist towers and utilitarian box-like buildings constructed for housing, commercial development, or government institutions. Some criticism noted that the new buildings were no better than the slums they replaced, and urban renewal supporters raised concerns that without facing the persisting criticism public support for investing in urban renewal would decrease.<sup>45</sup> Combining low-rise and high-rise buildings together gained support during this period, allowing garden apartments to be designed in a manner that corresponds with a more human scale and informality, such as stepping their facades or altering building heights. There was also a growing awareness of projects needing to retain some relationship with their neighborhood and that redevelopment projects should strive to include residents at various income levels and family types.

The Capitol Towers Apartments was among a growing trend of garden apartments and was part of the increased development of apartments across the country during the 1950s and 1960s. Both land use development pressures and increased demand for such housing fueled this growth. At the end of the 1960s, nearly half of the housing starts in the country were for apartments. During the mid-twentieth century apartment design became more varied in response to various market demands based on setting, consumer demand, and financing. Developers responded to specific components of residential market demand. Many garden apartments included social and recreational facilities and often catered to specific age groups or family types. These types of apartment complexes developed during this period to encompass a growing number of amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, art galleries, clubhouses, and playgrounds. Developers sought out market data to respond to various age groups, including young single people, young families, and older people whose children had left home, in order to build properties that would have features appealing to targeted groups. Besides the common issues of apartment design related to appealing exterior appearances and ensuring privacy and proper sound-proofing, for example, there was increased design response to demands for private outdoor space to supplement the public open space between buildings, along with individual access to units. Designers varied exterior spaces and building footprints to increase openness and to avoid monotony in the layout of complexes. Parking was often scattered throughout developments intermixed with landscaped spaces with trees and open space. There was also an increased interest and demand during the 1950s and 1960s for including high-rise tower apartments in complexes with low-rise units.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to its place within the general context of increased apartment construction with improved amenities during the 1950s and 1960s, Capitol Towers was also among the growing number of residential and commercial properties of the period where art work was installed as part of the project. Jacques Overhoff produced an eight panel set of concrete relief for Capitol Towers in 1961 which are installed on the wall by the pool facing west towards the property's central plaza. These panels do not appear to have been part of the project's initial design in 1958, but were added to the project prior to, and along with, construction of the initial garden apartment units and swimming pool. The trend to add art work to residential and commercial projects was an effort to find meaningful ornamentation in architecture and was, in part, a reaction to the abstract and rigid qualities of mid-twentieth century geometric patterns of buildings and the ascension of "machine-age" design Modernism. The inclusion of art work was part of architectural trends seeking to transcend the dominance of International Style Modernism in public, commercial, and institutional architecture. There were also a lot of new buildings being constructed at the time, and art work was included to enrich and provide individuality to the Modernists designs, many of which had similar aesthetic qualities. Collaboration between architect and artist usually sought compatibility wherein sculpture, painting, or mosaic would provide a visual and aesthetic enhancement without hampering the essential form of the building. There was a growing demand for public art intended to enliven public spaces and enhance a property's setting. In residential properties, the effort was partly seen as a way to hopefully inspire children and young people to appreciate art as part of their everyday life. Art work in architecture included superficial applications, such as

<sup>45</sup> James H. Scheuer, "To Beautify Housing," in letters to the Times, *New York Times*, July 8, 1958, 26; Charles Grutzner, "Title I Developer to Try Again Here," *New York Times*, September 6, 1959, 76.

<sup>46</sup> Elisabeth Kendal Thompson, "Garden Environments for Apartment Living," *Architectural Record*, September 1969, 183; "Boom is Foreseen in Tall Buildings," *New York Times*, January 15, 1961, R1.

stand-alone pieces, like Overhoff's concrete relief panels at Capitol Towers, which could be placed effectively in many properties, and fully integrated pieces specifically designed to be part of its surrounding architecture, as seen in some lobby installations in large office towers of the period. In Sacramento an example of this is the applied adobe tile murals at the Downtown Plaza Shopping Center (1970-1971) attributed to Albert Sanchez, AIA, in collaboration with John S. Bolles & Associates. Overhoff's concrete relief at Capitol Towers was also part of a trend in the increased use of concrete in art, along with the use of board form concrete installed to enrich wall surfaces.<sup>47</sup>

### Capitol Towers' Architectural and Landscape Designers

As noted, Scheuer hired a collection of well-known and experienced designers and planners for the Capitol Towers project. The lead design company was the San Francisco architectural firm of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), which worked with architects Edward L. Barnes, the architectural firm DeMars & Reay, and the landscape architectural firm of Lawrence Halprin & Associates.<sup>48</sup>

William Wurster (1895-1973) started his own architectural practice in 1926 and formed WBE with Theodore Bernardi (1903-1993) and Donn Emmons (1910-1997) in 1945, the latter of whom he had worked with since 1938. WBE was one of the best know architectural firms in California during the 1950s and 1960s. It was noted not only for individual residential work, but also for projects in the areas of redevelopment / urban renewal, multiple-unit residential, commercial / institutional / governmental work, and master planning. Capitol Towers was among many of WBE's redevelopment / urban renewal projects, which also included San Francisco's Gold Gateway Redevelopment project along the Embarcadero, the Woodlake Planned Community in San Mateo, Northpoint Residential and Commercial Complex in San Francisco, and the California State Exposition and Fair in Sacramento. Donn Emmons served as principal-in-charge for many of the firm's redevelopment projects, including Capitol Towers. It does not appear that either Wurster or Bernardi contributed in a considerable manner to the Capitol Towers project. WBE Associate Architect Karl Treffinger served as project manager until he left to open his own firm in 1960. From project correspondence it appears that Donn Emmons was the lead architect from WBE for Capitol Towers and architect Edward Barnes devised the garden apartment fenced patio and opposite facing balcony design. WBE was the primary design firm for Capitol Towers and was specifically responsible for the design of the towers, but also was in charge of the overall master planning and coordination. WBE's approach was heavy influenced by Wurster's affinity to Northern California, blending Modernist elements with demands of a project's site, client, and funding. There was also the use of unpretentious, sometimes inexpensive, and ordinary building materials used in firm's residential designs. WBE had a reputation for designing understated residences that took advantage of Northern California's temperate climate when possible. As seen in the Capitol Towers Apartments, WBE residential designs of the 1950s minimized a public façade in favor of optimizing private garden space. While they had some common elements to designs, such as the box-like form of the Capitol Towers garden apartment with their wide overhanging roofs, WBE designs were more noted for pursuing their clients' demand rather than providing a WBE mark in their final design, like other architectural firms of the period did.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Louis G. Redstone, *Art in Architecture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co, 1968), viii, 77, 85; David Van Dommelen, *Walls: Enrichment and Ornamentation* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., Inc., 1965), 41-42 and 79; Mary Douglass Foreman and Emma Lila Fundaburk, *Art in the Environment in the United States: A Book of 600 Photographs of Art in Architectural, Natural, Historic, and Modern Settings Across the Nation* (Luverne, AL: Fundaburk, 1975), 188-189; "Twenty Tenants Have Space in New Downtown Plaza," *Sacramento Bee* June 18, 1972; JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, "Historical Resources Impact Analysis Report: Sacramento Entertainment and Sports Complex Project," prepared for Environmental Science Associates, October 2013, 39.

<sup>48</sup> Saul Bass assisted Halprin as a street furniture consultant. See San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122.

<sup>49</sup> "Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc.," Architects, company brochure, 1967 (available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library); *Edward Larrabee Barnes*, 18; Alan R. Michelson, "Bernardi, Emmons – and Wurster: Focus on the Younger Partners," in Marc Treib, *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster* (Berkeley: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 204-225; H. Ralph Taylor, *Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp*, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 16, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection

Emmons received his education from Cornell University and University of Southern California. In addition to leading WBE's work on the redevelopment / urban renewal projects noted above, Emmons' other major works concurrent with Capitol Towers included the Bank of American World Headquarters Building in San Francisco; Mill Valley Public Library; and the redevelopment of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. Among the WBE works in Sacramento that Emmons is credited with leading include the Bank of American Building at 730 I Street (across from the Sacramento County Administration Center) and the California State Exposition and Fair (CalExpo). He also designed many of the firm's single family residences situated around the Bay Area.<sup>50</sup>

Edward L. Barnes (1915-2004) was among the influential architects and designers that graduated from Harvard University's design school in the 1940s as that school's education shifted to focus on Modernist design under the influence of European architects Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. Like WBE, Barnes was noted for his responsive designs where his buildings expressed the variety of factors placed on them, responding to site and program, and less on the signature that of the architect or client as was the case with some prominent designers of the mid to late twentieth century. He worked for a short time with William Wurster in San Francisco before working for industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss in Los Angeles where he worked on designs for mass-produced housing for the military during World War II. He established his own firm in New York in the late 1940s and proceeded with his pragmatic, direct, and varied approach to residential, commercial, and institutional designs, including office towers and campuses, built throughout the country and internationally. Barnes' approach, noted for its crisp geometric designs, corresponded well with WBE, which included Capitol Towers. Barnes contributed concepts for the layout and design of the Capitol Towers' garden apartments, including the reversal orientation of the first floor units facing towards their private patio and the second floor units facing the other direction towards the common park areas. His other work in Sacramento included contributions to the 1979 Crocker Art Museum Master Plan. Among his best work, designed around the same time as Capitol Towers, was the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, initially completed in 1961. This vernacular type village complex used Modernist angular shapes with natural materials integrated into its setting in the woods.<sup>51</sup>

The firm of DeMars & Reay had a limited role in developing the design for Capitol Towers. Vernon DeMars (1908-2005) contributed to the planning and overall design integrating the low-rise garden apartments with the towers. The firm, however, was not involved in the execution of the project.<sup>52</sup> DeMars was one of the San Francisco Bay Area's best-known social housing designers, having worked in the Farm Security Administration during the New Deal on farm workers housing, public housing like Easter Hill Village in Richmond built in the early 1950s (with Lawrence Halprin landscapes), and the Marin City redevelopment project of the late 1950s (also with Halprin and Scheuer). DeMar's many collaborations included his partnership from 1955-1965 with British architect Donald Reay (1914-2002), who had been involved in new town design in England following World War II before coming to California. Their firm's other work included several

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1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 392.

<sup>50</sup> American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: American Institute of Architects by R.R. Bowker, 1962), 195; American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1970), 254; Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc." Company Brochure, 1967. Available at UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Library; Allan Temko, "Sacramento's Second Gold Rush," *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 194; Alan R. Michelson, "Bernardi, Emmons – and Wurster: Focus on the Younger Partners," in *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*, edited by Marc Treib, 204-225 (Berkeley: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> *Edward Larrabee Barnes* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1994) 10-13, 18, and 248; Russell Boniface, "Edward Larrabee Barnes, FAIA, Selected for 2007 AIA Gold Medal," *AIArchitect This Week*, December 8, 2007. The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

<sup>52</sup> Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 391.

buildings on the UC Berkeley campus, where they both taught, contributions to the Golden Gateway Project in San Francisco, and the redevelopment scheme for Old Sacramento.<sup>53</sup>

Involvement of Lawrence Halprin & Associates in the development of Capitol Towers was part of a growing trend in the mid-twentieth century to creating a fully integrated design of buildings and landscape. The landscape design for Capitol Towers illustrates some aspects of contemporary landscape architecture of its period, taking into account pedestrian uses, recreational facilities, and landscape features that would complement the buildings. The design retains some formal elements of traditional Beaux-Art design with hierarchal axes, but modestly includes components that incorporate that represent the newer trends in landscape design of the mid-twentieth century. These elements include the design's site specific layout, informality, and human-scale features that both direct and enhance pedestrian experience of the space. Specifically, Capitol Towers' limited execution of Halprin's stylistic hallmarks included the patterned concrete plaza with neatly arranged trees and a small fountain, the axial pedestrian plan, and smaller organized garden areas in the project's various courtyards. The constructed project did not include the striking water features, concrete walkways reminiscent of his best known work, and sculpture depicted in the development's original plans from 1958.<sup>54</sup>

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was one of the most well-known landscape architects in the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century. He came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s with his innovative designs for urban environments, planned communities, and individual gardens. He was also among the influential architects and designers that graduated from Harvard University's design school in the 1940s as that school's education shifted to focus on Modernist design under Gropius and Breuer. Halprin settled in San Francisco and worked for a short time in the landscape architecture office of Thomas Church, who was one of California's most innovative landscape designers of the period. He began his own practice in 1949. Integration of concrete and water became hallmarks of many Halprin designs, such as can be seen in his most well-known urban plazas such as Lovejoy Plaza (1965-1966) in Portland, Oregon and Seattle's Freeway Park (1970-1976). Halprin was an important advocate and theoretician, publishing several influential studies in the 1960s and 1970s that examined human spatial experience and how people moved in natural and urban landscapes. He emphasized a commitment to making cities more livable by bringing people into direct contact with the designed spaces, for example. He was also involved in the reuse of former industrial spaces, such as in the renovation of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco (1962-1968), and helping integrated planned communities into their environment, the most prominent of which was his work at Sea Ranch in Marin County (1962-1967).<sup>55</sup>

WBE collaborated with Halprin & Associates on multiple projects, including many high-profile projects and several multi-unit residential projects. WBE and Halprin worked on the Marin City redevelopment, Ghirardelli Square, and the California Exposition and Fair in Sacramento. Their residential projects included Woodlake Apartments in San Mateo and Northpoint Apartments in San Francisco, both of which were designed for developer Gerson Bakar. The Woodlake Apartments in San Mateo, completed in 1966, was a 994 unit complex on a thirty acre suburban site. The inward facing design situated the housing units towards a large communal open landscaped area and included a shopping center, recreational facility and

<sup>53</sup> Roger Montgomery, "Mass Producing Bay Area Architecture," in Sally Woodbridge, ed, *Bay Area Houses*, (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1988), 231 and 238; Gebhard, et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 211, 240, 361, and 411; Vernon Armand DeMars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching," an oral history conducted in 1988-1989 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, 319; Kathleen Maclay, "Noted Architect Vernon DeMars dies at age 97," UC Berkeley Press Release, May 3, 2005, available online at: [http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/05/03\\_demars.shtml](http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/05/03_demars.shtml) (accessed April 2014); "In Memoriam: Donald P. Reay, Professor of Architecture, Emeritus, Berkeley, 1914-2002," available online at: <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/inmemoriam/DonaldP.Reay.htm> (accessed April 2014).

<sup>54</sup> William, A. Mann, *Landscape Architecture: An Illustrated History in Timelines, Site Plans, and Biography* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993), 78-80.

<sup>55</sup> Mann, *Landscape Architecture: An Illustrated History in Timelines, Site Plans, and Biography*, 334; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 122; *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64.

private landscaped courtyards. This project was more fully realized than Capitol Towers, and included much more intricate and integrated landscape features than the Sacramento project. The following year, the Northpoint Apartments resulted in an urban execution of design principles employed at Woodlake. The project incorporated landscaped courtyards with units at various setbacks to the exterior spaces. Each unit has either an enclosed patio or balcony, as semi-private outdoor space, the multiple lobbies help convey a more intimate setting, and parking is segregated from living spaced (in this case below ground). WBE used similarly cube forms with wide roof overhangs, and paneled balcony railings. The landscape included swimming pools, decorative concrete, fountains, trees, and landscaped areas. Different than Capitol Towers, the developers of Northpoint Apartments constructed commercial development on the adjacent block to serve residents.<sup>56</sup>

Jacques Overhoff (born in 1933) produced the multi-pane concrete relief wall that is situated at the property's central courtyard and the west side of the pool. The wall includes his name in relief and date of installation "1961" on the southern most panel. The Dutch-born Overhoff is a San Francisco Bay Area sculptor. He has many works permanently exhibited publicly include the sculpture at 1 Maritime Plaza in San Francisco "In Honor of the United Nations Charter," installed in 1965, and the "Standing Figure on Knife Edge," in the San Francisco Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project, installed in 1967. He also has work at City College of San Francisco and is responsible for the sculpture in front of the Bayview Branch Library in San Francisco. Elsewhere in Northern California, Overhoff has permanent work displayed at public locations, such as "Lost in the Mail" at the Walnut Creek City Hall, installed in 1985 and "Torque" at the Auto Plaza Hill Top in Richmond, installed in 1982. Overhoff's concrete relief panels at Capitol Towers were noted in several publications in the 1960s, as part of the larger media attention that the project and Sacramento redevelopment, were receiving at the time. The Capitol Towers work was an added enhancement to the project, but did not become one of his better know works of art, especially compared with his larger works in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>57</sup>

### Capitol Towers – Design Changes, Alterations, and Development Proposals

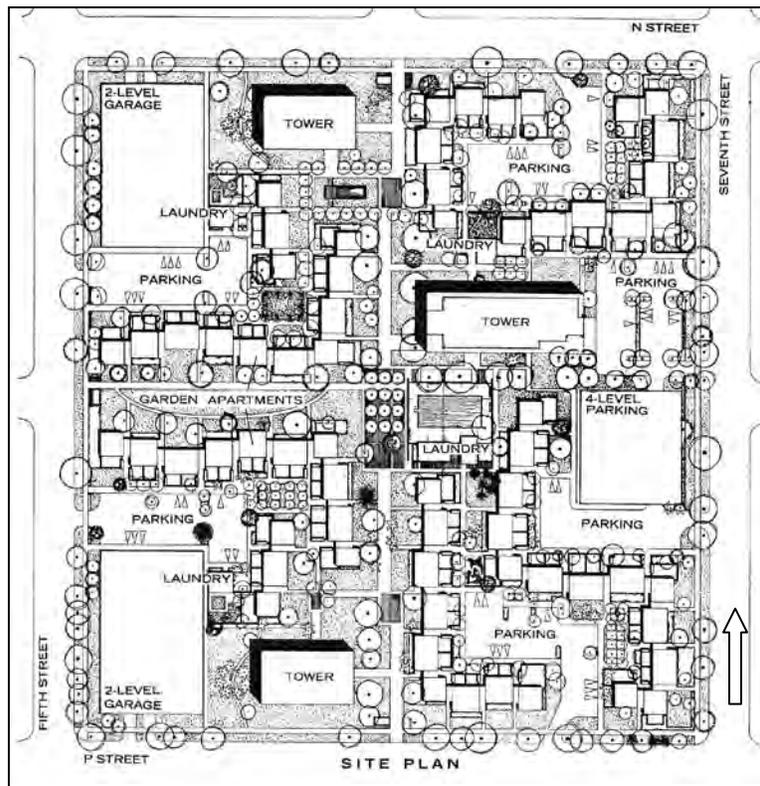
As noted, the design of the project changed considerably from the initial designs in 1958 and to construction between 1960 and 1965. The layout of the project, design of the buildings, and landscape features were changed. The design of the pedestrian circulation for the project was intended to take advantage of shopping that was to be sited on the blocks just west of the development, but such shopping never emerged. Some features of the project as redesigned in 1960 project were never realized, and Scheuer's firm never developed two of the three high rise apartment towers on the property. The images on the following pages show the project's initial design, the revised plans, and changes made to the property over time, the last of which annotated showing areas that were either never realized as part of the redesigned project or that were altered over time.

<sup>56</sup> Elisabeth Kendall Thompson, editor, *Apartments, Townhouses, and Condominiums* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, An Architectural Record Book, 1975, 14-15; Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places*, 128 and 130.

<sup>57</sup> Redstone, *Art in Architecture*, 91; Van Dommelen, *Walls: Enrichment and Ornamentation*, 80; "VLN: Bay Area Public Art," [www.verlang.com](http://www.verlang.com) (accessed April 2014); Bedford Gallery, "Public Art in Walnut Creek," and "Walnut Creek Public Art Walking Tour," Bedford Gallery website: <http://bedfordgallery.org/publicart/docs/PublicArtMap.pdf> and <http://bedfordgallery.org/publicart/docs/PublicArtBrochure.pdf> (accessed April 2014); "Torque," City of Richmond, CA website: <http://ca-richmond.civicplus.com/index.asp?NID=608> (accessed April 2014); San Francisco Public Library, "Bayview/Anna E. Waden Branch Library History," San Francisco Public Library website: <http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000016001> (accessed April 2014).



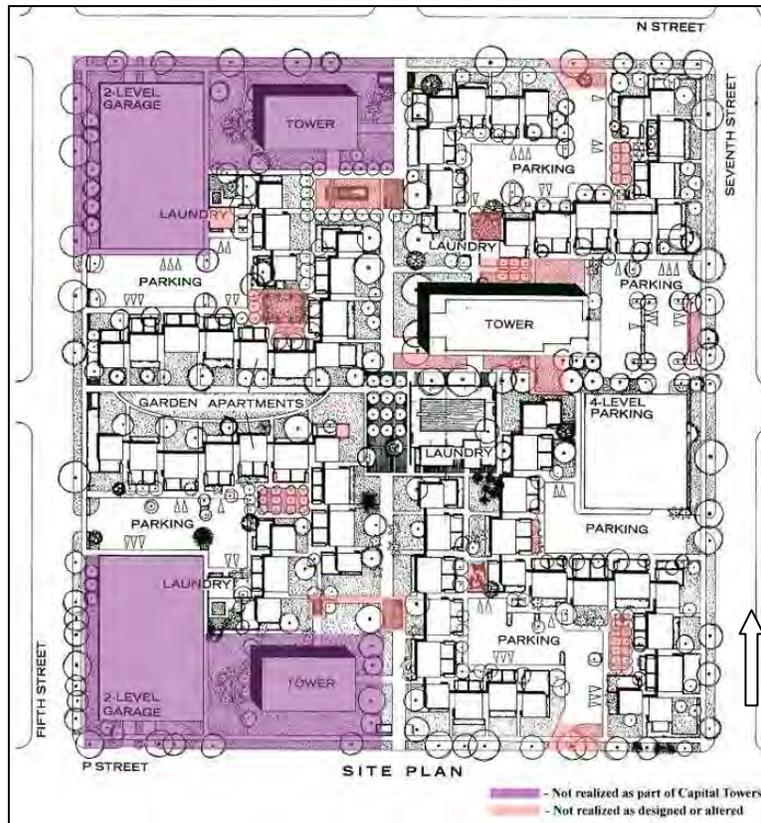
**Illustration 4:** Capitol Towers Apartments, initial design model 1958, view facing north.<sup>58</sup>



**Illustration 5:** Capitol Towers Apartments, revised design 1960 (north arrow added).<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Architectural Forum*, October 1960, 128

<sup>59</sup> *Architectural Forum*, October 1960, 128



**Illustration 6:** Capitol Towers Apartments, revised design 1960 (north arrow added), with annotations regarding unrealized or altered components.

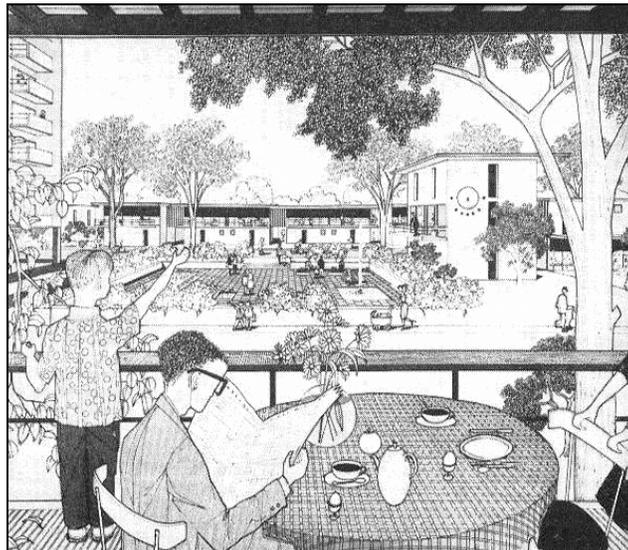
Construction estimates in 1959 exceeded expectations and the project team went to enormous effort to reduce costs so the project would align better with available funding and mortgage guarantees. In May 1959, Scheuer received construction estimates from his four local contractors for the first 92 units of the garden apartments and found the cost to be \$200,000 over the maximum FHA allowance.<sup>60</sup> As a result, Scheuer’s local contractors and the architect firm of WBE conferred to find ways to reduce construction costs without impairing the quality of construction. WBE held separate meetings with the contractors and the FHA. Scheuer’s team and WBE pressured the contractors to explore every possibility for reduce their construction estimates. WBE reconsidered the building and landscape drawings for the possibility of reduction. However, it was understood at the time that if landscape and building designs were marginalized by too much cost reduction, then the FHA would also reduce their commitment figure to the project. The contractors determined they could reduce costs to \$180,000 if the architects at WBE would approve a “considerable” number of changes, much coming out of site utilities and landscaping. WBE made the point to inform Scheuer, “that this reduction would be almost entirely at the expense of the project and could not help but make it less good if adopted.” By the end of June 1959, WBE compiled a list of changes for Scheuer including changes in exterior building trim, appliances for the units, and in plumbing for the buildings. The most extensive changes suggested were in the project’s landscaping. All garden walls were to be changed to wood, all brick was to be changed in favor of colored concrete, the pool was to be poured concrete instead of cast stone, the landscape design’s sunken pool was eliminated, all proposed shrubs and vines within private patio areas were eliminated, trees were to be

<sup>60</sup> The general contracts for the Capitol Towers garden apartments were Lawrence Construction Co., Campbell Construction Co., Erickson Construction Co., and Western Enterprises, Inc. Barrett Construction Co. built the single high-rise in the project. See “Capitol Towers Financing Plan Wins Approval,” *Sacramento Bee*, February 16, 1960; H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 3, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

reduced in size from 5 to 1-gallon, and the elaborate play structures in Play Area #2 were to be changed out for a standard swing set.<sup>61</sup> Many of the cost saving suggestions were, or appear to have been, adopted during this period and were integrated into the final design that was built.

Some characteristics of the original design that were published in *P/A* in 1959 came to fruition, but many aspects of the project changed following receipt of the *P/A* award and prior to the commencement of construction in 1960. Most striking, the project's layout changed from the original design, shifting the main axis of the property from an east-west orientation to a north-south orientation, reorganizing the combination of small and large sets of garden apartment units strung together under continual roofs, and decreasing the size and scale of the landscaped courtyards. Among the reasons for the reorientation of the buildings, the project architects convinced the redevelopment authorities that light coming from the north was preferable in the tower apartments over light from the west.

The project's landscape design was scale down prior to the start of construction in 1960. Wide courtyards with distinct geometrical architectural design, such as shown in the 1958 rendering below (**Illustration 7**), were removed from the plan and replaced by the more modest central courtyard and shown in **Illustration 8**. This courtyard's current condition is in **Photograph 1**, which shows that original street furniture, planters, and kiosks have been removed and banner poles, boxwood hedges, and new lampposts have been added. Other unbuilt landscape features that were part of the 1958 design included a "water motif" courtyard and courtyard with a grove of palm trees. **Illustration 9** shows the sunken garden that was built at the north end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis in place of the intend reflecting pool shown in the 1960 redesign graphic above.<sup>62</sup> One can also see in **Illustration 9** one of the secondary landscape courtyards, tucked between buildings, that has a grid pattern of small trees. This same courtyard is shown in **Photograph 18** with the original trees removed, replaced by new plantings that do not reflect the orderly layout of Halprin's design. Changes to the landscape design between the initial design and what was built are further shown in the 1958 rendering below (**Illustration 10**) and **Illustration 11**, the former displaying a wide raised landscape median and the latter showing a more modest walkway design that was built adjacent to a wide flat lawn.



**Illustration 7:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial design, 1958 (detail).<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Communication from Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency to the Sacramento City Council, Regular Meeting Sacramento City Council, June 10, 1959; Memo from WBE to James H. Scheuer et al, June 12, 1959, folder 824-2 Capitol Towers 1959, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>62</sup> "P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 105-111; "Diversifying the Redevelopment," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143-147.

<sup>63</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 111.



**Illustration 8:** Capitol Towers Apartments, central courtyard, 1962.<sup>64</sup>



**Illustration 9:** Capitol Towers Apartments, northwest corner of property, sunken garden area at lower left, view facing southwest, 1962.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Samuel Paul, *Apartments; Their Design and Development* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1967), 142.

<sup>65</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 144. Photo credit: Karl H. Reik.



**Illustration 10:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial design, pedestrian walkway, 1958 (detail).<sup>66</sup>



**Illustration 11:** Capitol Towers Apartments, 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis, 1962.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64-2.  
DPR 523L (1/95)

The basic form of the wood frame garden apartment units remained unchanged between the initial design and construction of those units in 1960 and 1962, as shown in **Illustration 12** and **Illustration 13**. These units retained their stepped footprints, breezeways between the units, cube forms with wide roof overhang under a continuous roof, vertically ornamented fenestration, and the basic layout of their outdoor spaces whereby the upper story balconies face one direction and the first floor enclosed patio / gardens face the other. The execution of these units, however, prompted some dismay as being more modest than had been intended. During construction of the garden apartment units *Architectural Record* noted that the new buildings “scarcely appear to be the elegant units depicted in the architectural renderings” and placed the fault for this change on lowered allowable structural costs under FHA rules.<sup>68</sup> In addition, the enclosed patio / garden area for first floor units were altered to all be similar in size, rather than having some be much larger than others. Also “clumsy” concrete-block fire walls were added between the garden apartment units “marring the original design.”<sup>69</sup> More windows were added to the low-rise units and the variety of colors intended for the various courtyards was minimally realized with only some detail features, such as railings, eaves, and stairways, receiving varied colors. Design features and detailing of the garden apartment units have been removed or altered over time, including replacement of the balcony railings, as shown in **Illustration 14** and **Photograph 12**. Also, the breezeways throughout the property had open risers in the stairs and were originally enclosed by vertical square wood slates within almost the entire area, deck to ceiling, of the second level opening, and the second floor balconies had wood frame railings with wood panels. The stair risers have been enclosed and the landing enclosures and railings have now been changed to standard metal railings, as shown in **Photograph 12** and **Illustration 14**.



**Illustration 12:** Capitol Towers garden apartments initial design, 1958.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 146. Photo credit: Jerry Stoll.

<sup>68</sup> Allan Temko, “Sacramento’s Second Gold Rush,” *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 129.

<sup>69</sup> Temko, “Sacramento’s Second Gold Rush,” *Architectural Record*, October 1960, 129. This comment is not clear as to whether this refers to interior or exterior features. Correspondence in the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077 at the Center for Sacramento History suggests that changes in the garden apartments were largely interior finishes and appliances.

<sup>70</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 111. Rendering by Helmut Jacoby.



**Illustration 13:** Capitol Towers garden apartments at southwest corner of property, April 18, 2014.



**Illustration 14:** Capitol Towers Apartments, typical garden apartment breezeway entrances, 1962  
(*Progressive Architecture*, March 1962, 143).

The exterior appearance of the apartment tower design was altered considerably for a variety of reasons between the initial plans and construction of the single high-rise tower in 1965. In January 1961 Donn Emmons of WBE decided that the appearance of high-rise would be “more distinguished” if there were two penthouse floors with wrap around terraces, which was agreed to by Scheuer’s Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation.<sup>71</sup> As Emmons undertook the redesign for the penthouse floors, new seismic recommendations were introduced into the California Building Code (CBC), forcing a change of construction of the proposed 20-story concrete high-rise to steel frame. The Renewal & Development Corporation concluded that switching the structural design of the building from concrete to steel was economically impossible given the FHA cost constraints and other factors. In May 1961 the Sacramento Building Code Board of Appeals agreed to amend the adoption of the CBC to remove the limitation of 13-story concrete buildings and allow the construction of a 15-story reinforced concrete tower. The agreed upon 15-story height of the reinforced concrete building required a redesign because the base of the building had to be increased to meet new CBC requirements. WBE spent three and a half months redesigning the high-rise to meet the objectives of the new code and produce a building that would be economically viable. WBE also wanted the redesigned apartment building to meet the “high design standards of our over-all plan.”<sup>72</sup> However, increasing the size of the foundation alone cost an additional \$150,000 in direct building costs. The redesign required Scheuer to secure an extension of FHA commitment for the tower. Sketch plans of the tower redesign from WBE were sent to FHA in June and November 1961, but were rejected as not detailed enough for FHA approval. Additional plans were sent in February 1962. As the FHA had no previous experience in Sacramento high-rise residential projects, multiple delays occurred as a detailed cost analysis was undertaken before FHA would back the redesigned high-rise. Final architectural drawings for the 203-unit high-rise were released in May 1962 with one penthouse floor, not two as Emmons designed in early 1961, and the ground floor was converted from residential to commercial space. Construction of the tower began in late summer/early fall 1962 by the Barrett Construction Company, two years after the original agreement to initiate tower construction following completion of the project’s first garden apartment units.<sup>73</sup>

As shown in **Illustration 15**, the original International Style design had a raised tower on a recessed base, solid wall concrete cantilevered balconies on all sides, and a diminutive penthouse at the top. One of the proposed towers entrances was to have a wide slender hood adjacent to enclosed courtyards. **Illustration 16** and **Illustration 17** shows some of the ways in which the tower design was altered in 1962. Vertical banding replaced the balconies to provide vertical division of the tower and both the base and top of the tower were changed for heavier-looking designs, including the projecting top floor. Also, the solid balconies were replaced by those with metal railings. **Illustration 18** shows the altered front entrance of the tower. This entrance has none of the prominence or design emphasis of the initial design. Historic photographs of the property also show that the property’s entrance along 7<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the tower originally had a tall concrete wall with

<sup>71</sup> H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 16, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>72</sup> James H. Scheuer, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, May 23, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>73</sup> James H. Scheuer to Jerome F. Lipp, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency, May 23, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, December 8, 1961, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, January 3, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1961, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; “Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released,” *The Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1.

the property's name on it, which has been removed, and that the tower's ground floor was inset on all four corners. The southeast corner of the tower, visible in **Illustration 19**, has now been modified to including the property's leasing office.<sup>74</sup>

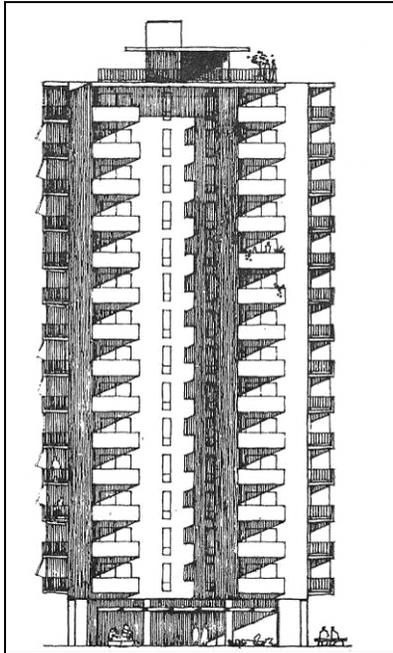
Historic photographs of the property show various other portions of the property that were either built differently than originally designed or that have been altered since initial construction. The pool area included a sun deck situated on top of the pool house building. This deck was accessed by a small flight of exterior stairs on the north side of the building and was enclosed by a metal frame railing with canvas panels. The pool house building was smaller and had different doors and windows. Also, the wall on the west end of the pool had a pebble stone finish on the back of the west facing concrete relief. Some of the first floor patio areas immediately adjacent to the property's central plaza were not originally enclosed by wood fencing. The laundry buildings have been modified with new windows and doors. The western laundry building was converted to a clubhouse, which included a south facing sliding glass door that has since been removed. There were also metal frame jungle gym play structures in the children play areas situated adjacent to the laundry buildings that have been removed. The property's original exterior lighting and exterior signage has been modified. The original pole lampposts with orb fixtures have been replaced with similarly designed light fixtures. The orb wall sconces adjacent to the garden apartment unit doors have been replaced by vertical fixtures with metal framing. There were also some light fixtures hanging from some of the larger trees that have since been removed.<sup>75</sup>

The main impediments to approvals and construction of Capitol Towers were the problems encountered in project funding and revenue. Scheuer and the project team repeatedly had problems with estimating and dealing with the operating costs, real estate taxes, and rents. Funding and revenue uncertainties caused problems for FHA approval of the project, which was necessary for its viability. For example, when FHA prepared the tax burden analysis for the first 92 garden apartment units, the estimated tax bill was \$174 per unit. While in 1960-1961 the average tax bill for new apartment buildings in Sacramento was \$160-\$175 per unit, Scheuer's company was taxed at \$206 per unit. This high cost was because of tax formulas that were based construction costs, rather than actual revenue generated by the property at the time. The very goals of the project, including low population density, high design standards, and enhanced amenities, as well as rigid fire and building codes, led to the high construction costs. Increased construction costs and taxes meant the project was under pressure to have higher rents; however, increases in rents had the potential for FHA to reduce financial support of the project. Scheuer's company was frustrated that the City was not more cooperative in helping lock in a reasonable tax rate for the project so that they did not have to pay a higher taxes than other competitive apartment housing in the city. Problems such as this plagued the project for many years, ultimately leading to the SRA terminating the development agreement for the northwest and southwest corners of the property that had been planned for the other high-rise apartment buildings.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> The William W. Wurster collection and Vernon De Mars collection at the University of California Berkeley Environmental Design Archives includes photographs from the early to mid-1960s taken of the property. The collections includes photos by Morley Baer, Jerry Stoll, Phil Palmer, and Karl Riek. Additional photos of Capitol Towers soon after its construction are available at CSH.

<sup>75</sup> Photographs in the William W. Wurster collection and Vernon De Mars collection at the University of California Berkeley Environmental Design Archives and at CSH. The laundry building was converted to a clubhouse in 1965, under city building permit F2537.

<sup>76</sup> H. Ralph Taylor, Renewal & Redevelopment Corporation to Jerome Lipp, Executive Director, Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, November 22, 1960, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1960, Box 76, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; Response to Request for Tract V to Remain as Open Space, Southeast Corner 5<sup>th</sup> and N Streets, Capitol Mall Project 2-A, August 10, 1977, folder 828-2f Capitol Towers, Box 73, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.



**Illustration 15:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial high-rise design 1958.<sup>77</sup>



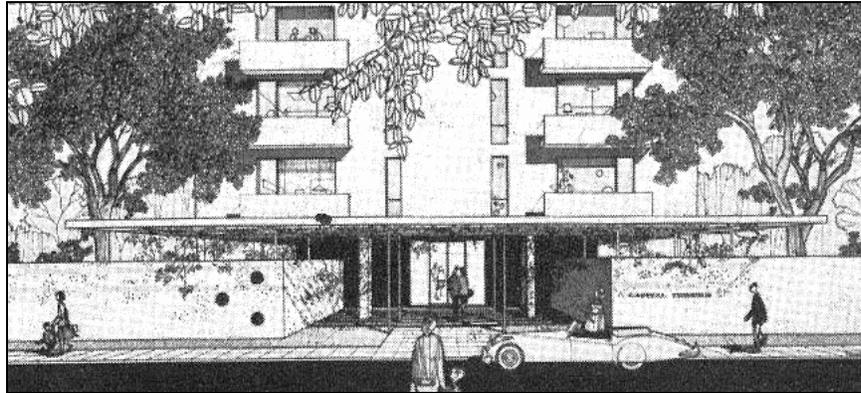
**Illustration 16:** Revised high-rise tower plan to conform to CBC standards, 1962.<sup>78</sup>



**Illustration 17:** Capitol Towers Apartments high-rise tower, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, 109.

<sup>78</sup> "Mall Apartment Plan Drawings Are Released," *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1962, B1.



**Illustration 18:** Capitol Towers Apartments initial high-rise design entrance detail, 1958.<sup>79</sup>



**Illustration 19:** Capitol Towers Apartments high-rise tower entrance south side, 2014.

During construction of the high-rise tower, Scheuer was concerned about the viability and future of the development. The unit density of the high-rise tower was necessary for the economic feasibility of the project and thus suggestions to reduce or eliminate the tower were near impossible for Scheuer to approve. Scheuer had already spent \$760,000 of his company's money to complete 400 of the 800 proposed garden apartment and high-rise units that Scheuer attributed to the "pioneering" effort of the redevelopment project. Much of the cost went into extensive and costly landscaping and apartment amenities to create an attractive environment that, as the developers asserted, would overcome the adverse conditions surrounding the project, including uncleared deteriorating buildings and vacant land, as well as the heavy truck traffic that traversed this area of the city prior to construction of Sacramento's freeways. In 1962 H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company wrote to the SRA lamenting, "We are badly hurt by the slums around us...we are making substantial rent cuts. We are getting full schedule rents in the interior of the project, but we cannot seem to get it on the perimeter." The slow pace of redevelopment in Sacramento's West End led Scheuer's company to realize in 1964 that the area has not yet developed to the point of attractiveness that would give their investment a sound economic base. Occupancy rates for the garden apartments remained low for several years, and even when garden apartments experienced up to 97% occupancy rate, rents

<sup>79</sup> *Architectural Record*, October 1958, 64-3.  
DPR 523L (1/95)

that could be charged under FHA requirements could not economically support the project and pay city taxes. The apartment towers appeared to be necessary. Scheuer concluded that this was true not only for his project, but also for the Capitol Mall development, which he said would remain an ‘unfinished symphony’ economically and architecturally speaking pending completion of the second and third high-rise towers. Funding challenges inherent in this project are essentially why by September 1964 the FHA suggested to Scheuer that “maybe it’s time to recognize the fact that the project is unsound,” and that he should sell it at its write-down value.<sup>80</sup>

Capitol Towers Apartments gained state-wide and national attention as academics, planners, and architects assessed the redevelopment trends in the late 1950s and 1960s that were quickly altering many of the nation’s urban environments. Sacramento was one of many cities with highly active redevelopment strategies that were reshaping their built environment. Planners and others were hopeful that high profile projects, such as Capitol Towers, would prove to be successful in reversing urban decay and creating positive urban environments. Capitol Towers received awards and praise during its design and in the period immediately following its construction. Many of the accolades were in reaction to the well-known designers and developers and their collaborative effort. The project was also admired, in great part, because of its potential for success. Such endorsement was given, however, without any passage of time to assess positive outcomes and without perspective to where this property fit into the historical lineage of such community developments.<sup>81</sup> Although critics raised concerns regarding the success of urban renewal redevelopment and superblock garden apartment / high-rise tower residential development even as many were designed and built in the 1950s and 1960s, the acclaim that Capitol Towers received largely occurred before the project had had time to be fully realized and before symbolic disasters of mid-century urban planning emerged, such as the 1972 demolition of the ill fated Pruitt-Igoe apartment complex in St. Louis which had been hailed as a model for urban housing when it was completed in 1955. With historical perspective, Capitol Towers can be seen as neither an outstanding example of urban residential development, nor as an extraordinary failure of urban planning from its time period. Rather, it was an early example of its type in Sacramento that was an earnest collaborative attempt by well meaning urban planners, well-known designers, and supportive developers to affect the city’s environment, albeit with modest results. Challenges in funding and constructing this portion of the West End’s urban renewal resulted in a property that did not realize considerable components of its original design and intent. Although Capitol Towers was the first garden apartments with a tower on a superblock in Sacramento, its design and construction fits within a broader historic context, and thus within that context it can be seen as lacking distinctive characteristics that would have illustrated traits making it important in the evolution of urban redevelopment or garden apartment / tower apartment complexes. The redesigned landscape was scaled down from the original design, only one of three towers was realized, and changes to the architecture decreased the impact the project had made in its original award-winning designs. Additionally, it is possible that a property like this could gain historical importance if it were to have been influential within its local or regional context, but the historical evidence does not support a conclusion that this project was influential in subsequent designs in Sacramento or elsewhere in Northern California, many of which followed similar design trends used during this period and that are evident in Capitol Towers.

<sup>80</sup> H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento, May 28, 1962, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; James H. Scheuer to Roy Pinkerton, August 29, 1963, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History; H. Ralph Taylor of the Renewal & Development Company to Ralph Herod, Executive Director Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento, September 25, 1964, folder 888-2 Capitol Towers 1963-1964, Box 77, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Collection 1997/077, Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>81</sup> Capitol Towers Apartments received awards such as the design award from P/A in 1959, an honorable mention in the 1962 AIA / *House and Home* “Homes for Better Living Awards Program,” award of merit in 1963 from the AIA Northern California Chapter, and an award from the Urban Renewal Administration in 1964. Architectural and design journals such as *Architectural Record*, *Architect and Contractor*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *House and Home* featured or discussed Capitol Towers in articles between 1958 and 1965. Samuel M. Green, who was an art history professor at Wesleyan University in the 1960s, for example, cited Capitol Towers as among the most “satisfactory” recent examples of urban housing in his 1966 book on American art and architecture, *American Art: A Historical Perspective*, praising its organized yet informal layout and noting its “interesting” design to ensure the privacy of its residents (page 515).

Capitol Towers was among the early projects in Sacramento of its type and the multiple garden apartment complexes developed in the city during the 1960s and 1970s. Hundreds of small apartment buildings were built in Sacramento from the 1950s to the 1970s replacing single-family homes and increasing the number of units from 4,000 to 23,910.<sup>82</sup> Robert C. Powell was among the most prominent developers of such complexes in Sacramento during this period. Powell was responsible for the Governor's Square Apartments located on blocks west and south of the Capitol Towers Apartments, built in 1970 and 1971, Woodside Apartments off Howe Avenue at Northrup Avenue, built in the late 1960s, and Campus Commons located just east of California State University Sacramento, built in the 1970s. Woodside, for example, was noted for its cluster planning, sympathetic landscaping, generous open spaces, and various community facilities. The complex included varied building footprints laid out in an offset manner to increase privacy and included private patio / garden open spaces. Redwood and cedar trimming and siding accented the stucco exteriors, used to complement the landscaping. Powell later developed upscale garden apartments and condominiums such as Selby Ranch and Wyndgate, both located on American River Drive, just east of Watt Avenue. Another prominent garden apartment complex in Sacramento was the Collegetown married student housing built in 1970, designed by Neill Smith & Associates with landscape architecture by Lawrence Halprin & Associates. The project was built with landscaped open spaces, courtyards, and sunken and heavily landscaped parking areas segregated from the living units. Each unit has an enclosed patio and the exterior of the buildings were originally exposed cedar siding.<sup>83</sup>

The Capitol Towers project was not financially successful until the late-1970s, having experienced higher than expected vacancy rates and some deferred maintenance. During the project's first two decades, HUD assisted with the property's mortgage when it was slipping into default. The Trust I and Trust II components of the property were placed into a payment agreement with HUD from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. HUD later had to assist with the Trust III mortgage for a time during the mid-1970s. The financial difficulties were largely responsible for the project's other tower units not being constructed, which led SRA to terminate the property's development agreement for the northwest and southwest parcels on the Capitol Towers' superblock. The property's financial difficulties continued into the early 1980s as the Scheuer family was unable to collect property management fees from some of its investors. By the late 1980s, although vacancy rates on the property were below average for the city, the property owners had started work to redevelop the property into an office and commercial complex.<sup>84</sup>

Capitol Towers struggled in part because of the lack of services in the neighborhood, such as the commercial development to the blocks west of the property that was never fully realized. Despite the city's continued attention to its redevelopment areas in the West End, commercial development and services were slow to grow and difficult to sustain. Chain grocery stores, for instance, could not sustain their required business level and moved out of the area in the late 1970s even after several residential developments had been completed.<sup>85</sup>

The Scheuer Family Trust, also referred to as the Capitol Towers Trust, attempted to further develop the Capitol Towers property in the late 1980s and 1990s, but was unable to do so. The plan was to lease office space, mostly to the State of California, in multiple towers that would have replaced the garden apartment units, but left in place the property's high-rise tower. The initial four 26-to-27-story towers was reduced to two 24-to-25-story towers. The project, which would have

<sup>82</sup> William Burg, *Sacramento Renaissance: Art, Music and Activism in California's Capital City* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>83</sup> Elisabeth Kendal Thompson, "Garden Environments for Apartment Living," *Architectural Record*, September 1969, 66-67 and 192-193; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980," 45; Robert D. Davila, "Obituary: Robert Powell was influential developer in capital," *Sacramento Bee*, November 6, 2007; Gebhard, et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 417.

<sup>84</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, "Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level," *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; Lou Thelen, "Capital Skyline on the Rise," *Sacramento Union*, September 15, 1988, 1 and 23; Joyce Terhaar, "Project backers wield clout," *Sacramento Bee*, September 16, 1988, C10-C11.

<sup>85</sup> Hilary Abramson and K.W. Lee, "Capitol Towers Legal Costs Hit Penthouse Level," *Sacramento Union*, July 24, 1977, A1-A2; "Grocery Store for Capitol Towers," *Sacramento Bee*, October 12, 1978, A8.

been phased over five to ten years, would have also included commercial development, parking, and several new mid-rise apartment buildings. It was planned to be built as market conditions warranted.<sup>86</sup> This effort dissipated by the end of the 1990s, but in 2000, Post Properties, an Atlanta-based developer, proposed another development that did not come to realization. The Capitol Towers Trust sold to the property in 2002 to Fowler and Flannagan, a development firm based in Larkspur in Marin County at the time. The firm became F & F Capitol Towers Associates, LLC and moved their operations to Lake Forest in Orange County. This owner renovated the property in 2005-2006, remodeling both interiors and exteriors of the property. Various partnerships under the control of Bond Companies purchased the Capitol Towers apartments in 2007, but redevelopment of the project did not come to fruition. Kennedy Wilson purchased the property in 2012.<sup>87</sup>

Completion of the Pioneer II tower in 1978 and Bridgeway Tower in 1980 completed the two other towers originally considered for the superblock on which Capitol Towers sits. As noted, SRA tried unsuccessfully for years to get Scheuer to complete the three tower plan. The Retirement Housing Foundation built the twelve story Pioneer II tower at the northeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and P streets for elderly housing across 5<sup>th</sup> Street from its previous high-rise facility Pioneer House that it built in 1966. SRA was only able to attract a developer for the southeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and N streets when it agreed to give the land away in hopes of capturing sufficient property taxes to make up the lost sales revenue. Bridgeway Tower was among the first condominium projects in the city's redevelopment area, built at the same time as the Riverfront Plaza Associates' development at 3<sup>rd</sup> and P streets, just south of the Crocker Art Gallery adjacent to I-5.<sup>88</sup>

Redwood Construction, Inc. was the prime contractor for Fowler and Flannagan's remodeling of the Capitol Towers Apartments in 2005-2006. The project involved renovating some features of building exteriors, upgrading the interiors of all units, and improving the property's amenities. The effort, in general, was to provide the property with a more contemporary design appearance and to upgrade old features. Exterior alterations to the tower includes installation of slate cladding at the base of the columns, faux slate corners extending to the top of the building, and a new paint scheme that accents the building's horizontal banding. Alterations to the property's buildings include a 500-square-foot addition to the pool house to accommodate a new fitness center, installation of a new spa near the pool, and replacement of the pool's wrought iron fence with a new metal frame and glass panel fence. The property's buildings have been repainted at least twice in the past decade. Redwood had new signage installed throughout the property, including unit numbers and four monument signs installed at the four corners of the property at 5<sup>th</sup>, 7, N, and P streets. Unit interior upgrades included marble entries, wood flooring, granite countertops, new appliances, and new fixtures. The leasing office and public areas of the ground floor and basement of the tower were remodeled. The owners converted a fitness center into a social room, improved laundry facilities, redecorated the lobby, and added a new canopy at the tower's entrance. Changes in the landscape and site work included installation of approximately 1000-linear feet of ledgerstone at the edges of planting beds, installation of a new waterfall / sign / planter at the tower's parking lot on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, replacing the swimming pool west wall's non-original Mondrian-inspired colored rectangle design with stone tiles, returning the Overhoff sculpture wall to its original monochromatic color, removal of trees from some unit's enclosed gardens, replacement and alteration / addition of lampposts, and replacement of various small plantings throughout the property.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Ted Reed, "Capitol Towers Proposal," *Sacramento Bee*, June 23, 1987, B1-B2; Lou Thelen, "Capital Skyline on the Rise," *Sacramento Union*, September 15, 1988, 1 and 23; "Capitol Towers Plan Retains Campus Setting," *Sacramento Bee*, September 18, 1988, J1; George Kostyrko, "City Council gets look at new Capitol Towers," *Sacramento Bee*, June 16, 1992, A3; Planning Dynamics Group, "Capitol Towers Development Concept Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report," prepared for the City of Sacramento Department of Planning & Development, 1996, 3-1

<sup>87</sup> Mary Lynne Vellinga, "Five New Towers Envisioned Downtown," *Sacramento Bee*, March 28, 2008; Redwood Construction, Inc., Close-Out manual, provided to JRP by Bond Companies; Sacramento County Assessor files, APNs: 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004.

<sup>88</sup> "Tower Condos Planned," *Sacramento Bee*, July 14, 1977, B3; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, "Housing and Redevelopment Programs, Annual Report – January 1980."

<sup>89</sup> Redwood Construction, Inc., Close-Out manual, provided to JRP in 2008 by Bond Companies; City of Sacramento, Building Inspection Division, multiple building permits.

The Capitol Towers Apartments are now upgraded and occupied, further remodeled since the changes made in 2005-2006. The property functions well with residents using the amenities and its communal landscape areas are well maintained, updated to appeal to the increasing number of urban dwellers seeking upscale amenities in a location convenient to downtown offices and state buildings. The property houses some families and still does not have sufficient commercial services in the immediate area.

## EVALUATION

The Capitol Towers Apartments has been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(4) of the CEQA Guidelines outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code and City of Sacramento Municipal Code. The property does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historic Places (CRHP), or the Sacramento Register (City Code Chapter 17.604). The property lacks sufficient historical significance and historic integrity to be eligible. The evaluation herein presents application of NRHP and CRHR criteria first followed by application of the Sacramento Register criteria.

### NRHP / CRHR Criteria

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have sufficient importance within the context of historical events and trends to be significant under NRHP Criterion A or CRHR Criterion 1. This property is associated with Sacramento's redevelopment urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed the urban environment of the city's West End. While Capitol Towers was a prominent project within the early phase of the city's urban renewal and among the multiple well-known projects conceived as part of the Capitol Mall redevelopment, this association is not significant because, as discussed in the historic context, this housing development was one of several elements of the overall plan of the area and it was secondary to the commercial and institutional aspects of the project being built on Capitol Avenue and further north. The property also has association with the broader state-wide and national historic contexts of community planning concepts being employed in urban renewal projects. Capitol Towers lacks significance in this area too. Although it was first of its kind in Sacramento, its original inventive planning concept was not fully realized and its execution represents a modest incremental step in the evolution. It did not play a demonstrably important role in urban renewal at either the state or national levels, and had only moderate results in helping "renew" downtown Sacramento.

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have significance under NRHP Criterion B or CRHR Criterion 2. There are no known historically significant individuals that lived in or are associated with this property and whose activities and contributions can be directly tied to this property. This property's rental units had hundreds of tenants over the years and research did not indicate that any significant individuals lived in Capitol Towers and contributed significantly to local, regional, state, or national history while in residence here. The property is also not significant for its association with any of the developers, including James Scheuer, because their contributions to American history are wide and varied and this modest residential property does not illustrate their places in history. Scheuer had little direct association with the Capitol Towers after its initial construction. Scheuer's contributions to residential redevelopment, for example, would likely be more significantly illustrated through the more prominent and more fully realized Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C.

The Capitol Towers Apartments does not have sufficient importance in architecture / planning, or association with prominent designers to be significant under NRHP Criterion C or CRHR Criterion 3. Examined at the local, state, and national levels of significance, the property does not embody sufficient distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction, it is not an important work of a master, and it does not possess high artistic value. The Capitol Towers is associated with the application of Garden City planning principals, as well as the urban tower-in-the-park residential concepts that were promulgated during much of the twentieth century. The property followed earlier multi-unit housing projects in Sacramento that had buildings set among communal landscape areas, and was among the many residential

redevelopment projects built in Northern California at the time. Although it was the first residential development in Sacramento's urban renewal area and it is representative of its type of design from this period, the property does not achieve significance within its architectural context because its striking initial building and landscape design was never realized and its contributions to garden apartment / tower apartment design are modest, particularly in comparison with later projects in Sacramento and elsewhere in Northern California.

Furthermore, the Modern architecture aesthetic of the property is modest. The garden apartments design with traditionalist influences and International Style influenced tower do not illustrate important qualities of this type of architecture. The garden apartments were intentionally unassuming and include an interesting design to ensure privacy of exterior spaces, but they lack the refined lines, remarkable use of geometric form, and structural honesty associated with other Modernist designs. The apartment tower's overall design impact is more utilitarian than elegant, as some International Style high-rise buildings can be. Its raised base does not appear to rise above the surface, but rather is bound firmly by the large piers, and the horizontality of the upper stories is broken by the balconies. The standard construction methods, finishes, and fixtures used on this property did not provide the constructed project a high artistic appearance. In addition, the Jacques Overhoff concrete panels located at the center plaza are an interesting original design feature, but they do not bolster the importance to the overall design of Capitol Towers as they were not an integrated component of the property's design and were a supplemental feature added to the complex.

Under NRHP Criterion C / CRHR Criterion 3, a property like Capitol Towers has potential significance for its association with its prominent designers, as the work of a master. As stated, this property does not have such significance. WBE, Edward L. Barnes, DeMars & Reay, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates all could be, or are, considered master designers of the mid-twentieth century. For all these designers, however, the Capitol Towers Apartments does not illustrate the best qualities of their work, all of whom have other more important residential redevelopment designs, or their important work is in other types of projects. WBE has many other fully realized and more refined residential redevelopment projects along with many other important works that demonstrate their significance within the field of architecture. The Capitol Towers high-rise designed by Donn Emmons is not an exceptional example of his work, and Emmons himself did not consider the high-rise as one of his principle works, either during its construction or years afterwards.<sup>90</sup>

Barnes is noted for many other types of work besides residential redevelopment projects, most of which have more striking geometric and visual qualities than the Capitol Towers garden apartment units. DeMars & Reay have little association with Capitol Towers beyond assisting with the project's initial designs. They too have other more important and fully realized residential redevelopment projects that better illustrate their contributions to architecture. Similarly, Capitol Towers presents only modest qualities of Lawrence Halprin's contributions to landscape architecture. Again, his initial designs were not fully realized at Capitol Towers, and those that were implemented were modest. Halprin's other works in Sacramento and Northern California, besides Capitol Towers, demonstrate his ability to provide interesting interplay between natural and man-made features and better integrate water and views into a project.

The Capitol Towers Apartments, as a historic architectural resource, has not, nor will likely, yield important information for history. Criterion D / Criterion 4 is typically used to evaluate historic sites and archaeological resources. Although buildings and structures can occasionally be recognized for the important information they might yield regarding historic construction or technologies, the buildings at Capitol Towers are of building types that are well documented through written and photographic sources from when they were constructed, and thus, the property is not a principal source of important information in this regard.

In addition to the property's insufficient historical significance, the collective impact of the minor changes made to the property over time have diminished the property's historic integrity. The property retains integrity of location with no

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: American Institute of Architects by R.R. Bowker, 1962), 34; American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1970), 44.

buildings or structures moved on to or off the property since construction, but the property's integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association have all been altered and impacted to various degrees. The property had simple finishes and features, many of which have been modified in some way. The garden apartment wood breezeway enclosures and balcony railings have been replaced with metal railings, for example, and all the exterior light fixtures have been replaced. The pool house was expanded and the small courtyard landscaping throughout the property has been heavily altered. The tower's first floor is greatly altered and the slate cladding is not in keeping with the building's original design intent. While one can get a sense of the property's original appearance and some of the designers' original intent, providing some sense of integrity of feeling and association, one has to ignore too many small modifications in order to comprehend aspects of the project's original design, setting, materials, and workmanship.

### Sacramento Register Criteria

The Sacramento Register Criteria are similar to the NRHP Criteria, the former enumerated differently, as listed in City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)(a) i to vi and 17.604.210 (A)(1)(b).

The Capitol Towers Apartments are not important for their association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, the region, the state or the nation (Sacramento Register Criterion i). As discussed under NRHP / CRHR criteria, this property is associated with Sacramento's redevelopment urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed the urban environment of the city's West End. While Capitol Towers was a prominent project within the early phase of the city's urban renewal and among the multiple well-known projects conceived as part of the Capitol Mall redevelopment, this association is not significant because, as discussed in the historic context, this housing development was one of several elements of the overall plan of the area and it was secondary to the commercial and institutional aspects of the project being built on Capitol Avenue and further north. The property also has association with the broader state-wide and national historic contexts of community planning concepts being employed in urban renewal projects. Capitol Towers lacks significance in this area too. Although it was first of its kind in Sacramento, its original inventive planning concept was not fully realized and its execution represents a modest incremental step in the evolution. It did not play a demonstrably important role in urban renew at either the state or national levels, and had only moderate results in helping "renew" downtown Sacramento.

The Capitol Towers Apartments are not associated with the lives of persons significant in the city's past (Sacramento Register Criterion ii). As discussed for the NRHP/CRHR above, there are no known historically significant individuals that lived in or are associated with this property and whose activities and contributions can be directly tied to this property. This property's rental units had hundreds of tenants over the years and research did not indicate that any significant individuals lived in Capitol Towers and contributed significantly to local, regional, state, or national history while in residence here. The property is also not significant for its association with any of the developers, including James Scheuer, because their contributions to American history are wide and varied and this modest residential property does not illustrate their places in history. Scheuer had little direct association with the Capitol Towers after its initial construction. Scheuer's contributions to residential redevelopment, for example, would likely be more significantly illustrated through the more prominent and more fully realized Capitol Park Apartments in Washington D.C.

The Capitol Towers Apartments do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction (Sacramento Register Criterion iii). As discussed under NRHP / CRHR criteria, this property's architectural design was examined at the local, state, and national levels of significance. The Capitol Towers is associated with the application of Garden City planning principals, as well as the urban tower-in-the-park residential concepts that were promulgated during much of the twentieth century. The property followed earlier multi-unit housing projects in Sacramento that had buildings set among communal landscape areas, and was among the many residential redevelopment projects built in Northern California at the time. Although it was the first residential development in Sacramento's urban renewal area and it is representative of its type of design from this period, the property does not achieve significance within its architectural context because its striking initial building and landscape design was never realized and its contributions to garden

apartment / tower apartment design are modest, particularly in comparison with later projects in Sacramento and elsewhere in Northern California.

Furthermore, the Modern architecture aesthetic of the property is modest. The garden apartments design with traditionalist influences and International Style influenced tower do not illustrate important qualities of this type of architecture. The garden apartments were intentionally unassuming and illustrate an interesting design to ensure privacy of exterior spaces, but they lack the refined lines, remarkable use of geometric form, and structural honesty associated with other Modernist designs. The apartment tower's overall design impact is more utilitarian than elegant, as some International Style high-rise buildings can be. Its raised base does not appear to rise above the surface, but rather is bound firmly by the large piers, and the horizontality of the upper stories is broken by the balconies. The standard construction methods, finishes, and fixtures used on this property did not provide the constructed project a high artistic appearance. In addition, the Jacques Overhoff concrete panels located at the center plaza are an interesting original design feature, but they do not bolster the importance to the overall design of Capitol Towers as they were not an integrated component of the property's design and were a supplemental feature added to the complex.

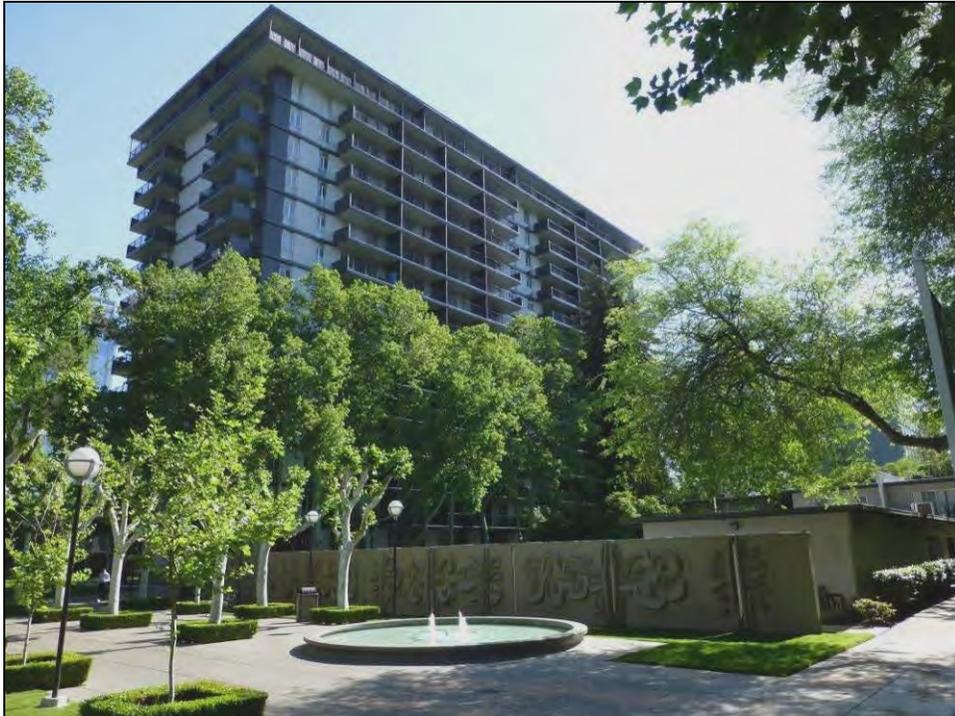
The Capitol Tower Apartments do not represent the work of an important creative individual or master (Sacramento Register Criterion iv). As a collaborative effort, Edward Barnes is attributed to the garden apartments design, Donn Emmons for WBE to the high-rise, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates to the landscape design. WBE, Edward Barnes, DeMars & Reay, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates all could be, or are, considered to be master designers of the mid-twentieth century. For all these designers, however, the Capitol Towers Apartments does not illustrate the best qualities of their work, all of whom have other more important residential redevelopment designs, or their important work is in other types of projects. WBE has many other fully realized and more refined residential redevelopment projects along with many other important works that demonstrate their significance within the field of architecture. Barnes is noted for many other types of work besides residential redevelopment projects, most of which have more striking geometric and visual qualities than Capitol Towers. DeMars & Reay have little association with Capitol Towers beyond assisting with the project's initial designs. They too have other more important and fully realized residential redevelopment projects that better illustrate their contributions to architecture. Similarly, Capitol Towers presents only modest qualities of Lawrence Halprin's contributions to landscape architecture. Again, his initial designs were not fully realized at Capitol Towers, and those that were implemented were modest. Halprin's other works in Sacramento and Northern California, besides Capitol Towers, demonstrate his ability to provide interesting interplay between natural and man-made features and better integrate water and views into a project.

The Capitol Tower Apartments do not possess high artistic value (Sacramento Register Criterion v). As a garden apartment with tower type development, this property does not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts more fully than other properties of its type.

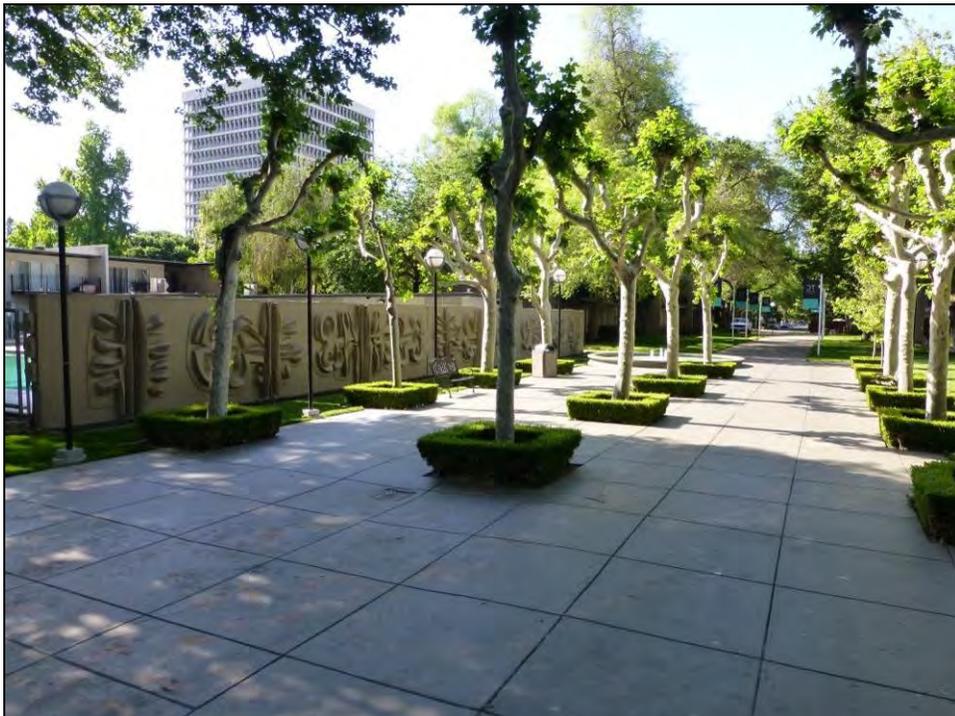
The Capitol Tower Apartments has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the city, the region, the state or the nation (Sacramento Register Criterion vi).

In addition to the property's insufficient historical significance, the collective impact of the minor changes made to the property over time have diminished the property's historic integrity [City Code 17.604.210 (A)(1)(b)]. The property retains integrity of location with no buildings or structures moved on to or off the property since construction, but the property's integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, and association have all been altered and impacted to various degrees. The property had simple finishes and features, many of which have been modified in some way. The garden apartment wood breezeway enclosures and balcony railings have been replaced with metal railings, for example, and all the exterior light fixtures have been replaced. The pool house was expanded and the small courtyard landscaping throughout the property has been heavily altered. The tower's first floor is greatly altered and the slate cladding is not in keeping with the building's original design intent. While one can get a sense of the property's original appearance and some of the designers' original intent, providing some sense of integrity of association, one has to ignore too many small modifications in order to comprehend aspects of the project's original design, setting, materials, and workmanship.

**Photographs:**



**Photograph 2:** Central plaza and tower, camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 3:** Central plaza landscaping with art wall, camera facing southeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 4:** North end of 6<sup>th</sup> Street axis and sunken garden at right, three-story unit at right, camera facing southwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 5:** O Street entrance from 5<sup>th</sup> Street, camera facing east, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 6:** Landscaping at corner of N Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, camera facing southwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 7:** Concrete block two-story unit divider (right), wood wall upper balcony divider (center), and open balcony plan (left), camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 8:** Southern parking lot off P Street, camera facing west, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 9:** 1500 units north of Pioneer Tower, camera facing northwest, April 18, 2014.



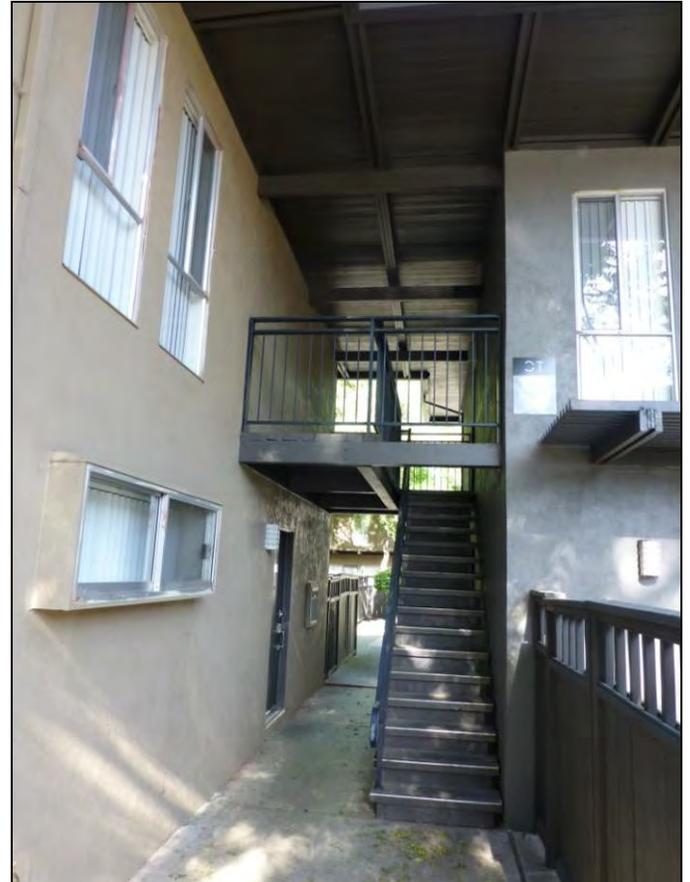
**Photograph 10:** First story enclosed patios at right, second story balcony at left, camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 11:** Enclosed patio fencing, storage unit, and wood pergolas over first story sliding doors leading to patio, camera facing southwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 12:** Example of Breezeway and second floor access, camera facing south, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 13:** Example of breezeway and box windows, camera facing west, April 18, 2014.



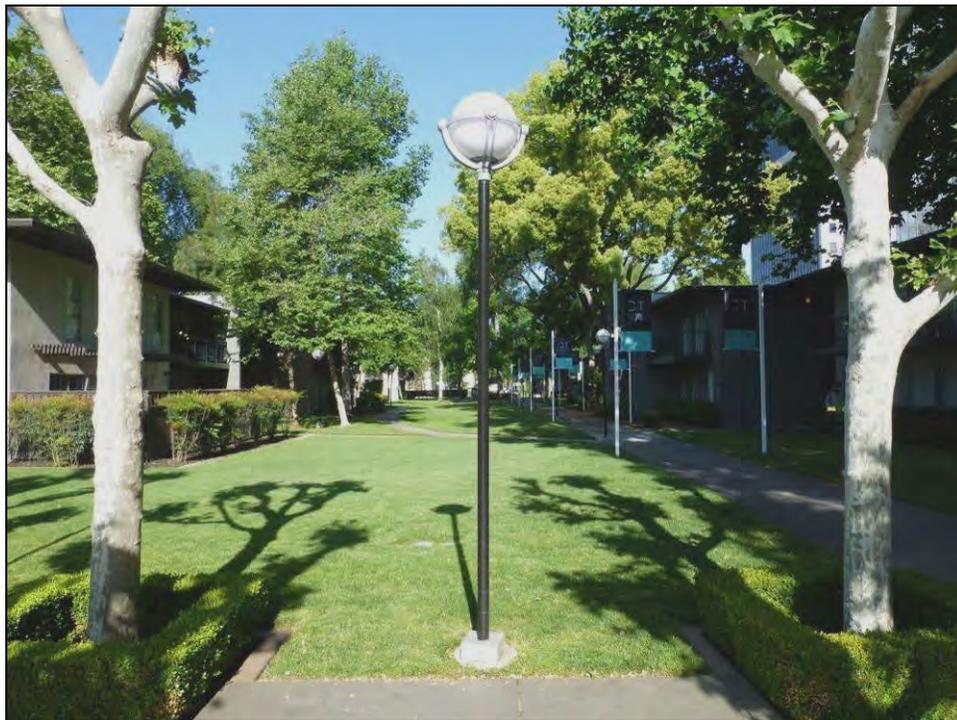
**Photograph 14:** Laundry building on southwest corner of property, camera facing southwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 15:** Former laundry facility at northwest corner of property converted to lounge, camera facing northwest, April 18, 2014.



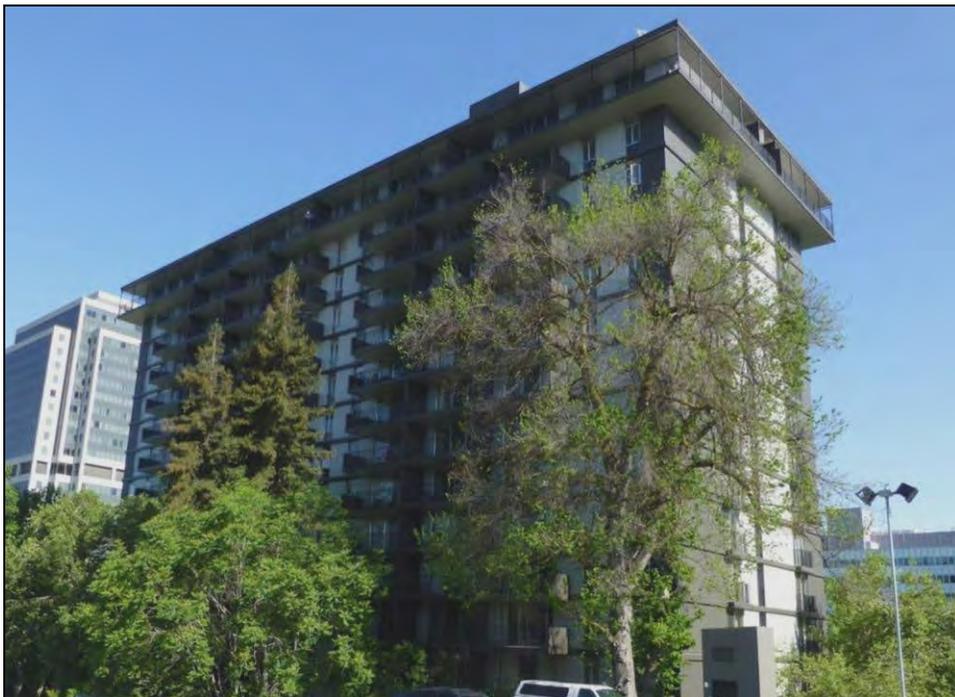
**Photograph 16:** “Dog Park,” former playground behind southwest laundry building, camera facing northwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 17:** O Street axis, camera facing west from central plaza, April 18, 2014.



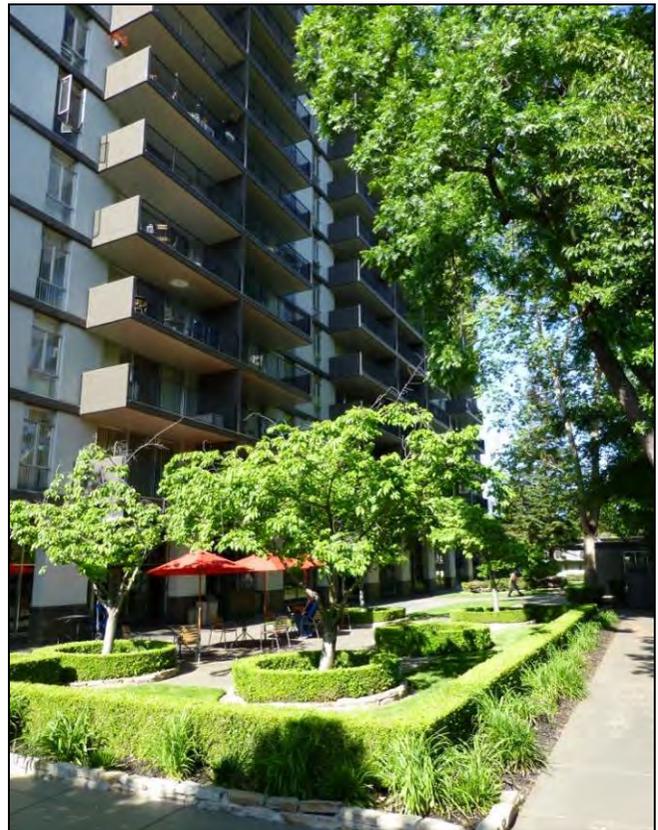
**Photograph 18:** Small courtyard in northwest portion of property, camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 19:** Tower's south and east side, camera facing northwest, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 20:** East side of Tower and 7<sup>th</sup> Street guest Parking lot, camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 21:** Courtyard on north side of tower, camera facing southwest, April 18, 2014.



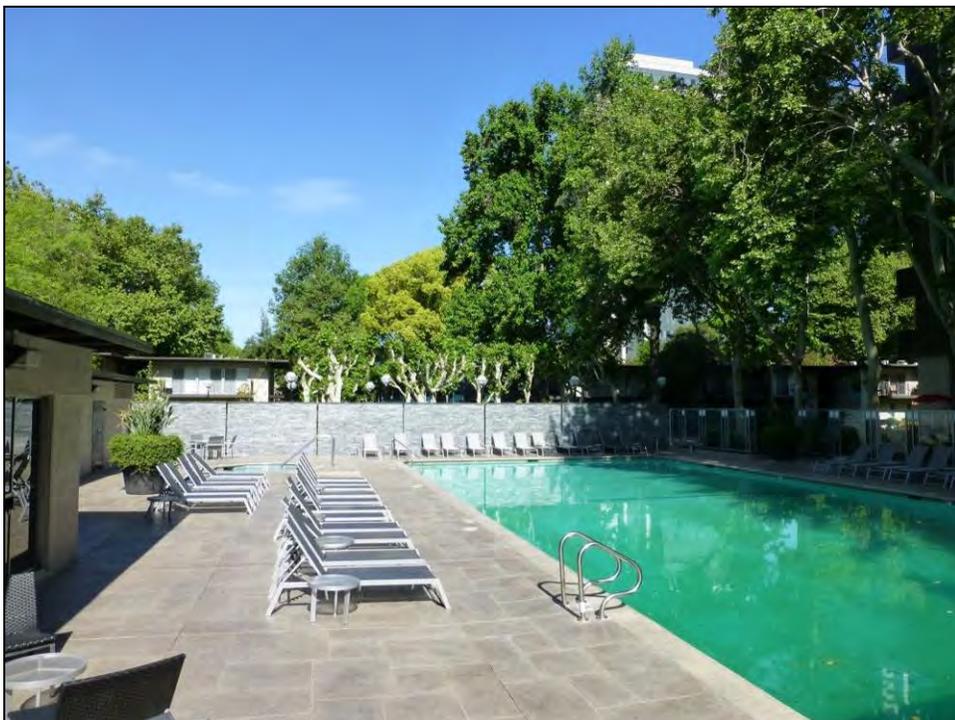
**Photograph 22:** North side of tower, camera facing west, April 18, 2014.



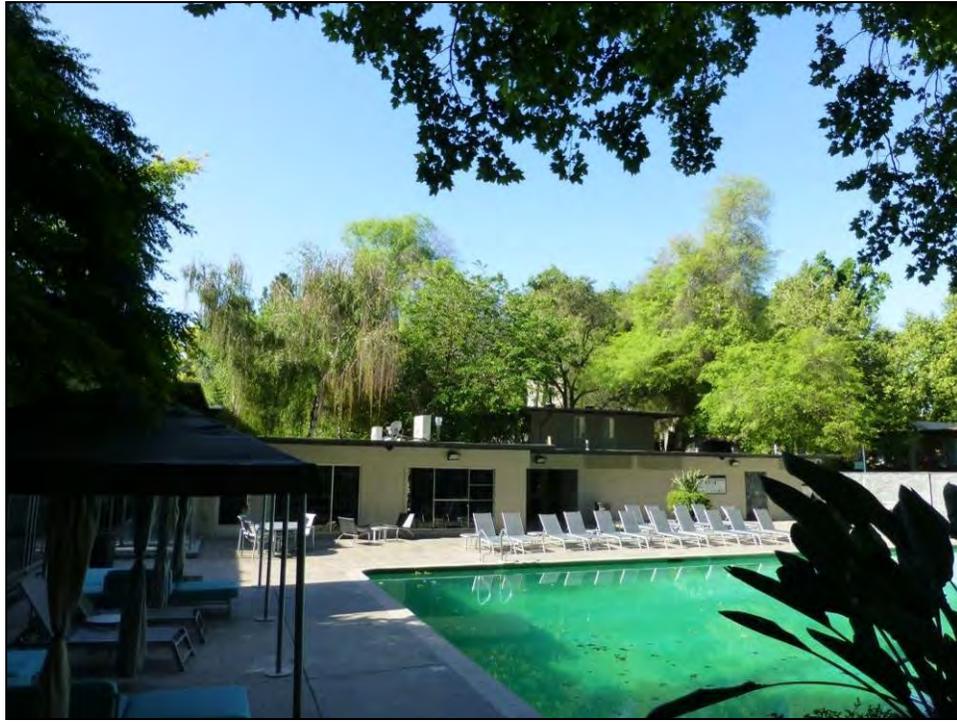
**Photograph 23:** Lobby and leasing office entrance, southeast corner of tower, camera facing north, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 24:** Parking garage along 7<sup>th</sup> Street, camera facing northeast, April 18, 2014.

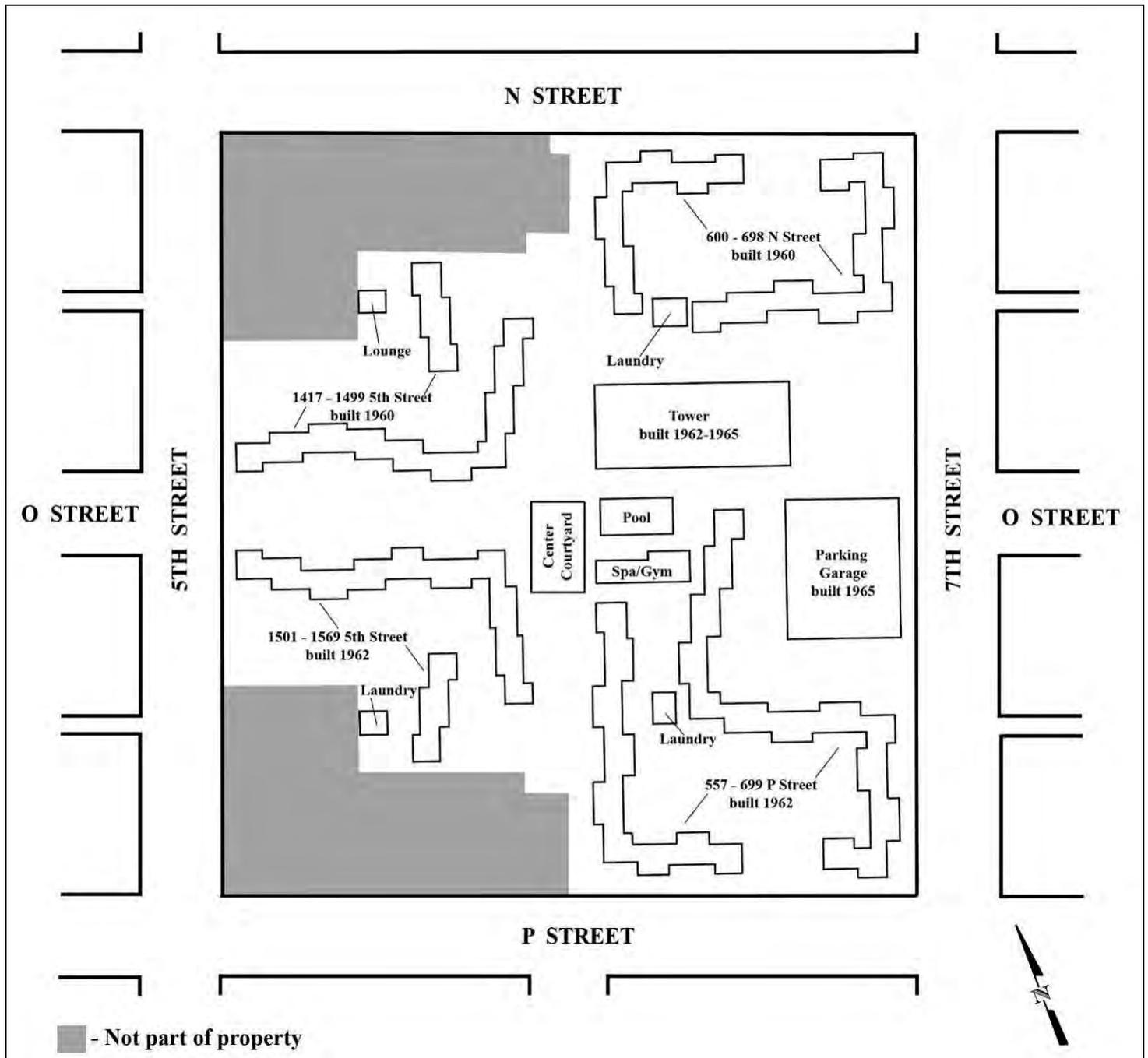


**Photograph 25:** Pool, south of tower, camera facing west, April 18, 2014.



**Photograph 26:** Pool house, camera facing south, April 18, 2014.

**Sketch Map:**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Capitol Towers

Other names/site number: Capitol Towers and Garden Apartments

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 1500 7<sup>th</sup> Street

City or town: Sacramento State: CA County: Sacramento

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

<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

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



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: \_\_\_\_\_

Foundation: Concrete footing (low-rises) and concrete piles (high-rise)

Walls: Stucco (low-rises) and board-formed reinforced concrete (high-rise)

Roof: Build-up composite roofing

### Narrative Description

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

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### Summary Paragraph

Capitol Towers is a large-scale, multi-family residential complex comprising low-rise garden apartment buildings, a high-rise tower, and pedestrian-oriented landscapes. Capitol Towers is located on approximately 10 acres in downtown Sacramento, California, less than a mile east from the western bank of the Sacramento River and about a quarter mile west of the State Capitol building. Constructed between 1959 and 1965, Capitol Towers was the first privately-sponsored urban redevelopment project in California. It was designed by a talented design team that included architecture firms Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), Edward Larrabee Barnes, and DeMars & Reay, as well as landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. The site planning and building and landscape design reflect the designers' concern less with style, trends, or orthodoxy than with providing functionality, comfort and livability through collaborative Modern design. The modest, stucco-clad, deep-eave low-rise garden apartment buildings, consisting of staggered unit modules to prevent monotonous linear blocks, fan across the superblock site and shape exterior spaces such as landscaped courts, pedestrian walkways, and surface parking lots. The horizontality of the garden apartment buildings also complements the

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concrete and glass high-rise building on-site and those on adjacent properties in a dynamic interplay between well-scaled horizontal and vertical elements. Derived from Garden City principles, Capitol Towers is an internal, pedestrian-oriented site with shared interior landscaped areas and automobiles and service uses placed at the site's periphery. Yet, unlike garden apartment complexes that are insular, Capitol Towers maintains a street presence with the low-rise units fronting city streets, parking lots pulled inward as interior courts, and a sense of openness, order, and permeability that connects with the surrounding urban grid. Despite alterations of some features across the site, Capitol Towers retains adequate integrity of its primary spatial relationships, residential buildings, and landscape features to convey its significance.

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## Narrative Description

### Spatial Organization

Capitol Towers consists of three legal parcels that together form an irregular, approximately T-shaped site on most of a four-block area. The eastern half of the site (top of the T) is bounded by N Street at the north, Seventh Street at the east, and P Street at the south. The western half of the site is bordered at the north by a condominium tower and its parking structure and at the south by a senior housing apartment tower and its surface parking lot. These two approximately one-acre sites at the northwest (N and Fifth Streets) and southwest corners (P and Fifth Streets) of the superblock are separate legal parcels developed at a later date and are not part of Capitol Towers. Capitol Towers extends west to midblock at Fifth Street as the leg of the T, which is the main pedestrian entrance into the site aligned with O Street.

The historic axial streets of O Street and 6th Street were repurposed as pedestrian access routes that were integrated into the superblock organization. Automobile traffic is restricted to the perimeter of the property, leaving the interior spaces open. The axial pedestrian routes now divide the complex into four smaller garden-oriented quadrants. The intersection of these pedestrian axes forms the property's central plaza. Much of the spatial arrangement stems from the rectilinear pedestrian axes.

The property includes a total of eight two- and three-story, low-rise apartment buildings with staggered unit modules connected by open breezeways. Two of the low-rise apartments are in each quadrant of the superblock. The buildings are roughly L-shaped, linear, or zigzag in plan and are sited relative to each other to surround common and semi-private landscaped spaces, as well as surface parking and service courts near the site's periphery. Low-rise buildings also face the streets at the southeast (P and Seventh Streets) and northeast (N and Seventh Streets) edges of the site. The arrangement of building allows for shared open green spaces, private outdoor spaces, convenient access to automobile parking, and an urban presence for the site.

The high-rise apartment tower, located toward the center of the superblock, is adjacent to both surface parking and a four-level parking structure located at the eastern edge of the site facing

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Seventh Street. The high-rise is surrounded by pathways and landscaped areas that connect it to the low-rise units and nearby communal amenities.

Also at the center of the superblock, at the intersection of the main pedestrian axes, is a central plaza anchored by a concrete sculpture wall by artist Jacques Overhoff. A grid of London plane trees and a circular fountain populate the open plaza. On the east side of the sculpture wall is a communal pool enclosed by contemporary fencing and a pool house/gym building.

Lawns connect the low-rise garden apartment units along the main axes as well as at secondary courtyards and are bisected by walkways that lead to and through the breezeways. Landscaped courts, with grids of trees and other plantings, are found throughout the site, including near the base of the high-rise and the two towers that are adjacent to but not part of Capitol Towers, as well as at entry points from each surfacing parking lot. Three one-story ancillary buildings used for laundry facilities and as a lounge with adjacent former playground spaces are at the northwest and southwest corners of the site, as well as north of the high rise.

### **Circulation**

Automobile and pedestrian circulation patterns are separated at Capitol Towers. There is no vehicular access through the landscape of the superblock interior, which maintains unimpeded pedestrian access.

Pedestrian circulation follows the main axes that were once O Street and Sixth Street, which divide the property into quadrants. The primary pedestrian entrance at the west is located midblock on Fifth Street, in line with O Street, and leads directly to the central plaza and the front of the sculpture wall. The midblock pedestrian entrances at N and P Streets at the north and south are in line with the vacated Sixth Street, which continues south of Capitol Towers, and adjacent to the two separate properties on the superblock. The east-west axis jogs around the central plaza and pool but continues as a walkway south of the high-rise tower until it reaches the surfacing parking and parking structure at Seventh Street.

From the main pedestrian axes, smaller walkways branch off through the interior green spaces and courtyards, leading to the residential units. These branches extend into the low-rise apartment buildings through the breezeways that separate the unit modules. Pedestrian access extends further beyond the residential units to the parking facilities, which allows for easy access between one's automobile and residence without impeding pedestrian flow of the central areas. Other paths extend to the ancillary buildings and the high-rise tower, which is surrounded by pedestrian paths.

Most pedestrian paths are paved with concrete and are straight and rectilinear in orientation, except for one curving pathway along the southern part of the west main pedestrian axis. This pathway interrupts the grid-like pedestrian routes that extend to the residential units but provides an alternate walking experience through the superblock.

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Six automobile access drives lead to interior surface parking and the four-level parking structure: one enters at the northeast side from N Street, one at the southeast side from P Street, two on the west side from Fifth Street, and two on the east side from Seventh Street flanking the parking structure.

### **Buildings**

Capitol Towers features two main residential building types: two- and three-story garden apartment buildings and a high-rise apartment tower. Other buildings include three one-story laundry/lounge facilities, a four-story parking structure, and a one-story pool house and gym.

#### *Low-Rise Buildings*

Each of the low-rise apartment buildings consists of staggered unit modules connected by open breezeways and a continuous flat, built-up roof with a unifying four foot deep eave of exposed wood rafters and boards. The wood-frame unit modules are clad in stucco and stand on foundations of concrete footings. Some modules are bisected by concrete block firewalls that extend above the roofline.

Each two-story module contains two or four units (one or two per floor). The three-story modules, located at the end of some buildings, contain a first-floor flat and a two-story unit on the upper floors. There are six unit types, ranging from studio to three-bedroom layouts.

The unit entry doors are in the breezeways, as are wood stairs with metal railings that lead to the second-floor units. The primary fenestration is a tall, tripartite aluminum-framed window unit with casement windows (one operable, one fix) above a single, fixed pane of glazing. The windows are in regular patterns, but the pattern varies based on the unit types. A horizontally oriented, boxed aluminum-framed sliding window projects into a few breezeways.

Each unit has an outdoor space accessed through an aluminum-framed sliding glass door with one or two fixed, full-high glazing. The first-floor units have private patios enclosed by wood-board fencing topped by open-framed rails that are generally oriented toward the surface parking lots. The second-floor units have wood balconies with metal railing oriented to the opposite facade from the patios to provide privacy. The balconies generally face landscape lawns and walkways toward the superblock interior or city streets. Privacy and shading are further enhanced for the patios by wood-slat overhangs between the first and second floors above the sliding glass door.

#### *High-Rise Tower*

The high-rise apartment tower is a 15-story, rectangular building that is oriented lengthwise along the superblock's east-west pedestrian axis. It is a reinforced concrete structure on a foundation of concrete piles. The roof is flat with air conditioning and other equipment as well as a screened cooling tower on top.

The high-rise has a partially recessed base, a middle shaft of apartment units with balconies, and a projecting penthouse level. Its exterior is primarily board-formed concrete with a vertical board

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pattern and aluminum-framed glazing, with the corners of the middle section clad in newer grey stone veneer tile.

The partially recessed ground floor has a shaded colonnade of board-formed concrete piers on the north and south sides, while the west end is an open breezeway and the east end enclosed in glazing; stone veneer tiles clad the bottom of the piers. The ground floor contains full height aluminum-framed storefront windows for the neighborhood-serving retail, offices, restaurants and building lobby. The upper stories are defined by a series of horizontal bands that separate each floor. The north and south façades feature bays of projecting concrete balconies. Each façade is different and asymmetrical but has a strong vertical orientation reinforced by the stacking of balconies and windows.

The south façade has two main bays of balconies, one with three balconies and one with four. Full-height partition walls divide the balconies, which have low concrete end walls and metal railings. Each balcony contains two full-height fixed glazing and a full-height sliding glass door. Between the balcony bays and at the east and west ends of the south façade are two bays of aluminum-framed windows separated by board-formed concrete walls. These full-height, four-lite window units have a fixed top and bottom lite and a pair of operable casement windows in the center.

The north façade is similar to the south façade, but has three bays of balconies. The central bay has three balconies, while the east bay has two and the west bay has a single balcony. Pairs of the four-lite casement window units are located between the balcony bays and at the east and west ends of the north façade.

The west facade has two bays of balconies, one at each end. Between the bays are board-formed concrete with a vertical board pattern and an open, recessed stair landing with fire doors and metal railing. Each balcony has concrete end walls and metal railing, as well as a sliding glass door and a pair of aluminum-framed casement windows with a fixed top lite. The east façade has two bays of shallow balconettes with full-height sliding-glass doors. Gray stone veneer tiles clad the façade at the north and south ends, while board-formed concrete is located between the balconette bays. A bay of recessed stair landings is also between the balconette bays.

At the top of the building is a projecting, continuous balcony with metal posts and railing around all façades. The penthouse units are recessed with full-height windows and sliding doors to the balcony, which is divided by full-height partitions between units. The high-rise tower contains studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartment units along a double-loaded corridor, while three-bedroom units are at the penthouse level.

### *Ancillary Buildings*

There are three, one-story, concrete block buildings on the site constructed with the low-rises between 1959 and 1961. They are rectangular in plan with flat roofs and four-foot deep eaves. Originally all laundry buildings, the one at the northwest corner of the site is now a lounge. The two continuing to serve as laundry facilities are located at the southwest corner of the superblock

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and north of the tower. The buildings have a mix of fenestration, some original and some later additions.

A stucco-clad pool house stands south of the pool. It is L-shaped with a flat roof and bisected by a glass-enclosed passageway. The east section of the pool house has full-height windows at the north façade. The west section of the pool house is entirely enclosed by stucco walls. The pool house, which originally housed laundry facilities, was constructed along with the pool in 1961.

The parking structure is a four-level split-level building. Constructed with the high-rise tower between 1963 and 1965, it is located along the eastern edge of the property, alongside Seventh Street and southeast of the high-rise apartment tower. The garage is reinforced concrete and features exit-entrance ramps on the ground floors of the north and south side. All stories feature exterior half-walls with pipe guard railings. Two exterior stair wells protrude from the north and south sides. An elevator shaft also protrudes from the north side of the structure, adjacent to the stairwell.

### **Landscape Features**

The landscape design at Capitol Towers is defined by public common spaces, semi-public shared lawns, secondary courtyards between buildings, landscaped courts, and private outdoor spaces like patios and balconies. Each of the 409 residential units (206 in low-rise buildings and 203 in the high-rise tower) has a private rear patio or balcony. Some existing site and street trees were retained and incorporated at the time of construction, while new trees were planted then and have matured, creating full canopies on the site. The ground cover is primarily grass on lawns that connect across the low-rise units, in addition to low planting around the low-rise modules.

At the center of Capitol Towers is the central plaza and pool facility. The central plaza is a paved area formed by a widened section of the north-south walkway axis. The plaza contains a grid of London plane trees set into concrete pavers, along with a low circular fountain with central jets at the southeast corner. Anchoring the plaza is a long sculptural wall at the eastern edge. The sculpture, designed by artist Jacques Overhoff, is formed by multiple panels of cast concrete with a high relief of abstract shapes and is signed "Overhoff, '61."

The east side of the sculpture wall faces the swimming pool and is clad with an alternating pattern of horizontal stone tiles. The pool is rectilinear and is oriented length-wise along the east-west axis. The pool is set within a large patio area, which also features a hot tub. The patio is bounded by a glass panel fence along its north, east, and south sides, and the pool house is located at the southern side.

In addition to the shared lawns that line the low-rise garden apartment units and are in the secondary courtyards, several public landscaped courts are found throughout Capitol Towers. These landscaped courts typically have grids of trees providing shading, and grass, low plantings, gravel, or other ground cover. The landscaped court at the north end of the superblock, located west of the north-south main walkway, is a sunken court. The landscaped courts have

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wood-slat benches and are located at each surface parking lot as an entry point and transition into the interior of the site.

### **Views & Vistas**

The views and vistas at Capitol Towers Apartments are set within the landscape orientation. The main axes and rectilinear pathways frame the site and establish a series of forced axial perspectives that are softened by the staggered, informal garden apartment buildings and irregular and more picturesque plantings. The breezeways between the unit modules also serve to frame views as a transitional experience between the superblock interior and the peripheral parking facilities.

Views from the first-floor units of the low-rise apartment buildings are restricted by walls that enclose private patios. The upper story units have balconies that extend from the opposing side of the building, opening up onto the interior greens space and providing a view of the courtyards without infringing upon the privacy of the first-floor units.

Views and vistas from the high-rise apartment tower vary, depending on height and orientation, but would prominently feature the Capitol Towers site and landscaping, downtown Sacramento, the State Capitol, Interstate-5, and the Sacramento River.

### **Small-Scale Features**

Capitol Towers features a number of small scale features set within the landscape. They include metal and wood-slat benches, banner flag posts, globe light posts, wood-slat and aggregate concrete trash receptacles, and gardens edged with slate. All units have contemporary number signage and vertical frosted glass exterior light fixtures. Wood-board garbage enclosures with open-framed top rails are also found within the parking lots. The wood-slat benches and trash receptacles are from the original construction of Capitol Towers.

### **Alterations**

Although changes have occurred to the property since the completion of the tower in early 1965, most alterations at Capitol Towers have occurred to minor component elements rather than to any major landscape features, spatial relationship or urban design concept. The most notable change is in the breezeways, where wood slat screens have been removed from the second-floor landings, the open-tread stairs have been closed, and wood railings have been replaced with metal. The original wood stairs and underlying wood structure remains. At the balconies of the garden apartment buildings, the wood-paneled railings have been replaced with open metal railings while the private patios originally had wood-board enclosures, they did not have the open-framed top rails. The boxed-framed sliding windows that appear occasionally among the garden apartment buildings do not appear original, and the lower glazing at some window units have been covered with solid board. Stucco, which had integrated color, and wood finishes have typically been repainted.

The ground-floor storefront glazing of the high-rise building has been altered to contemporary systems. Stone veneer tile has been added to the base of the concrete piers up to approximately

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three feet, while the corners of the tower have the addition of grey stone veneer tile, most noticeably at the east façade.

The pool house has been expanded to the east, the central passageway enclosed with glazed fencing, and window systems replaced. The back of the sculptural wall that faces the pool has been altered on more than one occasion, and currently features linear natural-colored tile. The metal-framed glass fencing around the pool is not original, nor is the hot tub. The pool itself has also been altered, though the shape and location remain the same. At the laundry and lounge buildings, some windows have been added.

The landscape similarly has had minor alterations in some locations. In the central plaza, box hedges have been added around each tree in the grid. The original wood-slat benches with curved backs have been replaced by metal benches, though the benches exist in other locations on site. Concrete planters have been removed, the Jacques Overhoff sculptural wall painted, and the fountain's water jets altered. However, the central plaza retains its key signature features and design relationships. In other areas of the site landscaped areas have had their plantings altered, but have remain soft scape spaces in original configurations. Playground equipment has been removed from outside of the laundry buildings, with one area now used as a pet park. Among the street furniture, the original globe light standard has been replaced throughout the site with a similar but not exact replica. Some wood-slate trash cans have been replaced with concrete-aggregate trash receptacles, and all kiosks have been removed.

### **Integrity**

As a whole, Capitol Towers retains sufficient integrity of its urban design concepts, spatial organization, circulation patterns, primary residential buildings, and key landscape features to convey its significance, despite alterations to component elements. It retains all seven aspects of integrity:

#### *Location:*

The Capitol Towers complex has not been moved and retains integrity of its location. No major buildings or features have been demolished or relocated.

#### *Design:*

The composition, balance and juxtaposition of the low-rise garden apartment buildings and high-rise tower around associated open spaces is a major organizational design component of the Capitol Towers site that remains clearly evident today. All defining elements of the design program are extant. This includes the staggered setbacks of the garden apartments, the opposing patio and balcony orientations of the lower and upper garden apartment units, prominent circulation patterns, open central plaza, varied softscape and hardscape areas, and parking locations at the outer edges. The spatial relationship between the low-rise and the high-rise buildings and the composition of built and landscape features has not been altered.

The loss of some design features, including wood slat screens in the breezeways and wood paneled balcony railings, somewhat alters the appearance of the low-rise buildings. The

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buildings, however, retain adequate design integrity in form, massing, layout, materials, and other character-defining design features: unifying deep eaves, original aluminum window units, and wood-slat sunshades at the patios. Similarly, the high-rise tower retains integrity of its design despite the addition of stone tile cladding along the corners of the middle section and at the base of its concrete piers. The buildings are all intact, retain the components found in the original design, and continue to be contributing features to the site.

Despite the loss of some street furniture, including the original globe light standards, kiosks, some wood-slat benches and trash receptacles, the landscape design maintains its hierarchy of spaces and uses among communal, semi-public, and private spaces. The planting plan supplements and enhances circulation and plan composition. Tree planting arrangements and prominent species are mature and character-defining. As such, the overall site landscape at Capitol Towers retains its integrity of design.

The concrete block laundry and lounge buildings retain their integrity of design in form and massing, as well as with the deep overhang. Some new door and window openings have been added, but generally these buildings retain sufficient integrity to be contributing features.

The pool and pool house have been repeatedly altered, including an addition constructed on the eastern end of the pool house. While these features are in their original locations, they do not appear to retain sufficient integrity to be contributing features.

*Setting:*

The setting at Capitol Towers Apartments has not been significantly altered since the property was constructed. The surrounding context continues to be a fairly dense urban environment. The addition of two towers at the northwest and southwest corners, in areas planned for towers but constructed separate from Capitol Towers, do not adversely affect the setting of Capitol Towers, and like the centrally located high-rise building, create a complementary interplay of vertical and horizontal massing.

Capitol Towers continues to be successful as a pedestrian-oriented, multi-family housing community in a park-like setting with a measured spatial arrangement of integrated built and landscaped areas. As such, Capitol Towers retains its integrity of setting.

*Materials:*

Capitol Towers has lost some original materials—most notably the wood-slat screens at the breezeways, wood panel balcony railing of the garden apartment buildings, original globe light standard, and kiosks. Nonetheless, the primary built and landscape features retain the majority of original materials and as such, and the selective removal of materials does not detrimentally affect the overall site's integrity. Therefore, the site retains integrity of materials.

The pool house/gym building has undergone a number of alterations, including expansion on its east end, and does not appear to retain integrity of materials.

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*Workmanship:*

Similarly, the loss of some original materials has resulted in the loss of some workmanship, though the most notable examples of workmanship remain. This includes the board-formed concrete in a vertical board pattern on the high-rise tower, the wood-framed extended eaves, and the formed cast panels which comprise Overhoff's concrete sculptural wall. Overall, the site retains integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:*

The overall feeling of Capitol Towers remains that of a large-scale, pedestrian-oriented multi-family residential complex, as it was originally developed. The pleasant outdoor environment and communal atmosphere is a testament to the concepts of the original design, one that brought together a combination of simple architectural, landscape and artistic features to create an engaging urban residential complex. Although the removal and replacement of some architectural elements affect the period feel, Capitol Towers still conveys the feeling of a complete residential community with a comprehensive midcentury Modern plan and composition.

*Association:*

Capitol Towers retains its integrity of association with early urban redevelopment in Sacramento and California. Despite some alterations, its essential form, design and spatial organization have not changed from when it was constructed between 1959 and 1965. The components of the program and site plan are present and active. The complex is surrounded by other buildings and sites that are part of the Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project, including the Federal Building directly to the north that was constructed shortly after Capitol Towers' initial low-rise units were built.

**Contributing Features**

Capitol Tower has 13 contributing buildings:

- Eight (8) low-rise garden apartment buildings
- High-rise tower (1)
- Three (3) laundry/lounge buildings
- Parking structure (1)

The overall site and designed landscape is a contributing site and the Jacques Overhoff sculptural wall is a contributing object. The altered pool house/gym is a non-contributing building.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

#### Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
-

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- 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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

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

**Period of Significance**

1959-1965

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

**Significant Dates**

1959—Construction begins

1960—First 92 low-rise units dedicated

1961—Sculpture wall installed

1961—Final 114 low-rise units opened

1963-1965—High rise and parking structure constructed

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons

Edward Larrabee Barnes

DeMars & Reay

Lawrence Halprin

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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.)

Capitol Towers, constructed between 1959 and 1965 on most of a four-block area in Sacramento, California, is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as among the earliest urban redevelopment projects in Sacramento, and the first privately-sponsored residential project to start construction in California. The initial development of 92 garden apartment units, starting in 1959 and dedicated in 1960, was the first implementation of federal urban redevelopment funds in the West for private housing to replace those demolished under slum clearance. As the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency's Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project was the first to use tax increment financing, the construction of Capitol Towers was at the forefront of redevelopment in California that would reshape many of the state's urban areas in the second half of the twentieth century.

Capitol Towers is also significant under Criterion C as a well-planned and well-designed example of urban redevelopment housing. Not only does its pedestrian-oriented design combine low-rise and high-rise buildings, integrated landscape features, parking at the periphery, and amenities for its residents, the design also maintains a strong urban presence while balancing privacy and community for its residents. Capitol Towers exhibited thoughtful and people-oriented design and planning features from conception through completion, even as the designers refined the design while adhering to the requirements that came with federal funding. In addition, Capitol Towers was the first redevelopment project constructed by many of its talented design team that included Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Edward Larrabee Barnes, DeMars & Reay and Lawrence Halprin, and reflects their social and aesthetic philosophies. In particular, Capitol Towers embodies the design and planning approach of WBE applied to a large urban site, and is considered by Lawrence Halprin to be his first urban plaza.

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

Constructed in three phases between 1959 and 1965, Capitol Towers occupies most of a four-block area south of Capitol Avenue that was earmarked for multifamily residential housing in Sacramento Redevelopment Agency's 1954 Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project. Developer James Scheuer and a design team consisting of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE), Edward Larrabee Barnes, DeMars & Reay, landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, as well as local Sacramento firm Dreyfuss & Blackford, and New York-based Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass, created a more informal, people-oriented housing complex in contrast to the tower-in-the-park model that had already come to define urban redevelopment housing by the late 1950s. Despite the limits imposed by Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance, the talented team employed thoughtful planning, design, and landscape to realize a highly livable community in the heart of California's capitol.

**Redevelopment in Sacramento**

As suburbanization accelerated in American metropolitan areas in the years after World War II, urban cores drastically diminished in importance as commercial, residential, and business centers. Crowded and unsanitary housing conditions in American cities from the late 19th and early 20th century galvanized progressive reformers to push for "slum clearance," and the situation worsened with the lack of investment during the Great Depression and World War II.<sup>1</sup> In California, the state legislature passed the California Redevelopment Act in 1945 to provide state funds for local improvement projects. The Act allowed a municipality to acquire property deemed "blighted," clear it, and sell or lease it to a private developer to create new uses that complied with the community's general plan and remained in the public interest.<sup>2</sup> However, substantial funding came with the passage of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which provided two-thirds the cost for "slum clearance" as well as funding for construction of publicly owned housing.<sup>3</sup>

Sacramento developed an initial redevelopment plan in 1950 focused on the West End, the area stretching from the Sacramento River east to Seventh Street and south of the Southern Pacific Depot to R or S Street.<sup>4</sup> Designed by Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander, the plan called for extensive slum clearance and the construction of high-rise public housing along the riverfront.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Allen Hays, *The Federal Government & Urban Housing*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), p.166-167.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Lastufka, "Redevelopment of Sacramento's West End, 1950-1970: A Historical Overview with an Analysis of the Impact of Relocation," (MA thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1985), p. 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> Hays, p. 168 and Seven M. Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City* (Charleston SC, Chicago IL, Portsmouth NH, San Francisco CA: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), p.127.

<sup>4</sup> Avella, p.126. A part of old Sacramento, the West End's aging buildings had deteriorated and the area embodied the perception of urban ills with high crime, bars, places of ill-repute, and flop houses. It was also where many single men working as laborers lived, and overlapped with several ethnic neighborhoods. However, to the established powerbrokers, it was a blighted area that was preventing the city from booming and urban redevelopment was an opportunity to remake the area.

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The project stalled after business interests opposed the public housing component and the relocation process met resistance.

In 1954, amendments to the Federal Housing Act weakened the link between public housing and redevelopment.<sup>5</sup> This opened the way for commercial uses to play a role in the urban redevelopment process, as well as provide special Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance guarantee, initially under Section 220, for private development of multi-family residential housing in urban redevelopments areas.<sup>6</sup>

A new redevelopment plan emerged from the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency (SRA), an independent urban redevelopment entity separate from the City of Sacramento. The new plan focused on the Capitol Mall area between the West End and the State Capitol. This plan for the Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project (Project 2-A) encompassed 15 blocks north and south of Capitol Avenue between portions of Third and Eighth Streets. The plan assigned new land uses for public buildings, parking, commercial, and housing. A four-block area—one block south of Capitol Avenue, between N and P Streets and Fifth and Seventh Streets—was designated for multi-family housing.<sup>7</sup>

In order to tap the federal funds, the City needed to match one-third of the plan's cost. Sacramento attempted to pass a bond measure in 1954 to fund the redevelopment project, but the city's voters rejected it. Instead, SRA used a provision of the state's Community Redevelopment Law for an innovative financing mechanism now known as tax increment financing.<sup>8</sup> Tax increment financing freezes property tax revenue in the redevelopment area at a baseline level for entities other than the redevelopment agency; increases in property tax over the baseline is returned to the redevelopment agency with the assumption that the increase in value was created by the redevelopment agency's investment. This allowed the SRA itself to issue a bond without the need for voter approval, with the expectation that future tax revenues from the increased property values would pay for the bond.<sup>9</sup>

### **Capitol Towers**

Even with the Capitol Mall Project approved and financing secured, SRA spent several years developing and implementing plans for land acquisition, resident relocation, and land clearance, as well as attracting private developers willing to develop projects. SRA selected various developers for different parcels rather than a single developer to take on the entire project area.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hays, p.169. The 1954 Housing Act also changed the program's name from urban redevelopment to urban renewal. For the sake of consistency, "urban redevelopment" is used throughout this nomination.

<sup>6</sup> Hays, p.174.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Arden, "Officials See Completed Plan of Capitol Mall Redevelopment," *Sacramento Bee*, August 27, 1955.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel S. Maroon, "Redevelopment in the Golden State: A Study in Plenary Power Under the California Constitution," *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly*, Vol. 40:2, Winter 2013, p.454.

<http://www.hastingsconlawquarterly.org/archives/V40/Maroon%20Final.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Richard Trainor, *Floor, Fire and Blight: A History of Redevelopment in Sacramento*, (Sacramento: Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency, 1991), p.34-35.

<sup>10</sup> Trainor, p 37 and Allan Temko, "Sacramento's Second Gold Rush," *Architectural Forum*, October 1960, p. 129.

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In 1958, SRA selected New York-based James H. Scheuer and Roger L. Stevens to develop the multi-family housing parcel.<sup>11</sup> As president of Renewal and Development Corporation (RDC), Scheuer had previously developed urban redevelopment housing in cities like Washington, DC, St. Louis, and Cleveland, and he would go on to develop others in San Francisco and San Juan, Puerto Rico around the time of Capitol Towers.<sup>12</sup>

Scheuer and his design team presented the design proposal for Capitol Towers in March 1958, “climaxing nearly eight years of preparatory work,” by SRA.<sup>13</sup> Expected to be “the first federally assisted residential slum clearance development to be constructed in the western states,” the newly named Capitol Towers would have three 15-story towers and two hundred garden apartment units in two- and three-story buildings in a staggered pattern to “give the project a style relieved of architectural monotony.”<sup>14</sup> Each apartment would have an outdoor living space, either a balcony or a patio, and near each tower would be a court with a different recreational theme—such as an activity area with a pool, a sunken garden, and a tree-shaded area. Other suggested amenities included a play area with sculptures for children, an outdoor telephone booth disguised as a Parisian kiosk, large sundials, sculptures, and a fountain. A poppy motif in various colors would be carried throughout the site.<sup>15</sup>

The plan was to construct all the garden apartments and one tower first, and then to construct the other two towers as Sacramento’s apartment market warranted. While groundbreaking was anticipated later in 1958, the project plans still needed official SRA approval, concurrence by the federal government, and a purchase price that was acceptable to SRA. These approvals and negotiations delayed the start of the project as Scheuer and his team refined the designs to bring the project in line with FHA financing requirements.<sup>16</sup> In the meantime, Scheuer and WBE urged SRA not to approve a street widening plan around the project site, as it would uproot more than 90 street trees that they believed would “add greatly to the attractiveness of the project.”<sup>17</sup>

The construction of Capitol Tower’s first phase of 92 low-rise garden apartments in 1960 represented the first private investment in urban redevelopment housing in California. Cities across the state prepared for redevelopment in the 1950s with redevelopment plans, land acquisition, resident relocation, and building demolition that, on the one hand, often destroyed whole neighborhoods and displaced long-term residents but also allowed for the construction of modern urban cores that transformed California cities in the second half of the twentieth century. Some publicly funded projects such as public housing, government buildings, and cultural

<sup>11</sup> “NY Firm Gets Signal to Start Designing \$15,000,000 Mall,” *Sacramento Bee*, January 14, 1958. According to Temko, “Sacramento’s Second Gold Rush,” Stevens, a theater producer and real estate executive, would later withdraw due to heavy commitments elsewhere.

<sup>12</sup> Kurt F. Stone, *The Jews of Capitol Hill: A Compendium of Jewish Congressional Members* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press Inc, 2011), p. 227.

<sup>13</sup> Edward F. Meagher, “Mall Apartment Project Designs Are Presented,” *Sacramento Bee*, March 27, 1958.

<sup>14</sup> Meagher, “Mall Apartment Project Designs.”

<sup>15</sup> Meagher, “Mall Apartment Project Designs.”

<sup>16</sup> “Scheuer Plans Earlier Mall Towers Start,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 17, 1958.

<sup>17</sup> “Mall Redevelopers Act to Save Trees,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 17, 1958.

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institutions, were part of the rebuilding, but private developers willing to invest in declining city centers, and willing to take on the complicated financing and regulations that came with federal funds, were responsible for the bulk of urban redevelopment. Capitol Towers was among the first of these privately-sponsored projects that helped to modernize cities in California

### **Design of Capitol Towers**

Capitol Towers is significant under Criterion C as a well-planned urban redevelopment project designed by a team of highly trained and nationally influential Modernist architects and landscape architects. The design of the site expresses the social and aesthetic philosophies of its collaborating designers, who would continue to develop these ideas in subsequent urban projects. In particular, Capitol Towers embodies the design and planning approach of WBE applied to a large urban site, and is considered by Lawrence Halprin to be his first urban plaza.

A modernized, urban version of a garden apartment complex, Capitol Towers adapts aspects of the Garden City Movement and Le Corbusier's Ideal City to re-image a different way of urban living (discussed below). As lead firm WBE described Capitol Towers,

[T]he design was conceived as a pedestrian-oriented residential project. High-and-low rise units are clustered about a mall, providing an informal, yet orderly, interplay of vertical and horizontal building masses. A park-like atmosphere is created by the retention of magnificent old trees; enhanced by extensive lawns, plantings, and specially-designed street furniture; and is preserved by restricting parking to islands surrounded by service areas.<sup>18</sup>

In a highly collaborative process, WBE, DeMars & Reay, and Edward Larrabee Barnes contributed to the design of Capitol Towers with a host of consultants.<sup>19</sup> They included:

- Mayer, Whittlesey and Glass, architecture and planning (New York)
- Dreyfuss & Blackford, architecture (Sacramento)
- Nathaniel S. Keith, housing
- Lawrence Halprin, landscape architect
- DeLeuw, Cather & Company, engineers
- William B. Gilbert, engineer

Barnes took the lead on designing the low-rise buildings, while WBE became principal architect for the high-rise tower. Donn Emmons was the partner in charge at WBE, though all three partners were engaged in the early schematic designs. DeMars & Reay and Mayer, Whittlesey and Glass, with their experiences in mass housing, were involved as well in the early site layout and planning. Ideas and designs went back and forth among those who were local in the Bay

<sup>18</sup> Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, *Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., Architects* (San Francisco, CA: Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, Inc., 1967), p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> See Correspondence 1957-58, 1958-60 folders in "Sacramento Redevelopment: Capitol Towers," William W. Wurster/Wurster, Bernardi, & Emmons Collection, (1976-2), Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

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Area (WBE, DeMars & Reay, and Halprin primarily) and in New York (Barnes and Mayer, Whittlesey and Glass in the initial concepts).<sup>20</sup>

Even after the initial concept was released in 1958, featuring staggered low-rise buildings with three high-rise towers on a superblock with parking at the periphery, the team continued to refine and discuss design elements, particularly in light of FHA requirements for room count, rent affordability, and loan terms. The largest change came from Dreyfuss & Blackford, who reoriented the high-rises from a north-south longitudinal axis to an east-west axis. Familiar with the local natural environment, the Sacramento-based associate architecture firm cautioned against expanses of glass on western exposures that would create uncomfortable conditions in Sacramento's hot summers. After discussions about northern exposures in winter months and the cost savings from reduced air conditioning loads, the design was changed to the final plan.

In addition to saving some of the street trees, Lawrence Halprin also retained some of the mature trees the site to incorporate into Capitol Towers.<sup>21</sup> Halprin incorporated into the paved central plaza a grove of trees (appear to be London plane trees or *Platanus x acerifolia*), distinctive deciduous trees that provide a low canopy during the summer months and add vibrancy with color, texture and shadow. This urban design element used in combination with a water fountain was used in Halprin's later highly acclaimed designs for University of California's Sproul Plaza in 1962, and Lovejoy Fountain Park in Portland, Oregon in 1966.<sup>22</sup> Other locations in Sacramento feature variations of this Modern-era sensibility, including the Sacramento County Courthouse at Ninth and G Streets built in 1965.

To unify the Capitol Towers site and complement the landscape design, Halprin specifically designed a set of street furniture for the project, including a globe light standard, wood-slat benches with curved backs, kiosks, and trash cans. He worked with graphic designer Saul Bass and designer Alexander Girard on graphics and a color scheme, as well as with artist Jacques Overhoff on the sculpture wall.<sup>23</sup> Some proposed features, such as the sundials and poppy motif, changed or were ultimately not incorporated.

The initial phase of 92 low-rise units were built in 1959 and 1960 within the northern half of the superblock and dedicated at the end of 1960. The remainder of the low-rise buildings, 114 units in all, opened in mid-1961, just after the Overhoff sculpture wall was installed.<sup>24</sup> In March 1963, ground broke for the 15-story high-rise tower, containing 203 units. The four-level parking structure along the east side at Seventh Street was constructed with the high rise. The tower was

<sup>20</sup> Correspondence 1957-1958 folder, "Sacramento Redevelopment: Capitol Towers," WBE Collection.

<sup>21</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Correspondence (014.I.A.6000) from Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>22</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Halprin Open Space Sequence, March 6, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Sacramento Redevelopment Correspondence (014.I.A.6000), Lawrence Halprin Collection. Originally, Bass and Girard had larger roles in the project, but time demands and cost cutting measures reduced the scopes of their work. It is not clear how much of their work remains at the site.

<sup>24</sup> "Tower Project in West End Gets Sculpture," *Sacramento Bee*, April 30, 1961.

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dedicated in January 1965, marking the completion of the final significant component of Capitol Tower's distinctive site plan.<sup>25</sup> Although completed just a few months shy of 50 years ago, the high-rise tower and parking structure were part of Capitol Tower's site plan from the beginning and completed after most of the site's defining features were in place.

Over the course of Capitol Tower's construction, progress was being made in the overall Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project: the Federal Building north of the Capitol Towers and some commercial buildings north of Capitol Avenue were constructed. However, the bulk of the redevelopment project came in the late 1960s through the 1980s. In Sacramento as in other American cities, the trend of mass suburbanization that took hold in the postwar period could not be reversed easily, despite the efforts of urban redevelopment. The lack of market demand for high-rise housing in downtown Sacramento prevented Scheuer from building the other two high-rise towers at Capitol Towers. Unaffiliated residential towers were constructed on the site's northwest and southwest corners separately in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

### **Capitol Towers as Urban Development Housing**

As initiated by Ebenezer Howard in England in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and popularized in the United States by progressive housing reformers such as Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and William Wurster's wife Catherine Bauer in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Garden City principles focused on removing the city grid and creating superblocks with housing clustered around shared, park-like open spaces. Pedestrian and automobile uses were separated to allow for safe, pedestrian-only interior spaces, automobiles were confined to the periphery and through streets minimized. Seen mainly as an alternative to overcrowded urban living, examples of communities using Garden City principles often were located in satellite or suburban areas and often inwardly oriented.<sup>26</sup>

With Modern architect Le Corbusier's 1920s theory of the "Ideal City," where free-standing towers were set in blocks of open space, the superblock configuration also separated pedestrian and automobile use. Standardized, modern, high-rise towers provided the necessary residential density in limited footprints so that much of the ground plane could be used for open space with sufficient light, air, and greenery often lacking in the crowded 19<sup>th</sup> century city.<sup>27</sup> Also distinct from the city street grid, this more cost-effective "towers in the park" model came to dominate postwar urban redevelopment housing with mixed success.

Capitol Tower's developer James Scheuer articulated his thoughts about urban redevelopment housing in a letter to the *New York Times* in July 1958. His letter encapsulates the mission statement of Capitol Towers, the plans of which had been released in March that year and was in process of design refinement and FHA approvals. In response to an article denouncing urban redevelopment projects in New York as "bleak towers" and "box-like buildings, no better than

<sup>25</sup> "Capitol Towers Apartments Will Dedicate 15 Story Tower Thursday," *Sacramento Bee*, January 10, 1965

<sup>26</sup> Page & Turnbull, "Parkmerced Historic Resource Evaluation & Cultural Landscape Assessment," November 13, 2009, p. 22-23.

<sup>27</sup> Page & Turnbull, pl. 23-24.

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the slums they replaced,” Scheuer agreed that redevelopment projects have “for the most part the uniformity of barracks and are painfully devoid of imagination.”<sup>28</sup> Scheuer continues,

We have now been warned that unless urban renewal is radically improved it will die aborning through lack of public support. The public will simply refuse to make the necessary capital investment, not only in terms of money but in terms of the inconvenience and dislocation which are unavoidable costs of redevelopment.

There is no reason why redevelopment projects cannot be exciting and attractive. Why must all buildings in a project be identical? Tall structures can be combined with medium and low structures. Where land costs make them feasible, a small number of two or three story garden apartments can add informality and the human dimension to projects.

When we erect high-rise apartment houses, slab buildings can be combined with tower structures. And they can be staggered rather than lined up like soldiers on parade.

Swimming pools, reflecting pools, imaginative playground facilities, trees, shrubs, fountains, sun dials and sculpture can be used to make developments attractive places to live. Why not break away from the conventional red brick by varying the color and texture of the building materials? Why not employ a variety of window, facade, and entrance treatments?

We should get away from the enormous projects of the past, projects which are a thing apart from the neighborhood and not of it. Let us plan “vest-pocket” projects, combining public housing units, cooperative, limited-profit buildings and upper-income Title I housing. This would vary the tenants as well as the structures, making projects more interesting places in which to live.

Fortunately, the picture is not entirely black. In various United States cities some of America’s most talented architects are involved in urban renewal. Within a year a great deal of their work will be finished, showing what can be done if only we set about to do the job with style and imagination.<sup>29</sup>

As constructed, Capitol Towers embodies Scheuer’s vision of “style and imagination” for urban redevelopment housing. While it is not the only project to incorporate low-rise apartment buildings and high-rise residential towers, the collaborative planning, rich and layered site design, and spatial relationships at Capitol Towers, working in concert with the urban setting, resulted in a “more interesting place[s] in which to live,” and a compelling early example of redevelopment housing in California. .

<sup>28</sup> James H. Scheuer, “Letters to the Times: To Beautify Housing,” The New York Times, July 8, 1958.

<sup>29</sup> Scheuer, “Letters to the Times: To Beautify Housing.”

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The spatial relationships between the low-rise and the high-rise building create a comfortable density that avoids enormous stretches of vast emptiness seen in some “towers in the park” developments. The park-like setting is created through a variety of proportionally-scaled spaces for private uses, shared lawns, quiet courtyards, communal gathering, and recreational use. Taken in with the Halprin-design street furniture, hardscape pathways and landscape features the site comes together into a cohesive, balanced whole.

For the residents, privacy and community are balanced. Clearly defined patios to the rear of residential units and balconies overlooking the internal walkways and city sidewalks offer them private outdoor spaces. Community amenities, such as the pool, central plaza, and ground-floor shops in the high-rise tower, provide gathering areas for residents, while the connected lawns in front of the garden apartment buildings offer areas shared among immediate neighbors. These designed spaces were intended to demonstrate the possibilities of rich and diverse communal interaction through a landscaped, pedestrian-oriented setting inserted into an urban core area. The project served as an early and highly regarded demonstration of both interactive public space connected with the city circulation, and a respite for the core residential community.

As is often the case with FHA-involved developments, the buildings are simply detailed. However, the low-rise buildings are staggered to prevent straight, monotonous blocks of units. Breezeways between modules create permeable spaces for natural breezes, views and pedestrian circulation. Simple design details, such as the uniformly deep eaves and the wood slat sunshades over the patio doors, not only create architectural accents and visual consistency but they also provide functional sun protection and dynamic shading throughout the site. Such details, along with the unusual casement windows with lower panes that form almost full-height glazing and private outdoor areas for each unit, add to the visual interest and livability of the units.

The high-rise tower, one of the earliest by WBE, is similarly modest in detail but avoids flatness and monotony. Though the windows, sliding glass doors, and concrete balconies are consistent on the two long sides (north and south facades), they have different bay patterns to give some visual interest. The projecting penthouse balcony gives the building a top, almost in the traditional base-shaft-top organization seen in Classical and New Formalist buildings. The base of the high-rise is partially open and recessed to create a sense of lightness and reception. The resulting colonnade offers a shaded walkway to access the neighborhood-serving retail and restaurants.

As much as Capitol Towers is a self-contained, pedestrian-oriented site, it remains open, permeable, and complementary to the larger urban context. At the northeast and southeast corners, the low-rises present a street-facing presence to engage the site with the surrounding streets, which is unlike earlier larger-scaled garden apartment complexes that emphasized an internal orientation as an escape from the city. Similarly, the main north-south and east-west pedestrian axes at Capitol Towers generally continue the urban sidewalk grid, rather than create a new circulation pattern. The low-rise buildings and its balconies internally face the main pedestrian walks as on a city street, and the open and welcoming pedestrian entrances at the

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west, north, and south allow residents and non-residents alike to walk through the development and reconnect with the street grid.

The parking areas, a necessity by the late 1950s, also reinforce the urbanity of the site. While they are placed at the edges so that Capitol Towers can have open, car-free internal spaces, the surface parking areas are tucked into interior courts and accessed from the streets by narrow driveway curb cuts. They are surrounded by low-rise apartment buildings to allow residents convenient access to cars and a place for services while avoiding barrier elements at interfaces with the city. The exception is at the east side along Seventh Street, where a four-story parking structure and a surface parking lot serve the high-rise tower.

### **Recognition for Capitol Towers**

Before construction started, as the design was undergoing refinements by the project team, the essential concepts of Capitol Towers received national recognition. Most significantly, the project received the First Design Award from *Progressive Architecture's* Annual Design Awards Program in early 1959.<sup>30</sup> The First Design Award was the highest honor recognizing a single project from a pool of over six hundred submissions. The Capitol Towers project also rose above almost thirty projects that received Award Citations and Design Awards. The jury, which consisted of architects Hugh Stubbins (chair), Ladislav Rado, Philip Will, Minoru Yamasaki, and engineer Milo S. Ketchum, were “looking for a clear architectural expression; something that contributes to development of this expression.”<sup>31</sup> In selecting Capitol Towers, the jury recognized that the proposed design was different from what was being built under urban redevelopment elsewhere.

At a time when Urban Redevelopment is much in the public consciousness, and both proposals and finished projects are daily news items, it is hoped that this First Design Award will arrest the attention of architects, planners, developers, civic officials, and all others concerned with rebuilding our cities. This project, prepared with unusual care, should stimulate reflection, stock-taking, and thorough study...Unlike most current projects in which use, coverage, and density are rigidly prescribed for the planners, the program, in this case, was jointly developed by the Redevelopment Agency, the private developers, their architects and consultants. Thus, an earlier proposal of an all-high-rise project has been replaced by a design which encompasses both high- and low-rise units and places particular emphasis on intensive ground-use, on the separation of pedestrian and vehicular ways, and the shaping of exterior spaces.<sup>32</sup>

The award description particularly called out the parking in cul-de-sacs that leaves the interior of the site free of vehicular traffic, the privacy afforded tenants with the balconies and patios

<sup>30</sup> “P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards,” *Progressive Architecture*, January 1959, p.105-111.

<sup>31</sup> “P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards,” p.105.

<sup>32</sup> “P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards,” p.107-109. The initial Sacramento redevelopment plan by Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander had received a Special Design Award from *Progressive Architecture* in 1955.

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oriented in opposite directions, the staggering of the apartments “[t]o further the visual interest even more, and to increase the amount of privacy,” and the use of breezeways at the points where apartments are offset. According to the jury, “In this way, the architects have been able to maintain the urban character of the closed square while ventilating the courts.”<sup>33</sup> As the summary states,

[T]he Jury was particularly pleased with the informal, yet orderly interplay of the vertical and horizontal building masses; the excellent use of the grounds; the ingenious design of the low-rise units, which are both economical and livable; and the solution of the parking element. Unanimously, the Jurors considered this project an important piece of work and a highly sensitive design—one which stood above all the others for qualities that went well beyond mere function.<sup>34</sup>

With the exception of the two high-rise towers and more vibrant use of color, most of what the *Progressive Architecture* award recognized was realized in the built work, even as the towers were re-oriented to better address Sacramento’s summer heat.

Upon completion of the low-rise apartment buildings, Capitol Towers received a Merit Award from the Northern California chapter of the American Institute of Architects’ Honor Awards Program in 1963. The award citation noted, “Maximum advantage was taken of the park-like atmosphere of the site by creating a central core exclusively for pedestrians in this apartment complex.”<sup>35</sup> The jury commented,

A most handsome solution to an extremely difficult and important architectural problem. Many times mass housing in this income bracket becomes a hard-boiled, inhuman concept. The fine separation of the occupancy from the automobile is most commendable, and all the jury agreed that from the pedestrian viewpoint—the gardens, the plaza furniture, and the recreational spaces were most successful. A comfortable and simple transition from the private residential living to public housing.<sup>36</sup>

Capitol Towers also won a First Honor Award from the Urban Renewal Administration as part of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) Awards Program in 1964 and a Certificate of Excellence from the Governor’s Design Awards Program in 1966.<sup>37</sup> The Advisory Committee for the Urban Renewal Administration award “remarked on the subtle yet rich landscape design as greatly enhancing the site and the simple, direct structures. Good site planning thus resulted in

<sup>33</sup> “P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards,” p.110-11.

<sup>34</sup> “P/A Sixth Annual Design Awards,” p.111.

<sup>35</sup> “San Francisco Bay Region A.I.A. Awards,” *Arts & Architecture*, May 1963, p.28.

<sup>36</sup> “San Francisco Bay Region A.I.A. Awards,” p.28. It does not appear that the reference to “public housing” was intended to mean publicly -owned housing.

<sup>37</sup> Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, p.30.

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well-scaled open spaces. There seemed to be an effective program of design of street furniture, lighting fixtures, benches, etc.”<sup>38</sup>

Capitol Towers was among the most recognized projects designed for Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons as well as the other designers on the team.

### Architects and Designers

Capitol Towers was a collaboration among a talented, nationally renowned team of master designers. It was an early opportunity to develop their ideas and approaches to reimagining an urban site just as American city centers were being reconsidered and reconceived. Capitol Towers was an important transitional project particularly for WBE and Lawrence Halprin to test their social, aesthetic, and planning philosophies on a larger, urban site.

#### *Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons*

Principal William Wurster (1895-1973) first established his own firm in 1924 in Berkeley focused primarily on residential projects in the popular period revival styles of the era. Through key projects and clients like the Gregory Farmhouse for Warren and Sadie Gregory in Scotts Valley (north of Santa Cruz, 1928), Wurster experimented with vernacular styles that were unassuming yet closely linked to the surrounding natural environment. Such understated approaches, in contrast to the more formal, grand designs expected of the wealthy, “fully embodied the values of a monied California society intent on living unostentatiously and close to the land.”<sup>39</sup>

Additional residential commissions for friends of clients like the Gregorys in San Francisco and throughout the rural and suburban Bay Area further developed Wurster’s reputation and ideas of California living, with its emphasis on casualness and outdoor living. His interest in landscape led to a prolific collaboration with landscape architect Thomas Church (1902-1978), a pioneer of modern California landscape design.

By the mid-1930s, Wurster’s practice was firmly established as the International Style and European Modernism started to appear in the Bay Area. With younger architects like Theodore Bernardi (1903-1990) bringing more progressive ideas about modernism to the firm, and Wurster’s own travels to Europe in the 1930s, projects in the 1940s started to reflect modernist features of crisp lines, rectilinear volumes, expanses of glazing, and lower pitched roofs. The projects remained responsive to individual sites and did not abandon the needs of clients in favor of architectural doctrine.

The firm produced numerous residential projects in the late 1930s to 1950s as it became first Wurster and Bernardi in 1944 and finally Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons (WBE) with Donn

<sup>38</sup> “Redevelopment Design Award—Residential: Capitol Towers Garden Apartments,” *URA 1964 Honor Awards Program in Urban Renewal Design*, Urban Renewal Administration, Housing and Home Finance Agency.

<sup>39</sup> Marc Treib, “William Wilson Wurster: The Feeling of Function,” in Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*, (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and University of California Press, 1995), p. 19.

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Emmons (1910-1997) becoming a partner in 1945. It was the projects of this period, along with fellow Bay Area architects Gardner Dailey and John Ekin Dinwiddie that came to define the regional variant on Modernism known as Bay Region Modernism.

Wurster's interests start to expand into urban planning and mass housing in the 1940s, first with his marriage to noted urban planning and progressive housing expert Catherine Bauer in 1941 and his involvement with defense housing projects also in 1941. In 1943, Wurster and Bauer move to the East Coast for Wurster to study urban planning at Harvard. He would remain on East Coast once he was appointed dean of the architecture school at MIT in 1944. Bernardi and Emmons took on the bulk of the firm's design work back in San Francisco, even upon Wurster's returned to the Bay Area in 1950 to serve as the dean for the architecture school at UC Berkeley. Deeply influenced by Wurster's "pragmatic regionally based design philosophy," Bernardi and Emmons continued Wurster's example of allowing the clients to lead the design process rather than impose the firm's design ideals as the firm grew in the 1950s.

WBE continued to design single-family residential projects into the 1960s, but those diminished as larger educational, commercial, and redevelopment commissions came into the firm. These ranged from the award-winning Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences (1954) at Stanford University to the prototype, and subsequent models, of the brand-defining, Marina-style Safeway grocery stores (1954-63) that proliferated across California to major urban renewal master planned and mixed used projects like Capitol Towers (1958-65) in Sacramento and Golden Gateway Redevelopment (1960-67) in San Francisco. The firm's other notable projects in San Francisco include the adaptive reuse and remodeling of Ghirardelli Square (1963-65) and the Bank of America headquarters (1965-77) with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, also redevelopment projects.

Capitol Towers was among the projects that helped WBE transition from single-family residential and commercial commissions like the Safeway stores, to larger scaled projects. The firm had worked on a number of university campus planning projects, as well as individual college buildings in the 1950s. Capitol Towers was an opportunity to engage with an urban site and implement the social and urban planning philosophies that interested Wurster and the other partners. As with their regional variant on Modernism, WBE did not follow the common trend for urban redevelopment housing design or accept the constraints of FHA regulations. WBE led the Capitol Towers design team in creating a more imaginative, humane alternative that embodied Garden City principles balanced with urbanity, mixed private and communal spaces, integrated modern landscapes, and the human experience. WBE would continue to develop these concepts in subsequent urban projects like Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project and Ghirardelli Square. Capitol Towers was one of 12 projects that WBE profiled in their 1967 company brochure highlighting the firm's significant larger projects.<sup>40</sup>

### *Lawrence Halprin*

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) is one of the most prolific American landscape architects of the postwar years. His approach, methodology, and compositions have left a resonating impact upon

<sup>40</sup>Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, p. 30-31.

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numerous urban spaces not only throughout the United States, but across the world. He was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1916 and attended Cornell University and the University of Wisconsin, Madison as a horticulture student. From 1942 to 1944, he attended the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where he studied under prominent designers Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius, who were famous for spreading the influence of the Bauhaus school and early international modernism. At Harvard he met and befriended William Wurster.

Following his completion of the program and active duty during World War II, Halprin arrived in San Francisco, where his contact with Wurster landed him employment with Thomas Church, a prominent and innovative landscape architect. Halprin worked with Church on several projects, including the acclaimed Donnell Garden in Sonoma, California, which became an early modern masterpiece that embodied the casual, indoor-outdoor California lifestyle. In 1949, Halprin established his own practice focused primarily on residential gardens, of which he designed over 300 between 1949 and 1961. By the mid-1950s, Halprin's practice expanded to designing retail spaces, institutional landscape programs, and university campus plans, and (starting in the 1960s) larger commissions for corporate plazas, urban public parks, museum gardens, and national parks.

Throughout his career he established a style that was reminiscent of the modern abstract art movement, often evoking organic and natural elements in geometric forms. Nature was a common source of inspiration for many of Halprin's designs, albeit expressed through modern and austere materials, like concrete. The most common natural element that Halprin celebrated in his designs was water, which became a hallmark of his work following a life-changing discovery of hiking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the late 1950s. Also important was the notion of movement, an appreciation gained from his wife, Anna, who was a professional modern dancer. Halprin developed movement plans or "scores" that were part methodical analysis and part choreography compositions of how people interact with a series of spaces and the typological elements therein. Halprin considered issues such as pedestrian circulation, rest areas, contrasts of noise volume, perspective views, access to daylight, and user experience. These scores became fundamental to the RSVP cycle design process that he developed throughout the 1960s.<sup>41</sup>

A frequent collaborator with WBE and other San Francisco architects, Halprin is best known for a number of prominent works within his long career: St. Francis Square (1963), San Francisco, CA; Sea Ranch (1962-67), Sonoma County, CA; Ghirardelli Square (1963-65, with WBE), San Francisco, CA; Nicollet Avenue Mall (1967), Minneapolis; Portland Open Space Sequence (1965-78), Portland, OR; California State Fairgrounds (1968, with WBE), Sacramento; Skyline Park (1975, demolished 2003), Denver, CO; Seattle Freeway Park (1976), Seattle, WA; and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (1997), Washington D.C.

About Capitol Towers, Halprin wrote, "I designed my first urban plaza at the center of the Sacramento project, and brought in the sculptor Jacques Overhoff to work on an enclosing cast

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<sup>41</sup> RSVP stands for "Resources, Scores, Valuation and Performance," which is a holistic interpretation of a space that includes existing resources and conditions, potential interactions with these conditions, the revision and interpretation of interactions with the space, and the actions over time within the space.

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concrete wall. I was developing street details for these larger commissions and I was learning about graphics from the great graphic designer Saul Bass, who was collaborating on some of these projects.”<sup>42</sup>

Halprin was known for his work in public urban plazas, often as part of larger urban redevelopment projects that came following Capitol Towers. From the nomination for his Open Space Sequence in Portland, OR in 2013.

Halprin’s particular contribution was to reinvent the public plaza as a symbolic yet interactive place. Elizabeth Meyer, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia, offers that Halprin “reimagined a public realm for American cities that had been cleared by federal urban renewal programs and abandoned for new suburban developments.” The timing of this reinvention was critical; Halprin’s projects were often a core element of revitalizing what were then considered dying city cores. Put another way by landscape architect Laurie Olin, “Larry was working at a time when no one believed in public spaces...No one did it with such bravura and sense of generosity.”<sup>43</sup>

Capitol Towers was an early large-scale and urban project for Halprin, and reflects aspects of his initial thoughts and approaches to designing spaces for cities. Halprin extensively featured the Capitol Towers street furniture in his 1963 book *Cities*, in which he examined the components that contribute to landscape in cities. Halprin also includes a notional system evaluating “the walking experience,” through Capitol Tower in *Cities* as an example of evaluating a design and thinking about the “kinesthetic experience.”<sup>44</sup> A precursor to his RSVP Cycle, the Capitol Tower analysis demonstrates that Halprin was already considering the experience of movement as part of his design process, ideas that later developed into more formal studies of choreography with design.

#### *Edward Larrabee Barnes*

Edward Larrabee Barnes (1915-2004) studied architecture at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design in the 1940s and worked in the office of early Modern Movement masters Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer after graduation. After a stint as a naval architect in San Francisco during World War II, Barnes landed positions in prominent California firms, working first for William Wurster and later for Henry Dreyfuss, who was working on developing mass-production housing types.<sup>45</sup> While with Dreyfuss, Barnes experimented with modern architectural forms, theories, and manufacturing techniques to address the burgeoning demand for housing that developed in the post-war years. These experience would benefit Barnes while he worked on two large house redevelopment projects: Capitol Towers Apartments in Sacramento, CA, and El Monte in San Juan, Puerto Rico, both for developer James Scheuer.

<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Halprin, *A Life Spent Changing Places*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.108.

<sup>43</sup> John M. Tess, Heritage Consulting Group, “Halprin Open Space Sequence,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, prepared November 17, 2012, listed March 6, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence Halprin, *Cities*, Revised edition, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), p.212-3.

<sup>45</sup> Summarized from Edward L. Barnes, *Edward Larrabee Barnes: Architect* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1994), p. 10-21.

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Barnes established his own practice in New York in 1948, starting with residential projects and growing to larger commercial and institutional commissions in the 1960s through the 1980s. Architectural critics have argued that Barnes' personal style was the absence of one. His various projects—private residences, academic buildings, campus plans, commercial towers, churches, museums, and housing developments—responded to modernist ideals and a participatory democratic environment, lacking monumental reference to the architect, or those who commissioned the building.<sup>46</sup> His approach addressed a site comprehensively—context, landscape, client needs, regulations, budget, aesthetics, projective image, structural systems, climate, etc.—and reflected his modernist ideals and education. Some of his most celebrated works include the Haystack Mountain School of Arts (1962), Deer Isle, ME; IBM 590 Madison Ave (1983), New York, NY; Dallas Museum of Art (1984), Dallas, TX; and Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center (1990), Los Angeles, CA.

Though simpler and less formal than his later works, Capitol Towers was an early large project for Barnes, and an opportunity to work with Wurster and WBE again. Similar to the other designers on the team, Barnes was not preoccupied with monumental architecture or designs adhering to architectural styles. He embraced the complex factors and social issues that could be addressed through modern architecture. While he is credited with the low-rise buildings' staggered plan and opposite orientation of patios and balconies, he was also part of the collaborative effort that saw suggestions and ideas go back and forth among the design team.

#### *DeMars & Reay*

Born in San Francisco, Vernon DeMars (1908-2005) received his Bachelors of Architecture from UC Berkeley in 1931 amidst the socio-economic turmoil of the Great Depression. With limited opportunities, DeMars acquired a job with the National Park Service, which eventually led to the position of Chief Architect of the Western Division of the Farm Security Administration (FSA), a government organization that was established through the Roosevelt administration's New Deal policies. DeMars oversaw the planning, designing, and building of forty communities from 1937 to 1943 for the FSA, which focused on providing for the populations of migrant agricultural workers. These communities were meant to be quick to assemble and cheap to build, but socially adequate and culturally responsive to the drastic stresses and difficulties that were experienced by these displaced and transient populations.<sup>47</sup> Following this experience, DeMars began working for the National Housing Agency (NHA) in Washington DC as Chief of Housing Standards, where he was involved in researching potential post-war housing options.<sup>48</sup>

In the immediate postwar years, DeMars was invited to teach at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) by William Wurster, a fellow San Francisco architect who was then the dean

<sup>46</sup> Douglas Martin, "Edward Larrabee Barnes, Modern Architect, Dies at 89," *New York Times* (September 23, 2004)

<sup>47</sup> Paul Heyer, *Architects on Architecture*, (New York: Walker and Co., 1966), p. 96.

<sup>48</sup> Laura Ward et al, "Inventory of the Vernon DeMars Collection: 1933-2005," in *Environmental Design Archives*-College of Environmental Design (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 3, accessed June 26, 2014, <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/berkeley/ceda/demars.pdf>

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of the School of Architecture. DeMars continued to be involved with multi-family housing development and design while at MIT, assisting in the design of the acclaimed Eastgate Apartments located at MIT.<sup>49</sup> In 1950, DeMars and his wife, Betty Bates, moved back to the Bay Area, where he began teaching at the University of California Berkeley and would continue to do so until his retirement in 1975. Also, upon reestablishing himself in the Bay Area, DeMars became very involved in numerous housing projects, most notably the Easter Hill Village public housing development in Richmond, California, which he developed in 1954 with landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. DeMars and architect Donald P. Reay established their own firm DeMars & Reay in 1955. The firm specialized in housing and community development and addressed countless planning and design issues in the hopes of creating viable and socially responsible communities through comprehensive planning and the exploration of different building types and forms.<sup>50</sup>

DeMars stressed the importance of diversity as a fundamental component to successful communities. Diversity in building types not only provided a number of different practical and functional purposes and functions, but provided aesthetic variation within a development. DeMars recognized the monotony and the utilitarian aesthetic inherent within the housing projects of the day and sought to avoid this in his projects. The mixture of building types, density, scale, building arrangements, and spatial organization, while possessing enough architectural aesthetic continuity became trademarks of DeMars projects. This combination of diverse environmental design and comprehensive design were integral to his theory of “planned chaos.”<sup>51</sup>

In addition to DeMars’ mass housing experience, the firm also constructed a number of buildings at UC Berkeley, including the Student Center, Zellerbach Hall, and Wurster Hall in the 1960s and designed the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project with WBE in the early 1960s.

At Capitol Towers, DeMars and Reay were involved with the initial site planning in 1958 and likely contributed their experience with mass housing, community planning and federal agencies to the design team.

WBE, DeMars & Reay, and Halprin were part of the architectural community in San Francisco and had personal as well as working relationships primarily through William Wurster. Edward Larrabee Barnes also had connection to Wurster and WBE, as he worked in the office after World War II. All of the principal designers involved shared a philosophy that architecture was not about style or orthodoxy, but designing for the human experience. That philosophy is seen in the design and planning of Capitol Towers, and further explored in subsequent urban projects in collaborations by these firms.

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<sup>49</sup> Richard Peters and Henry Lagorio, “In Memorium: Vernon Armand DeMars - Professor of Architecture, Emeritus,” University of California Academic Senate, accessed June 26, 2014, <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/inmemoriam/vernonarmanddemars.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> Ward, “Inventory of the Vernon DeMars Collection: 1933-2005.”

<sup>51</sup> Peters and Lagorio, “In Memorium”

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WBE and DeMars & Reay would go on to design the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project in San Francisco, constructed in the early to mid-1960s, which also includes low-rise and high-rise residential buildings along with commercial office and retail spaces and an elevated landscape plaza. Lawrence Halprin designed the landscape at St. Francis Square, a 1963 cooperative housing development in San Francisco's Western Addition redevelopment area. WBE and Halprin also collaborated on Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco in the 1960s. With this project, counter to the wholesale demolition that defined urban redevelopment and urban renewal, WBE and Halprin adaptively reused existing buildings and added modern interventions.

### **Conclusion**

Built by a team of talented ground-breaking modern designers and an experienced developer, Capitol Towers is significant locally and state-wide as a successful example of urban redevelopment housing from the mid-twentieth century, and the first of its kind in California. It meets Criterion A as the first privately-sponsored urban redevelopment project to start construction within Sacramento as well as the first privately developed residential redevelopment project in California using federal funds. It served as an early precedent for future redevelopment projects in the state, particularly with housing, that defied national trends for the type and instead incorporated low-rises garden apartments, a high-rise tower, and integrated Modern landscapes.

Capitol Towers also meets Criterion C as an admirable example of urban redevelopment housing that uses thoughtful site planning, landscape design, and urban planning principles to create a livable community despite the constraints of federal requirements that often limited design options. As an early urban redevelopment project for its master designers, Capitol Towers was an important project for them individually and collectively to test their social and aesthetic philosophies for reimagining urban centers. While a collaborative project, Capitol Towers embodies the thoughtful design and planning approach of WBE, as well as preliminary exploration by Lawrence Halprin with urban plazas and spaces.

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** approx. 10.2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.576984 | Longitude: -121.502259 |
| 2. Latitude: 38.577264 | Longitude: -121.500853 |
| 3. Latitude: 38.576887 | Longitude: -121.499524 |
| 4. Latitude: 38.574826 | Longitude: -121.500413 |
| 5. Latitude: 38.575150 | Longitude: -121.501630 |
| 6. Latitude: 38.576086 | Longitude: -121.502649 |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The property boundaries correspond to three legal parcels with the Sacramento County Assessor Parcel Numbers: 006-0300-002, 006-0300-003, and 006-0300-004.

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

The boundaries for Capitol Tower was selected based on the three legal parcels that currently comprise the site. These parcels correspond to the original construction of Capitol Tower from 1959 to 1965 and exclude the two parcels on the superblock that were developed separately and at later dates.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Flora Chou, Cultural Resources Planner  
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telephone: 213-221-1202  
date: July 2, 2014

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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**

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

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Name of Property: Capitol Towers

City or Vicinity: Sacramento

County: Sacramento

State: CA

Photographer: Page & Turnbull

Date Photographed: April 9, 2014, except 0001 and 0015 on June 4, 2014

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

<b>PHOTO #</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION/VIEW</b>
0001	Main pedestrian entrance to Capitol Towers from Fifth Street, camera facing southeast.
0002	East-west main pedestrian axis flanked by low-rise garden apartments, camera facing east to central plaza.
0003	Typical low-rise garden apartment building with staggered unit modules along interior walkways, camera facing northeast.
0004	Central plaza, with sculptural wall, grid of London poplar trees, and circular fountain, camera facing northeast.
0005	Central plaza along north-south main walkway, camera facing north.
0006	Central plaza with low-rise garden apartments in background, camera facing northwest.
0007	South façade of high-rise tower with central plaza and low-rise garden units in the foreground, camera facing northeast.
0008	North-south pedestrian axis facing to central plaza, camera facing south.
0009	Typical three-story module with north and west facades of high-rise tower in background, camera facing southeast.
0010	Landscaped courtyard surrounded by low-rise garden apartments, camera facing south.

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- 0011 Typical breezeway between unit modules in garden apartment buildings, camera facing east.
- 0012 Typical breezeway and staggered unit module with continuous roof and deep eaves in low-rise garden apartment buildings, camera facing east.
- 0013 Sunken landscape court at northern of site, camera facing west.
- 0014 Low-rise garden apartments at the northern edge of Capitol Towers site along the south side of N Street, camera facing southeast.
- 0015 Low-rise garden apartments at the northeast corner of site with high-rise tower in the background at N and Seventh Streets, camera facing southwest.
- 0016 Low-rise garden apartments and landscaping along western side of Seventh Street, camera facing south.
- 0017 East facade of high-rise tower from midblock on Seventh Street, camera facing west.
- 0018 Four-level parking structure with south facade of high-rise tower in the background, camera facing northwest.
- 0019 South facade of high-rise tower juxtaposed with low-rise garden apartments in the foreground, camera facing northwest.
- 0020 Typical low-rise garden apartment buildings with enclosed private patios, camera facing southwest.
- 0021 Typical surface parking court enclosed by low-rise garden apartments, camera facing south.
- 0022 Recessed ground-floor storefronts and concrete pier colonnade of high-rise tower, camera facing west.
- 0023 Detail of high-rise tower's south façade with concrete balconies and aluminum-framed window units, camera facing north.
- 0024 Example of landscape court with grid of trees between low-rise garden apartments and parking lot, camera facing southwest.
- 0025 Typical laundry building, camera facing east.
- 0026 South facade of pool house, camera facing north

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- 0027 Swimming pool with central plaza in the background, camera facing west.
- 0028 Typical Lawrence Halprin-design wood-slat bench and trash receptacle.
- 0029 Overall view of Capital Tower with high-rise tower above low-rise garden apartments and full canopy of tree cover, camera facing east.

**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.).

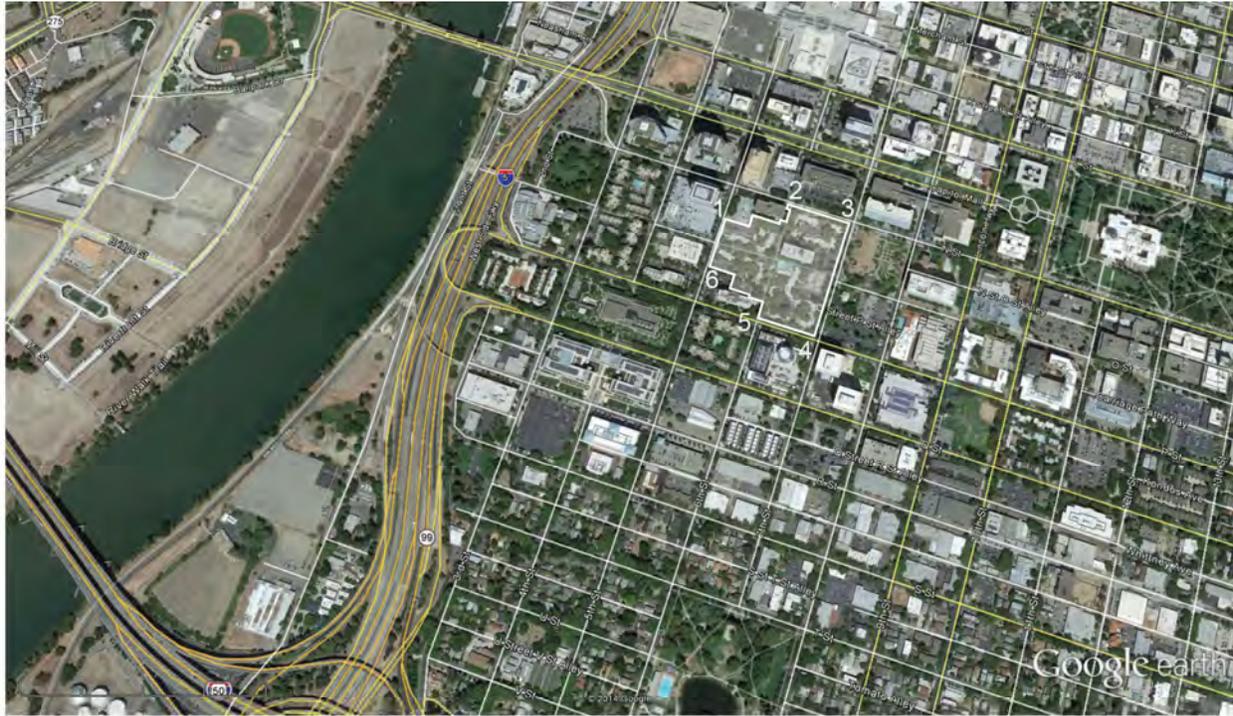
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form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

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
County and State

### Additional Documentation: Location Map

Figure 1.



Google earth

feet 3000  
km 1



Decimal Degrees:

1: 38.576984, -121.502259

2: 38.577264, -121.500853

3: 38.576887, -121.499524

4: 38.574826, -121.500413

5: 38.575150, -121.501630

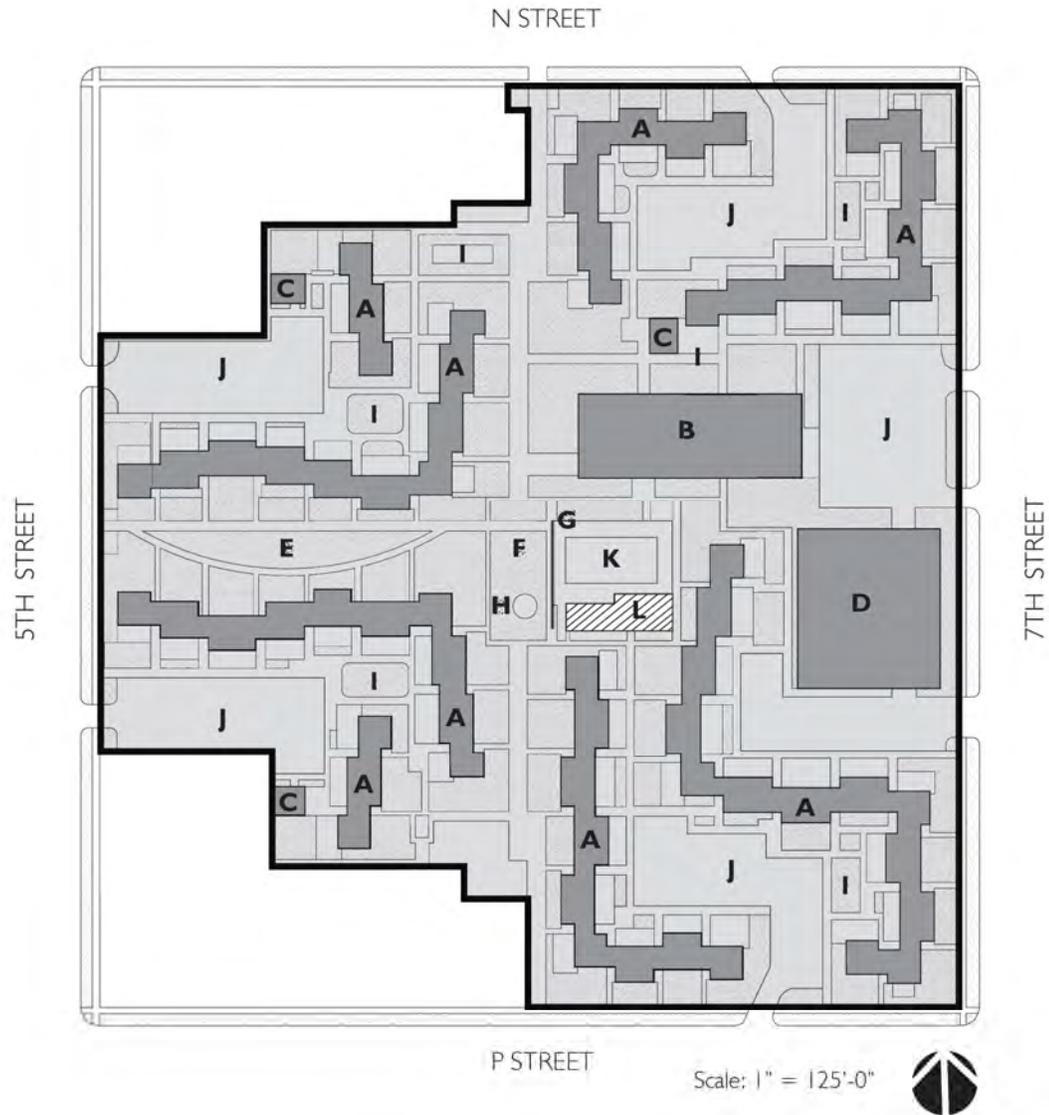
6: 38.576086, -121.502649

Capitol Towers  
 Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
 County and State

**Additional Documentation: Sketch Map**

**Figure 2.**



- Legend**
- Site Boundary
  - Contributing Features
  - Contributing Landscape
  - Noncontributing Features

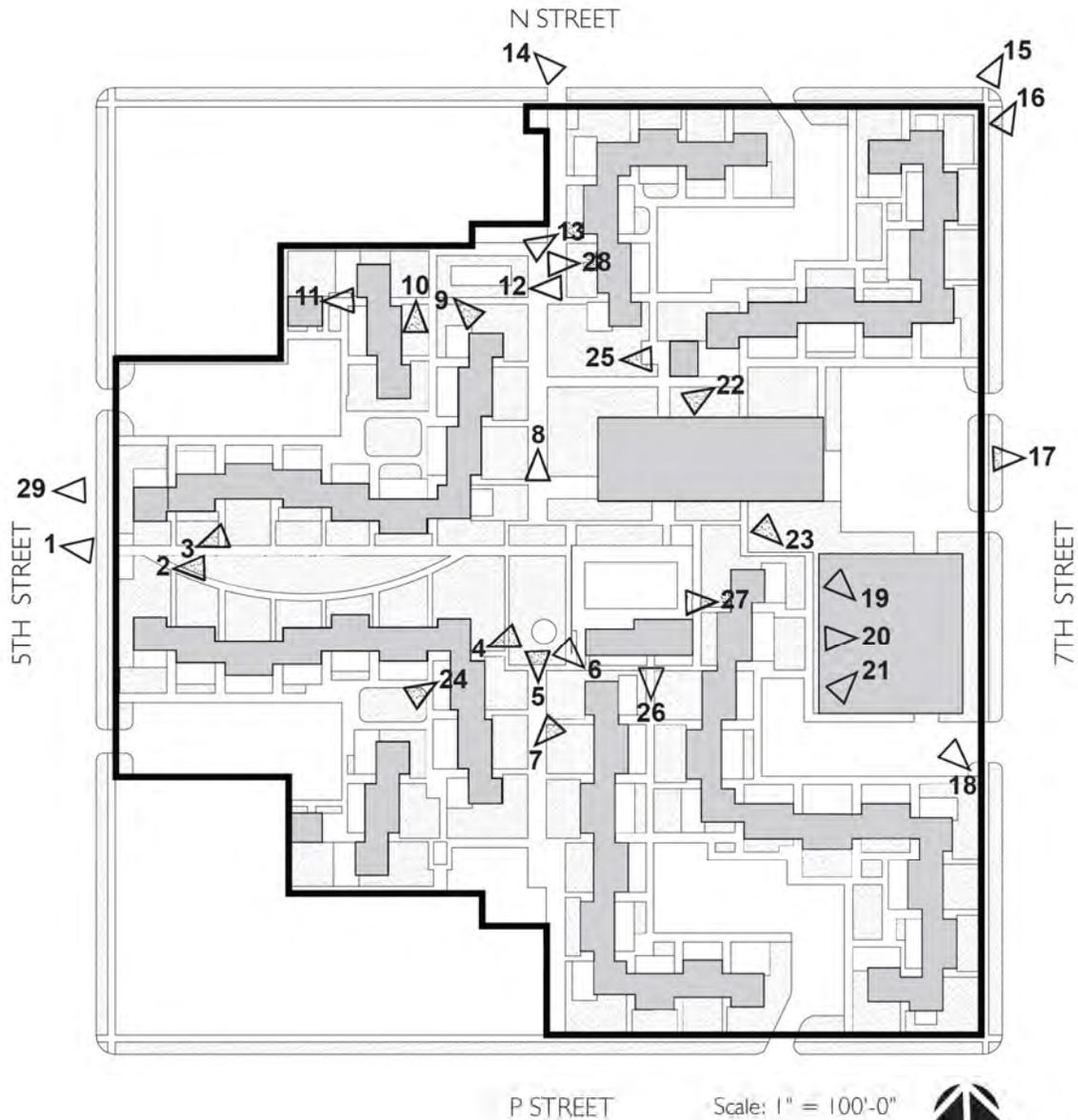
- Key:**
- A: low-rise garden apartments
  - B: high-rise tower
  - C: laundry/ lounge buildings
  - D: parking structure
  - E: site landscaping
  - F: central plaza
  - G: sculptural wall
  - H: fountain
  - I: landscaped court
  - J: parking lot
  - K: pool
  - L: pool house/ gym

- Parcels Within Site Boundary:**
- 006-0300-002
  - 006-0300-003
  - 006-0300-004

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
County and State

**Additional Documentation: Photo Key**  
**Figure 3.**



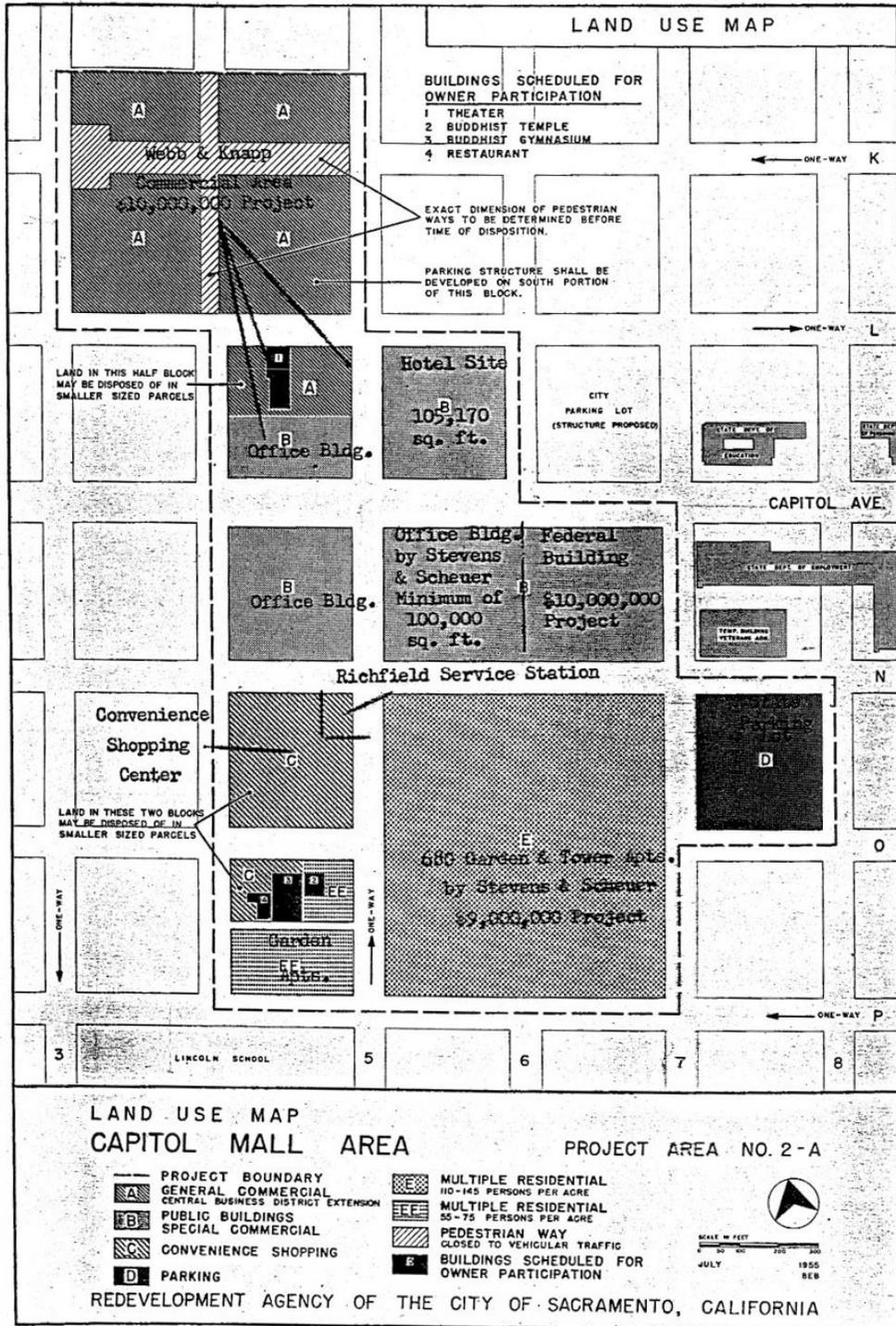
- Legend
-  Site Boundary
  -  Building on Site
  -  Keyed Photograph

Capitol Towers  
 Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
 County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic Images

Figure 4.

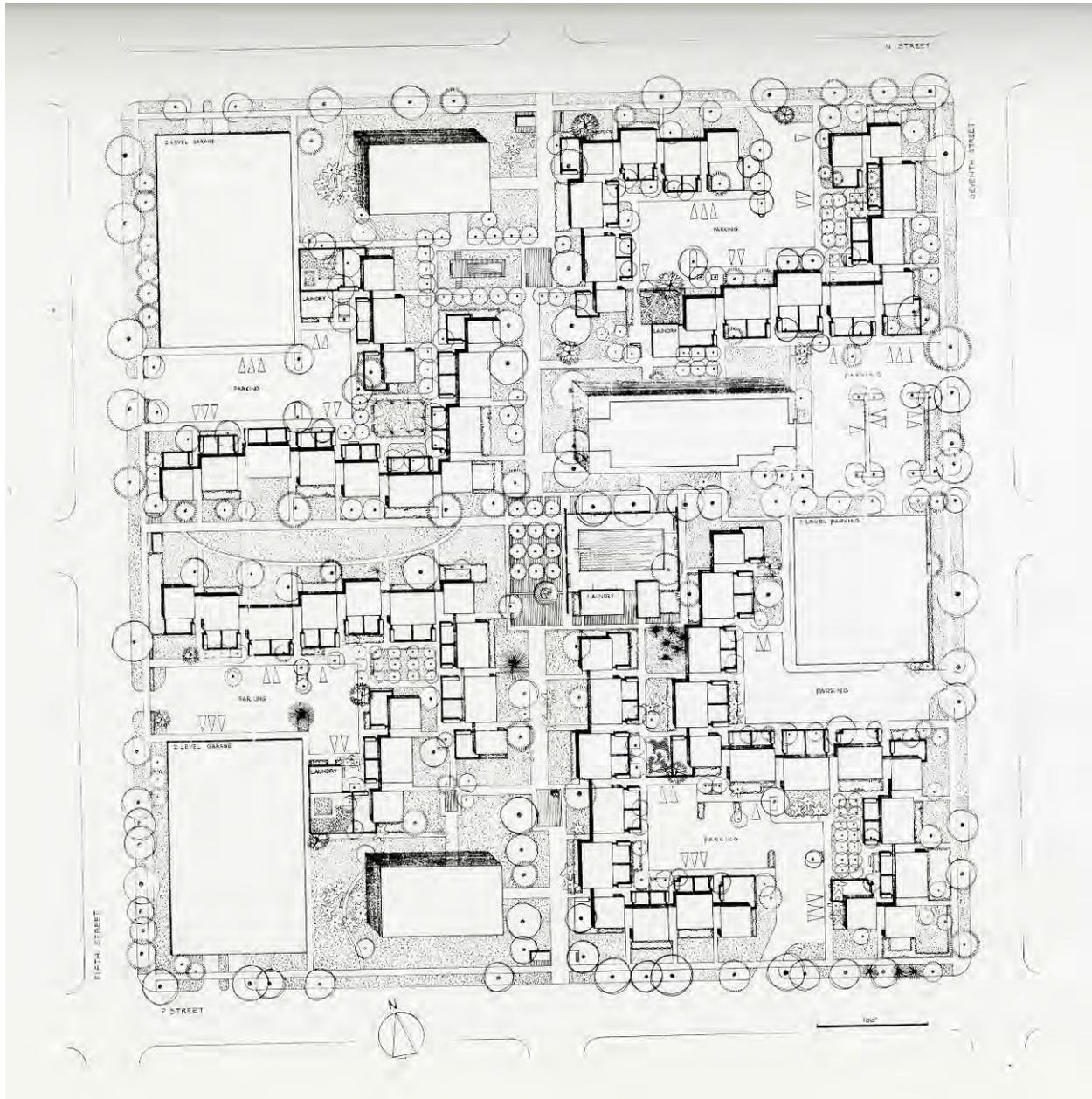


Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project Area, ca. 1959. Capitol Towers is Parcel E in the southeast corner. Source: *Sacramento Redevelopment*, May 1959.

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
County and State

Figure 5.



Site plan for Capitol Towers, ca. 1964. Source: Center for Sacramento History, James Henley Collection, 1997/046/0048.

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

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**Figure 6.**



Initial low-rise units at Capitol Towers, looking north to the Federal Building under construction, 1960. Source: Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento Bee Collection, 1983/005/SBPM1560.

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

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**Figure 7.**



Central plaza at Capitol Towers, with circular fountain and sculptural wall in 1961, looking north. Source: Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento Bee Collection, 1983/005/SBPM0385.

Capitol Towers  
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA  
County and State

**Figure 8.**



Capitol Tower's high-rise overlooking low-rise units in 1969, looking north. Source: Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento Bee Collection, 1983/005/SBPM1564.



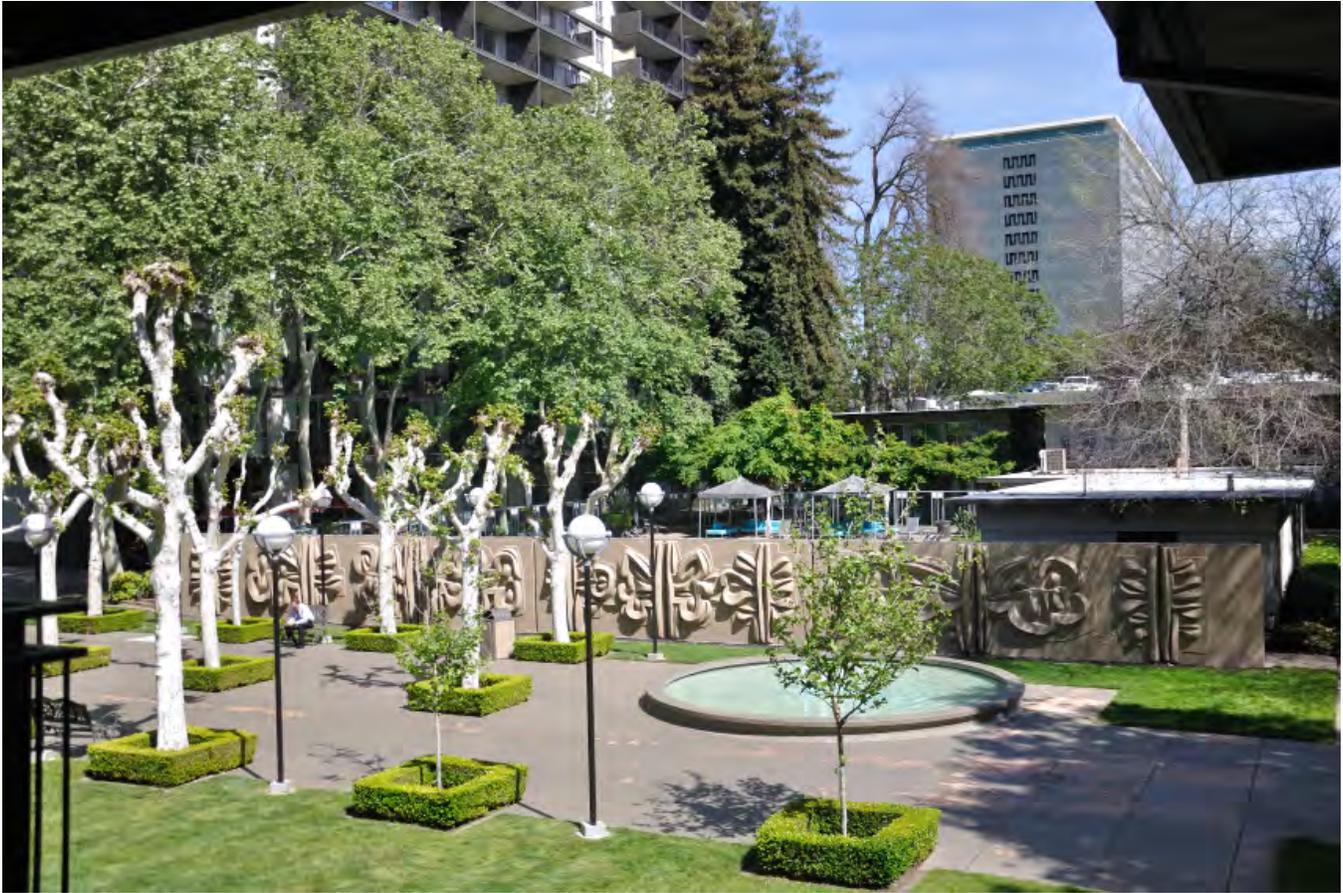
Photograph 1 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0001



Photograph 2 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0002



Photograph 3 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0003



Photograph 4 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0004



Photograph 5 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0005



Photograph 6 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0006



Photograph 7 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0007



Photograph 8 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0008



Photograph 9 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0009



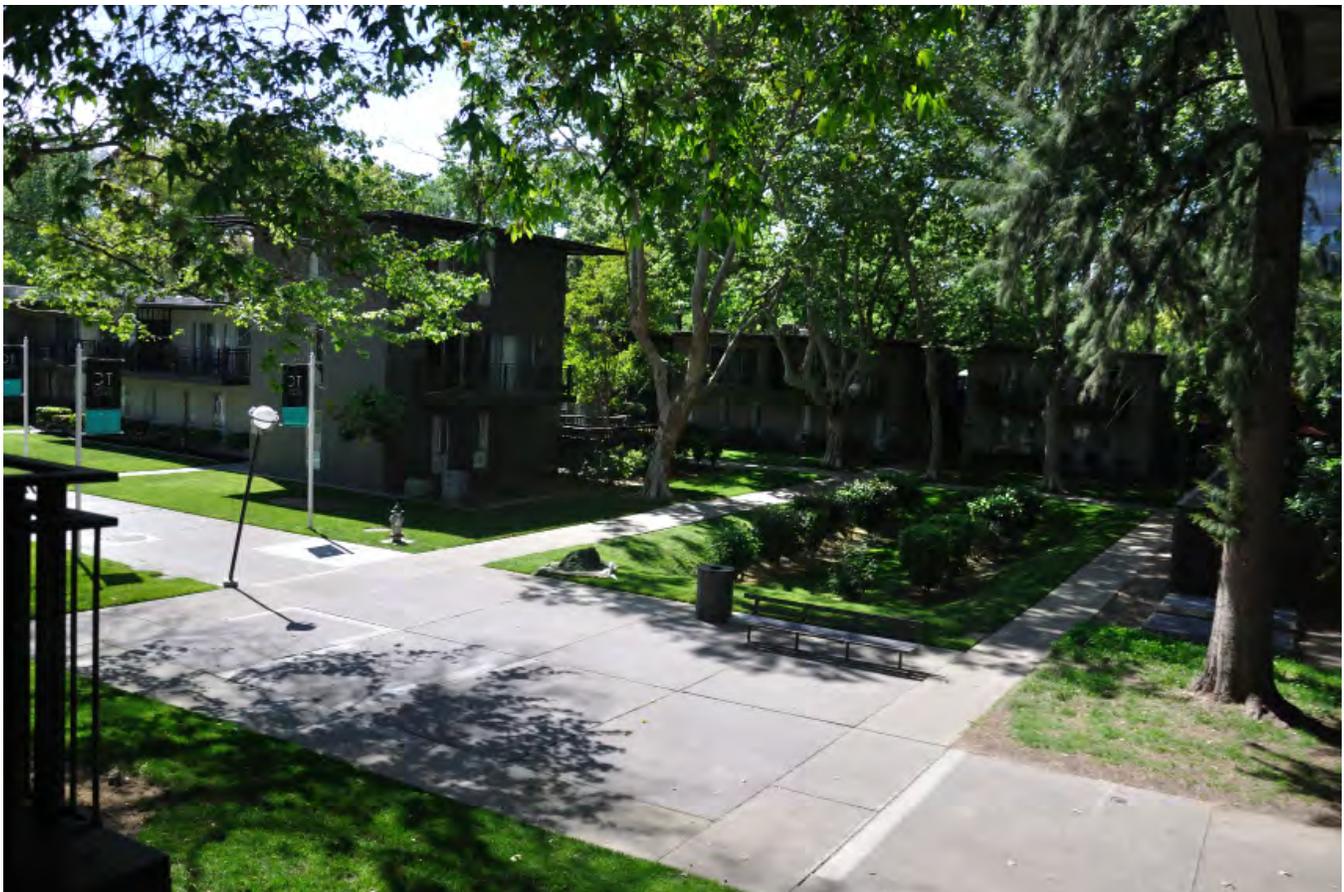
Photograph 10 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0010



Photograph 11 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0011



Photograph 12 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0012



Photograph 13 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0013



Photograph 14 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0014



Photograph 15 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0015



Photograph 16 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0016



Photograph 17 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0017



Photograph 18 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0018



Photograph 19 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0019



Photograph 20 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0020



Photograph 21 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0021



Photograph 22 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0022



Photograph 23 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0023



Photograph 24 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0024



Photograph 25 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0025



Photograph 26 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0026



Photograph 27 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0027



Photograph 28 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0028



Photograph 29 of 29: CA\_Sacramento County\_Capitol Towers\_0029



CAREY & CO. INC.  
ARCHITECTURE

## **Sacramento Commons - Preservation Alternatives November 5, 2014**

For the purposes of developing the alternatives analysis, potential historical resource impacts of the alternatives were evaluated in consideration of the character-defining features of the Capitol Towers property as set forth in SacMod's NRHP Nomination. The character-defining features identified in SacMod's NRHP Nomination include:

1. Building type, including the staggered setbacks of the garden apartment buildings, three story buildings, ancillary buildings, and the high rise building.
2. Character-defining features of the buildings themselves, including stucco cladding, deep eaves, and connecting breezeways.
3. Opposing patio and balcony orientations of the lower and upper garden apartment units.
4. Spatial features including courtyards, interior landscaped areas and connecting pedestrian walkways, especially the central plaza with fountain.
5. Mature trees and landscaping arrangements, including trees that once were street trees.
6. The Overhoff sculptural panels.
7. The site plan, or overall relationship of one feature to another.

### **Alternative 1**

The following alternative will not reduce the proposed project's impacts on the historical resource, Capitol Towers, to a level that is less-than-significant, although it will have the least impact of any of the alternatives considered, except for the "no project" alternative. This alternative focuses the development along the edges of the superblock, preserving most of the property's historic core. Areas designated for development include the following:

1. On the north edge of the block along N Street, extending to 7<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 36,400 square feet. This will remove approximately 12 low-rise units, as well as some associated parking.
2. On the east edge, at the center of the block along 7<sup>th</sup> Street, over the area that currently contains a parking lot and parking garage, approximately 36,880 square feet. This area will need to have pedestrian access through its center in the east-west direction to maintain pedestrian access along the east-west axis of the site (see below).

3. At the southeast corner of the site, along P Street extending to 7<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 52,100 square feet. This will remove approximately 16 low-rise units, as well as some associated parking.
4. On the west edge, at the center of the block along 5<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 47,500 square feet. This will remove approximately 10 low-rise units, as well as some associated parking. This area will need to have pedestrian access through its center in the east-west direction to maintain through access along the east-west axis of the site (see below).
5. This Alternative proposes the construction of four 15 story towers with adjacent 3-5 story parking structures in the locations described above (see site plan.) The adjacent existing highrise buildings located on the superblock are both 15 stories tall.

Since portions of the existing complex will be modified under this alternative, certain features of the remaining portions of the historical resource shall be restored. These include both features of the landscape and of the buildings.

#### **Landscape Features:**

Missing landscape furniture, including the waste receptacles and slat benches, shall be returned to the site, and the existing, non-contributing iron benches shall be removed. At the central plaza, the box hedges shall be removed from the tree wells. The circular fountain shall be retained in its existing location. The Jacques Overhoff sculptural wall would preferably also remain in its existing original location, but may be moved to a compatible alternative location if the pool is not maintained. Although the wall is modular, if moved, the panels should stay together.

The landscape design at Capitol Towers is defined by public common spaces like the open central plaza with fountain, plantings, the Jacques Overhoff sculptural wall, semi-public shared lawns, secondary courtyards between buildings, landscaped courts, and private outdoor spaces like patios and balconies, which are retained in the open core plan. Additionally, while the existing pool and pool house do not have sufficient integrity to be considered character-defining features of the historic resource, they are part of the public common spaces found throughout the site. It is possible that these features could be altered or replaced with compatible elements of similar size and scale, including a similarly-located pool, without further diminishing the historic integrity of the remaining portions of Capitol Towers.

Character-defining features of the Capitol Towers landscape design include tree planting arrangements, along with the extant mature and prominent specimens. Existing mature trees shall be retained, especially those that predate construction of Capitol Towers. Some of these were former street trees along O and 6<sup>th</sup> streets, and are significant at demarking the original street pattern. Where historic trees have been removed after the period of significance, they shall be replanted.

### **Building Features:**

This alternative, while proposing to demolish some of Capitol Towers' garden apartment units, retains the design integrity of the remaining buildings. This includes retention of their form, massing, layout, materials, and other character-defining features of the garden apartments such as the staggered setbacks, opposing patio and balcony orientations of the lower and upper units, unifying deep eaves, original aluminum window units, and wood-slat sunshades at the patios.

### **Restoration of architectural features:**

Original features of the existing buildings shall be restored, using photo documentation and other documentation. These features include the slatted windscreens at the breezeways between the units.

### **Pedestrian access:**

Currently, pedestrian access is maintained through the center of the site both in the east-west and north-south direction. This pedestrian access shall be maintained in the redeveloped scheme.

New construction shall be compatible and differentiated, meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Rehabilitation*.

Overall, this alternative's development along the edges of the Capitol Towers property preserves the large-scale, pedestrian-oriented multifamily residential complex at the historic core of the superblock. This alternative preserves all of the essential character-defining features of the site, as well as their critical relationships to help preserve much of the historic resource's overall composition, balance, and juxtaposition of the garden apartment units with the high-rise tower. However, it will reduce the openness of the site and therefore feeling. The alternative retains some of the the seven aspects of integrity as follows:

1. Location: All of the major site features will remain in their existing locations.
2. Design: This alternative preserves the form, most of the plan and space, and the structure and style of the property. The open core alternative, while eliminating much of the parking at the outer edges including the sole parking structure, retains much of the staggered setbacks of the Garden Apartments, the opposing patio and balcony orientations of the lower and upper garden apartment units, prominent circulation patterns (north-south and east-west axis), the open central plaza with fountain, plantings, and Jacques Overhoff sculptural wall, and softscape and hardscape areas.
- 3.
4. Setting: This alternative preserves most of the historic setting of Capitol Towers. The new structures will be higher than the existing perimeter low-rise buildings, but will be about the same height as the high rises already within and surrounding

- the site. The loss of some of the low rise buildings on the perimeter of the site and the construction of new, taller structures in these locations will be lessened by restoring some of the missing building and site features to their original design.
5. **Materials:** Since some of the lowrise buildings will be demolished, there will be a minor loss of materials. New materials, used for the new structures, shall be compatible.
  6. **Workmanship:** Again, by preserving most of the historic Capitol Towers, historic workmanship will be preserved.
  7. **Feeling:** Having more highrise buildings will result in increased shadows and a loss of the feeling of openness. However, some of the historic feeling of the site as urban redevelopment housing that incorporated low-rises garden apartments, a high-rise tower, and integrated Modern landscape, will be preserved.
  8. **Association.** The historic association will not be impacted by this alternative.

### **Alternative 2**

Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1, except that the new towers are 24 stories tall, instead of 15. It would also include taller parking structures – each would be 5-7 stories tall. The footprints of these structures are assumed to be identical to those proposed in Alternative 1.

This alternative has an even greater impact on the integrity of the property than Alternative 1, but would reduce impact on the integrity of the property as compared to the proposed project. While impacts to location, design, materials, workmanship and association are no greater than those described under Alternative 1, above, feeling and setting would be much more impacted. Impacts to feeling would result from increased shadows and the sense of surrounding bulkiness rather than openness, and impacts to setting would be even greater. These impacts might be somewhat mitigated by placing landscape buffers between the new towers and existing buildings, and/or using green wall technology, especially at the taller garage structures. In addition to the landscape buffers recommended above, all other mitigations described above under Alternative 1 shall be implemented. However, these mitigations would not reduce the impacts to less-than-significant.

### **Alternative 3: Preservation of the northeast and southeast quadrants**

The following alternative will not reduce the proposed project's impacts to the historical resource, Capitol Towers, to a level that is less-than-significant, but will preserve some of the historic features and relationships of the property and would reduce the historic impact as compared to the proposed project but to a lesser degree than either Alternative 1 or 2. This alternative removes two quadrants of the complex, and preserves and restores the remaining two quadrants. Quadrants recommended for retention include the north-east and south-east quadrants. The western two quadrants would therefore be available for development. These two quadrants were chosen for preservation because these

quadrants include more garden apartments than the other two quadrants and because any other two quadrant option would preserve fewer character-defining features.

The following are additional considerations for this alternative:

1. The art panels that currently line the central plaza shall be moved to within the preserved portion of the complex.
2. The north-south and east-west axes shall be maintained.
3. Mature trees, including street trees from O and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, shall be preserved.
4. Street furniture at the preserved areas of the site shall be restored.
5. Altered features of the buildings to be retained shall be restored as described above.

New construction adjacent to the preservation zone shall be compatible and differentiated, meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Rehabilitation*.

This Alternative would not result in a finding of less than significant impact because it does not preserve important site relationships. Many of Capitol Towers' character-defining features, discussed under Preservation Alternative 1, would not remain. In terms of the seven aspects of integrity, this Alternative evaluates as follows:

1. Location: Capitol Towers remains in its historic location, but some features, such as the sculptural wall, may be moved.
2. Design: While the design of the remaining buildings will not be impacted, the overall site plan would be destroyed. Also, not all of the character-defining features would remain.
3. Materials: Materials within the preservation area will retain their integrity. The suggested restoration of missing features will improve integrity of materials.
4. Setting: The setting will be heavily impacted by the loss of one half of the site.
5. Workmanship: The workmanship within the preservation area will be retained, but be lost in the portion of the property that would be demolished.
6. Feeling: The site will lose its integrity of feeling under this alternative.
7. Association: The preserved portion of the site would retain its integrity of association; the new construction portion would not. Therefore, integrity of association would be impacted.

This alternative does not reduce impacts to a level that is less-than-significant because it diminishes the historical resource's integrity such that it would not sufficiently convey its

historical significance as the first privately-sponsored urban redevelopment project to start construction within Sacramento as well as the first privately developed residential redevelopment project in California using federal funds (NRHP Criterion A), and as an example of urban redevelopment housing that uses thoughtful site planning, landscape design, and urban planning principles to create a livable community despite the constraints of federal requirements that often limited design options (NRHP Criterion C).

**Alternative 4: Preservation of the northwest and southwest quadrants**

Like alternative 3, above, this alternative preserves only two quadrants. Since these two quadrants are smaller and contain fewer garden apartments and character defining features than the quadrants chosen for Alternative 3, this alternative has an even greater impact on the integrity of the resource as compared to Alternatives 1 through 3. The western quadrants would also not as effectively preserve the relationship between the Tower, the low rise structures, and the Plaza. Therefore, the context of the preserved Tower would be lost.

The considerations listed under Alternative 3, above, shall be followed if Alternative 4 is selected. However, this alternative provides only cursory historic benefits.

**Other Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

Other alternatives examined include a three quadrant preservation option, a one quadrant preservation option, and other possible two quadrant alternatives. All of these other Alternatives had impacts to the site's integrity similar to or greater than those described above for Alternatives 3 and 4.