



MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex

360 and 375 N. Crescent Drive
Beverly Hills, CA

Landmark Assessment Report

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1. Introduction

1.1. Executive Summary

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) has prepared this Landmark Assessment Report for the properties at 360 and 375 North Crescent Drive, Beverly Hills, California. The complex, originally the headquarters of the Music Corporation of America (MCA), is developed with two commercial buildings (9370 Santa Monica Blvd. and 360 N. Crescent Dr.) and a parking garage (375 N. Crescent Dr.) constructed in phases between 1937 and 1969. All buildings were designed by architect Paul R. Williams in the Classical Revival style. Williams is included on the City of Beverly Hills’s List of Local Master Architects.¹ The formal courtyard between 9370 Santa Monica and 360 N. Crescent was originally designed by landscape architect Paul Shipley. The buildings and parking structure are currently owned by Platinum Equity.

For the purposes of this assessment, the three buildings will collectively be referred to as the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex.

ARG evaluated the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex to determine whether it appears to be eligible for listing as a Beverly Hills Landmark. Preparation of this report included the following tasks related to research, documentation, and analysis:

- Visited the complex on December 18, 2019 to assess existing conditions and document the buildings’ exteriors with digital photographs;²
- Reviewed local ordinances and other reference materials related to the evaluation of historical resources in the City of Beverly Hills;
- Reviewed applicable background materials including historical drawings and building permits;
- Conducted supplemental research to glean additional information about the complex’s development history, design, occupancy, and potential historical significance;
- Developed applicable historic contexts and themes; and
- Evaluated the complex against Beverly Hills Landmark eligibility criteria.

Research materials were culled from the following sources: the Los Angeles Public Library; the Beverly Hills Public Library; the archives of the *Los Angeles Times* and other local periodicals; drawings and building permits obtained from the City of Beverly Hills’s Community Development Department; online repositories; and ARG’s in-house collection of architectural books and reference materials. A complete list of sources is included at the end of this report.

In summary, ARG concludes that all three buildings within the complex exhibit the character-defining features of the Classical Revival style and are an exceptional work of master architect Paul R. Williams.

¹ City of Beverly Hills, “List of Local Master Architects, Version 2.1,” adopted October 14, 2015, revised January 13, 2016.

² As they are not readily accessible to the public, the interiors of the buildings were not documented and are not included as part of this landmark assessment.

The north building (1938) is also significant for its association with MCA presidents Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman as they presided over the transformation of the corporation from a talent agency to a media empire. For these reasons, the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex appears eligible for listing as a Beverly Hills Landmark.

The following sections provide a contextual basis for analysis and a detailed discussion of how this determination was made.

1.2. Preparer Qualifications

This report was prepared by Katie Horak, Principal; Evanne St. Charles, Associate; and Rosa Lisa Fry, all of whom meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards*, 36 CFR Part 61, in the discipline of Architectural History. Project support was provided by ARG intern Krista Gelev.

2. Architectural Description

2.1. Site and Landscape

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is located near the northern corner of a commercial area bounded by Santa Monica Boulevard (north and west), Wilshire Boulevard (south), and Rexford Drive (east), just outside the area informally known as the Golden Triangle. Just south of the Beverly Hills Civic Center, this area serves as the city's central business district. The topography of the area is flat, and streets run at a 45-degree angle, askew of the cardinal directions. The site comprises two parcels on either side of N. Crescent Drive, just south of Santa Monica Boulevard and across from Beverly Hills City Hall.

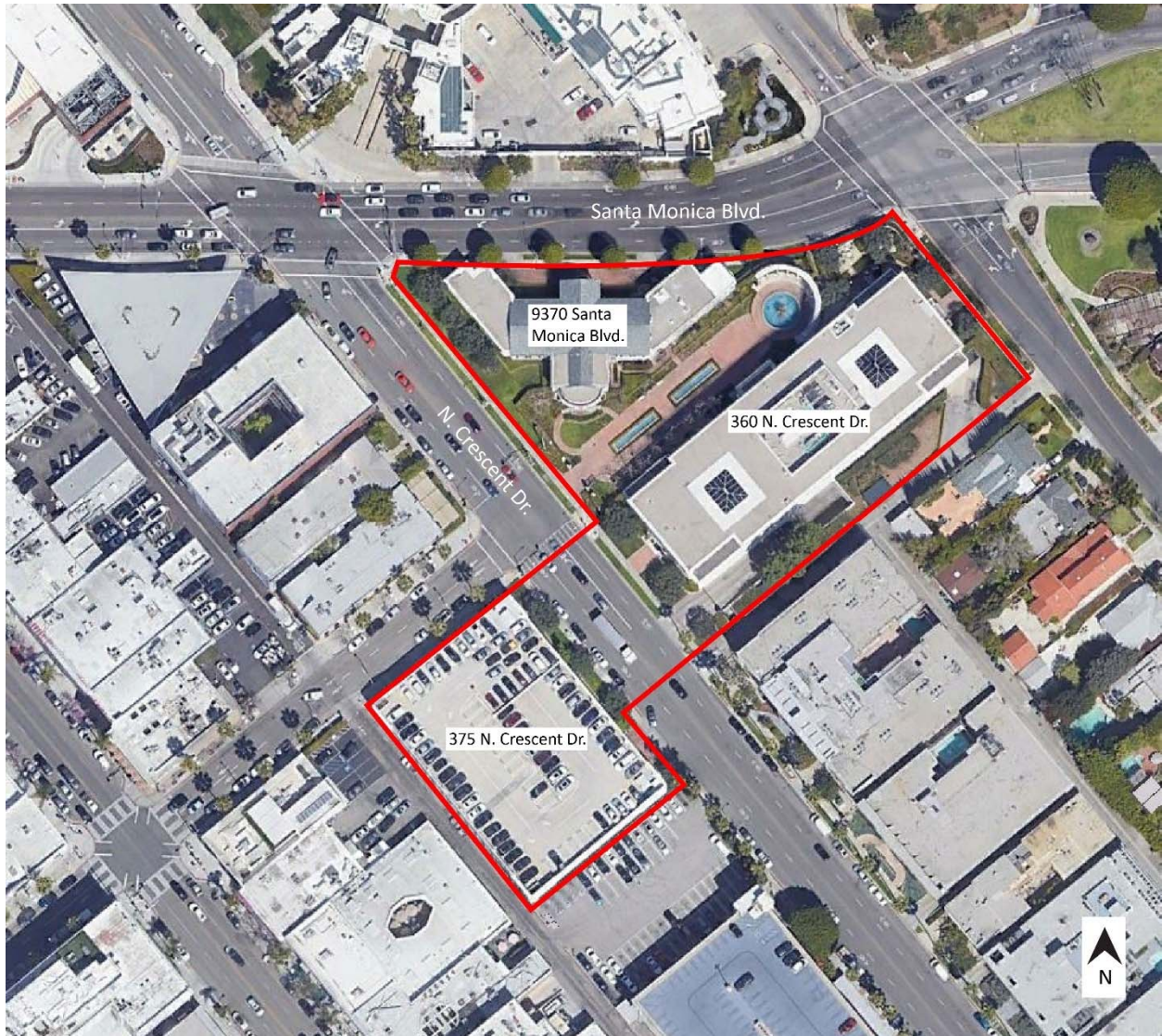
The northern parcel is large and irregular in shape; it contains two buildings with the addresses 9370 Santa Monica Blvd. and 360 N. Crescent Dr.³ The buildings are separated by a landscaped courtyard accessed by a decorative metal gate off of N. Crescent Dr. Designed by landscape architect Paul Shipley, with later alterations by Dennis Hickock, the courtyard features a long, rectangular walkway paved with brick laid in a herringbone pattern. The walkway is flanked by regularly spaced trees, benches, two cast iron light fixtures, and manicured hedges.⁴ Two narrow, concrete rectangular pools with limestone coping are set in the center of the brick paving. At the northeastern terminus of the courtyard is a circular fountain made of concrete and capped with limestone; it is set on a circular brick platform. The fountain contains a dynamic bronze sculpture featuring the Roman god Neptune and his satyrs battling a sea serpent atop a marble pedestal. The fountain's platform is backed by a semi-circular Ionic peristyle capped with a wide entablature. Purportedly, the fountain was 125 years old and made in Italy before it was acquired by MCA president Jules Stein. The peristyle, also acquired by Stein, was said to have been salvaged from the house that William Randolph Hearst built for actress Marion Davies on the Santa Monica beach.⁵ Previously anchoring a park sited in the approximate location of the south office building, the fountain and peristyle were relocated to the current courtyard during the south office building's construction in 1967-69.

The southern parcel, 375 N. Crescent Drive, is a smaller rectangular lot developed with a multi-level parking structure. Following is a description of each of the office buildings and parking structure.

³ Research indicated that the address 360 N. Crescent Dr. is typically used to refer to the entire parcel.

⁴ "Beverly Hills Gives Architectural Awards," *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1973, L20; Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture, "Global Crossing Corporate Headquarters Landscape Renovation," July 3, 2000.

⁵ Marilyn Elias, "Face Lifts for Aging Structures," *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1981, F1; Robert John Pierson, "Taking a Sweetheart of a Stroll in Beverly Hills," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1987, D1. The 1981 article discusses the conservation of the "old Florentine fountain" in Litton Plaza, the bronze and marble materiality of which had been compromised by "smog and chlorin[ated city water]." According to the 1987 article, the courtyard fountain in question was then 125 years old and had been originally imported from Italy. The article also states that the colonnade originated from a house built by William Randolph Hearst for Marion Davies in Santa Monica.



Location map. The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is outlined in red (Google Maps).

2.2. 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard (North Office Building)

The north office building (9370 Santa Monica Blvd.) is located at the northern edge of the parcel shared with 360 N. Crescent Dr. Constructed in 1938, the north building served as the original headquarters of the Music Corporation of America. The building is two stories in height and irregular in plan. Its front façade faces north towards Santa Monica Boulevard and is accessed by a gently curved semi-circular brick driveway. There is a narrow lawn between the building and the driveway and low hedges along the building's foundation. The main/center volume comprises the original 1938 office, which is flanked by two diagonally positioned wings that were added in 1948. The original volume has a slate-shingled, cross-gable roof, and the additions have flat roofs. A cupola with a wood balustrade is centered on the ridgeline of the primary roof form. The south façade contains a flat-roofed, semi-circular volume extending out from under the rear centered gable. All roofs feature entablatures with dentil moulding. The building's walls are primarily clad in brick that is painted white and features a running bond pattern and extruded mortar. The base of the building is covered in smooth stucco, and an angled brick stringcourse delineates the first and second levels. The building retains symmetrically arranged, individual wood windows that are all double-hung and multi-light. The second-story windows on the north facade of the original 1938 volume are floor-to-ceiling, twelve-over-twelve, and double-hung, with decorative metal railings. All other windows are smaller (eight-over-eight), and all windows at the second story have wood shutters.

The north (front) façade is symmetrical. This façade is distinguished by a full-height entry portico with a pediment supported by four fluted Corinthian columns with shallow square bases and two Corinthian pilasters. The columns sit on a triple-stepped platform composed of granite stairs and a brick and granite stylobate. In the center of the pediment is a circular window with a tracery pattern and decorative surround. Paneled double front wood doors are centered within the portico and feature a decorative surround and frieze surmounted by a broken pediment. Above the door and slightly obscured by the broken pediment is a full-story, multi-light swept head wood window. Flanking the door are two decorative lanterns and two rounded arch niches each filled with a planter. The rest of the façade is lined with twelve-over-twelve (second story) or eight-over-eight (first story) double-hung wood windows.

Except for the tops of the gable ends, the original east and west façades of the 1938 building are obscured by the 1948 wing additions. The ends of the wings, which face northeast and northwest, are identical. Both have four eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows and retain gently curved first-story bays decorated with a simple plaster frieze and pilasters.

The south façade of the building is similar to the primary façade with the exception of the semi-circular volume at its center. This projection features a single wood door at the first story with a raised stoop reached by and a double staircase. The door is paneled and partially glazed with a semi-circular overdoor surmounted by a pediment. The door is bounded by divided sidelights and decorative lanterns. Symmetrically arranged plaster pilasters decorate the first story of the semi-circular volume, while the second-story form is slightly set back and clad in smooth stucco. A fixed, multi-light second-story window is set directly above the door and is flanked by narrow double-hung windows. The south façade also contains two additional paneled wood doors with multi-light transoms and multi-light windows at the first and second stories.

2.3. 360 N. Crescent Drive (South Office Building)

The south office building (360 N. Crescent Drive) is sited on the southern edge of the parcel shared with 9370 Santa Monica Blvd. Constructed between 1967 and 1968, it is a three-story rectangular building with a basement level garage. Its broad front façade faces northwest and is accessed through the courtyard shared with 9370 Santa Monica to the north. It was designed to match the 1938 building. The roof is flat and is distinguished by a wide entablature and cornice. As with 9370 Santa Monica, the building is clad with brick that is painted white, with extruded mortar, and laid in a running bond pattern. A decorative brick stringcourse separates the second and third stories, and simple plaster pilasters are regularly spaced along all façades. All of the building's windows are wood, multi-light (eight-over-eight), and double-hung. The third-story windows all have a recessed concrete spandrel that is inset with a decorative metal grille. These upper-story windows are also bound by wood shutters. All of the façades are symmetrical.

The north (front) façade is marked by a two-story entrance portico supported by four Ionic columns.⁶ The columns sit on a triple-stepped granite platform. The portico's entablature features dentil moulding below the cornice, and there is a low metal railing along the perimeter of its roof. Two double-height Ionic pilasters anchor the back corners of the portico. The main entrance door is centered within the portico and retains a decorative wood surround with pilasters and a broken segmented pediment. In the middle of the broken pediment is a carved wood urn sculpture which partially obscures the window above the door. The partially glazed, non-original metal doors are surmounted by a metal overdoor panel. Flanking the paired doors are two rounded arch niches each filled with a planter. The east and west ends project slightly from the rest of the façade. Originally, each of these volumes featured a center window at the first story that was ornamented with a pediment, pilasters, and semi-circular overdoor. The center window at the east volume was replaced with a compatible multi-light wood door in 2007.⁷ The rest of the façade is filled with eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows with simple surrounds.

The east and west façades have entrances facing N. Rexford Drive and N. Crescent Drive, respectively. The façades are set back from the street and are fronted by lawn, trees, manicured hedges, and brick walkways laid in a herringbone pattern. These two facades are identical to each other, with the exception of some additional cast stone stairs at the east entrance stoop. Each façade features a slightly protruding pedimented wood entrance surround with a semi-circular overdoor panel and a set of paired, paneled wood doors. The entrances have wide brick stoops bounded by metal railings and raised concrete planters. The entranceways are flanked by sconce lanterns and pairs of two-story Tuscan pilasters. Windows match those on the north façade.

The south (rear) façade faces an alley. This façade is nearly identical to the primary façade, though there is no portico entrance, and a brick paved ramp from N. Crescent Drive leads to the basement parking lot. The rear façade has no other entrances, only evenly distributed windows matching those on the other façades.

⁶ For the purposes of this description, the cardinal directions (rather than their true direction) are used to identify each façade.

⁷ "Window to door modification," drawing, Platinum Equity, April 20, 2007.

2.4. 375 N. Crescent Drive (Parking Garage)

The parking garage was built in 1967 and is separated from the other buildings in the complex by N. Crescent Drive. It sits at a 45-degree angle with the cardinal directions on the corner of Brighton Way and N. Crescent Dr. and is bounded by an alley and surface parking lot to the southwest and southeast, respectively. The building is slightly set back from N. Crescent Dr. by a lawn, olive trees, and raised concrete planters with hedges. A long narrow raised concrete planter with hedges lines the setback along Brighton Way.⁸ The two-story rectangular building contains three levels of below-ground parking and open rooftop parking that is bounded by a parapet wall. The building is primarily clad in the same white painted brick as the other two buildings in the complex. However, three sides of the monolithic exterior feature brick brise soleil. Each corner of the building is distinguished by a smooth stucco pediment and full-height brick pilasters. Brick pilasters are evenly spaced along all façades.

The building retains two main façades, which face N. Crescent Dr. and Brighton Way, respectively.⁹ The east façade, facing N. Crescent Dr. and the associated office buildings, is asymmetrical with a herringbone brick paved vehicular entrance located near the south corner. This entrance is used for both ingress and egress. It is surmounted by a shallow balcony with a decorative metal railing and three fixed, multi-light wood windows. A mirror of this balcony and window set (without the garage entrance) is adjacent to the north corner of the building. Both pedimented corners on this façade feature a semi-circular wood overdoor panel and a set of paneled wood doors delineated by a smaller pediment and pilasters. The pedestrian entrances are flanked by wall-mounted lanterns and have shallow single-stepped stoops made of brick and cast stone. Both corner entrances also retain a second-story circular window with a decorative surround. The majority of the façade is composed of panels of brick brise soleil separated by full-height brick pilasters.

The parking lot's north façade faces Brighton Way and has the same pedestrian corner entrances as the Crescent Drive façade. A herringbone brick paved vehicular entry distinguished by a simple lintel and projecting cornice is positioned adjacent to the west corner. The rest of the façade is composed of brick brise soleil and pilasters.

The west façade of the structure faces a surface parking lot and alley. This façade is less articulated than the N. Crescent Dr. and Brighton Way façades. It does not have pedestrian entrance stoops, decorative ironwork, or windows, though pedimented corners and brick brise soleil are present. An unadorned vehicular entrance is located near the south end of the façade.

The east façade faces a surface parking lot and is devoid of fenestration. The pedimented corners and brick pilasters are the only decoration.

⁸ The plants date to the 2000 landscape renovation of the complex by Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture.

⁹ For the purposes of this description, the cardinal directions (rather than their true direction) are used to identify each façade.

Existing Conditions Photographs



View east of the landscaped courtyard between 9370 Santa Monica Blvd. and 360 N. Crescent Dr. (ARG, 2019).



Interior view west of the courtyard. Note the brick paving, rectangular pools, and manicured softscape (ARG, 2019).



Close-up of the peristyle and fountain at the east end of the courtyard (ARG, 2019).



9370 Santa Monica Blvd., view south of the front (north) façade (ARG, 2019).



9370 Santa Monica Blvd., close-up of the front (north) façade. Note the pedimented entrance portico with Corinthian columns, classical door surround, and arched niches (ARG, 2019).



9370 Santa Monica Blvd., view southwest of the north façade and east end wing (ARG, 2019).



9370 Santa Monica Blvd., close-up of the wing, west end. Note the round bay with pilasters and entablature (ARG, 2019).



9370 Santa Monica Blvd., view north of the south facade main entry volume. Note pilasters, entablature, and classical door surround (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., view southeast of the front facade (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., close-up of the front facade entrance portico. Note the Ionic columns and classical door surround (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., view northeast of the west facade (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., close-up of the west facade entrance stoop. Note the paired pilasters and classical door surround (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., view southwest of the east facade (ARG, 2019).



360 N. Crescent Dr., view north of the south facade and parking ramp (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., view south of the main façades (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., close-up of the pedestrian entrance at the northeast corner. Note the pediment and entablature at the parapet, circular window, and classical door surround (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., close-up of the vehicular entrance off of Crescent. Note the balcony with decorative railing and multi-light windows (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., view south of the primary (north) facade (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., close-up of the vehicular entrance off of Brighton. Note the lintel and cornice above the entrance and wall panels of brick brise soleil (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., view southeast of the west façade (ARG, 2019).



375 N. Crescent Dr., view northwest of the south façade (ARG, 2019).

3. Character-Defining Features

A character-defining feature is an aspect of a building's design, construction, or setting that is illustrative of its reasons for significance. Character-defining elements may include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, and decorative details, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. The character-defining features of a building are essential to its ability to convey and retain its significance.

The period of significance for the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is defined as 1938-1969, the period during which it was developed. All of the complex's character-defining features date to this time.

3.1. Site and Landscape

- Axial, herringbone brick-paved courtyard divided by two concrete rectangular pools with limestone coping
- Semi-circular Ionic peristyle set on a circular brick stylobate with a fountain at its center
- Round concrete fountain with limestone coping featuring a bronze Neptune sculpture on a marble base in the center
- Decorative wrought iron gate with painted brick pillars on the east and west sides of the courtyard and south of the south office building parking ramp
- Formal softscape, including manicured lawn and hedges in the courtyard planters and at building setbacks (plant species have changed)

3.2. 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard (North Office Building)

- Prominent corner location, set back at the intersections of N. Crescent Drive, Santa Monica Boulevard, and N. Rexford Drive
- Semi-circular herringbone brick-paved driveway fronting the north (front) façade
- Primary, rectangular volume flanked by diagonally projecting (splayed) wings
- Two-story height
- Highly visible, symmetrical façades
- Centered gable roof with slate shingle roofing, flanked by flat roof wings
- Cupola with wood balustrade centered on the gable roof ridgeline
- Entablatures with dentil molding along the roofs
- Painted brick cladding with extruded mortar, laid in a running bond pattern
- Angled brick stringcourse and evenly spaced plaster pilasters on all façades

- Eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows at all façades (second-story windows have shutters and decorative metal grilles)
- Twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood windows at the second story of the north (front) façade
- Multi-light fixed wood windows above the main entrances at the north and south façades
- Monumental entrance portico with two-story Corinthian columns and a denticulated pediment at the north (front) façade
- Paired, paneled wood doors with a classical door surround and broken pediment flanked by metal lanterns and niches at the north (front) façade
- Single-story, rounded bays with pilasters and entablature capping the east and west wings
- Semi-circular volume with setback second story at the south façade
- Paneled wood entrance door with a pedimented surround and double staircase at the south façade semi-circular volume
- Secondary paneled wood doors at the south façade

3.3. 360 N. Crescent Drive (South Office Building)

- Prominent corner location, set back at the intersections of N. Crescent Drive, Santa Monica Boulevard, and N. Rexford Drive
- Simple, rectangular massing with highly visible symmetrical façades
- Three-story height with basement-level parking garage
- Flat roof distinguished by entablatures along the parapet
- Painted brick cladding with extruded mortar, laid in a running bond pattern
- Angled brick stringcourse between the second and third stories
- Regularly spaced, two-story plaster pilasters at all façades
- Multi-light (eight-over-eight) wood windows throughout (third-story windows have shutters and decorative metal grilles)
- Monumental entrance portico with two-story Ionic columns, a wood denticulated entablature, and a decorative metal railing on the porch roof at the north (front) façade
- Classical wood door surround with a broken pediment and carved wood urn sculpture at the front (north) entrance
- Secondary (east and west) entrances consisting of a herringbone brick-paved walkway, brick entrance stoops with cast stone steps bounded by metal handrails and concrete planters
- Paired, paneled wood doors with wood pedimented door surrounds, semi-circular overdoor panels, and wall-mounted metal lanterns at secondary (east and west) entrances

3.4. 375 N. Crescent Drive (Parking Garage)

- Prominent corner location, slightly set back at the intersection of N. Crescent Drive and Brighton Way, directly across from 360 N. Crescent Drive.
- Simple rectangular massing

At primary (north and east) façades:

- Painted brick cladding laid in a running bond pattern
- Wide entablature along the roof parapet with pediments corner
- Brick brise soleil panels defined by two-story brick pilasters
- Corner pedestrian brick and cast stone entrance stoops with paneled wood doors, pedimented door surrounds, circular wood windows, and wall-mounted metal lanterns
- Raised concrete planters and herringbone brick-paved entrance walkways
- Herringbone brick-paved vehicular entrance surmounted by three multi-light wood windows and a balcony off of N. Crescent Dr.
- Herringbone brick-paved vehicular entrance with simple lintel and cornice off of Brighton Way

4. Chronology of Development and Use

The following is a chronology of the development and use of the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex, derived from online building permits and drawings from the City of Beverly Hills Community Development Department and other research. Aside from the permit for the 1948 wing additions, no permits have been found with the address 9370 Santa Monica, though often the address 360 N. Crescent Dr. is used in reference to both buildings on the parcel. For both of these office buildings, interior alterations, beginning in 1977 and continuing through the present, have largely consisted of tenant improvements (office remodeling for new tenants) as well as systems upgrades and accessibility improvements. Due to the substantial number of interior alterations, each individual interior permit is not enumerated in the list below.

4.1. 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard (North Office Building)

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 1937-38 | Office building is constructed for the Music Corporation of America (MCA) at 9370 Burton Way (later Santa Monica Blvd.). Paul R. Williams is the architect. ¹⁰ The building appears on the front cover of <i>California Arts & Architecture</i> magazine in October 1938. ¹¹ |
| 1939 | The building's design earns Williams the AIA Award of Merit, Southern California Chapter. ¹² |
| 1948 | Permit issued for new wings on the east and west sides of the original building. Permit No. 23222 |
| 1964 | Building bought by electronics conglomerate Litton Industries to serve as its new headquarters. ¹³ Around this time, the land to the south of the building is landscaped, and a semi-circular peristyle and fountain are installed. ¹⁴ |

¹⁰ "Music Corporation Invests \$150,000 in Beverly Hills," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1937.

¹¹ "Music Corporation of America," *California Arts & Architecture*, October 1938: Cover.

¹² The Paul R. Williams Project, "Paul R. Williams, Architect," accessed January 2020, <https://www.paulrwilliamsproject.org/about/paul-revere-williams-architect/>.

¹³ Ronald J. Ostrow, "Litton Offers New Dividend Paying Stock," *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1963.

¹⁴ Marilyn Elias, "Face Lifts for Aging Structures," *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1981, F1; Robert John Pierson, "Taking a Sweetheart of a Stroll in Beverly Hills," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1987, D1. The 1981 article discusses the conservation of the "old Florentine fountain" in Litton Plaza, the bronze and marble materiality of which had been compromised by "smog and chlorin[ated city water]." According to the 1987 article, the courtyard fountain in question was then 125 years old and had been originally imported from Italy. The article also states that the colonnade originated from a house built by William Randolph Hearst in Santa Monica.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1966 | The City Planning Commission of Beverly Hills allows Litton Industries to construct a circular driveway at the Litton headquarters building, now listed at 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard. ¹⁵ |
| 1998-1999 | Building purchased by Crescent Pacific Partners and occupied by telecommunications company Global Crossing. ¹⁶ Permits issued for major tenant improvement/interior remodeling at 360 N. Crescent Drive for new building owner Global Crossing Ltd. These permits do not specifically mention the building at 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard, but it is possible that interior remodeling occurred at this time. |
| 2000 | Plans approved for landscape renovation by Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture. Renovations include the replacement of wax leaf privet shrubs with boxwood and annual color shrubs in front of the primary façade along Santa Monica Boulevard. Eugenia hedges, boxwood, annual color shrubs are added to enclose the rear façade accessed from N. Crescent Drive. ¹⁷ |
| 2003 | Building purchased and occupied by Paradigm Talent Agency and Platinum Equity. ¹⁸ |
| 2003-2010 | Permits issued for major tenant improvement/interior remodeling at 360 N. Crescent Drive for new building owner Platinum Equity. These permits do not specifically mention the building at 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard, but it is possible that interior remodeling occurred during this time. |
| 2017 | Paradigm relocates to another site in Los Angeles, leaving Platinum Equity as the sole owner and occupant of the property. ¹⁹ |
| c. 2019-present | Building is vacant as observed on site visit. |

¹⁵ "City Approves Driveway Plan," *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1966.

¹⁶ "Global Crossing's Posh Beverly Hills HQ on Sales Block," *Commercial Real Estate Direct*, September 18, 2002, https://www.crenews.com/general_news/general/global-crossings-posh-beverly-hills-hq-on-sales-block.html and Michael T. Jarvis, "Landmark Indecision," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 2002, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-dec-15-tm-opmcabuilding50-story.html>.

¹⁷ Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture, "Global Crossing Corporate Headquarters Landscape Renovation."

¹⁸ Claude Brodesser, "Paradigm Shifts into MCA Digs," *Variety*, February 10, 2003, <https://variety.com/2003/scene/markets-festivals/paradigm-shifts-into-mca-digs-1117880376/>.

¹⁹ Justin Kroll, "Paradigm Talent Agency Moving to New Los Angeles Headquarters," *Variety*, July 17, 2017, <https://variety.com/2017/biz/news/paradigm-new-headquarters-los-angeles-1202497963/>.

4.2. 360 N. Crescent Drive (South Office Building)

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1967 | <p>Permit issued for new three-story office building and subterranean parking at 360 N. Crescent Drive. Litton Industries Inc. is the owner, Paul R. Williams is the architect, and C.L. Peck is contractor. Permit No. 680139²⁰</p> <p>Phil Shipley and Associates design a landscaped courtyard at the site now known as Litton Plaza. The fountain and peristyle, placed southwest of the 1938 building in 1964, are reused and relocated further north and east, anchoring the courtyard between the 1938 building and new office building. The area between the buildings is repaved with brick. Eucalyptus trees along the south façade of the north office building, as well as carob trees along the northern border of the fountain, are removed.²¹</p> |
| 1969 | Permit issued for final inspections at 360 N. Crescent Drive. Permit No. 680139 |
| 1983 | Permit issued for re-roofing. Permit No. 830732 |
| 1988 | Permit issued for courtyard brick paving and repair. Activity No. 88003341 |
| 1989 | Permit issued to repair the existing roof at damaged spots. Permit No. 89004157 |
| 1990 | Permit issued to replace existing mouldings and one exterior door at 360 N. Crescent Drive. Permit specifies that door is “used for exiting only,” and would thus likely be the doorway on either the building’s east or west façades. Permit No. 90005934. |
| 1992 | Permit for planting of three 60-inch olive trees issued. Permit No. 92004724. According to landscaping plans from 2000, the trees were planted at various points along the west side of 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard and 360 N. Crescent Drive. These olive trees appear to be extant. |
| 1994 | <p>Sign permit issued to reface existing signs. Permit No. 94005613</p> <p>Permit issued to tear off wet roofing and replace “Class A” roofing. Permit No. 94001613</p> |
| 1998-1999 | <p>Building purchased by Crescent Pacific Partners and occupied by telecommunications company Global Crossing.²²</p> <p>Permits issued for major tenant improvement/interior remodeling for new building owner Global Crossing Ltd.</p> |

²⁰ “C.L Peck Contractor” appears on a bronze plate inset in the brick paving immediately in front of the primary entrance.

²¹ Paul R. Williams & Associates, “Office Building, Litton Industries, Inc.,” plot plan, December 11, 1967.

²² “Global Crossing’s Posh Beverly Hills HQ on Sales Block.”

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | <p>Certificate of Occupancy issued. Building type III-1 Hr. Permit No. 99002373</p> <p>Permit issued for the removal of built-up roofing and replacement with same Class A flat roof. Activity No. 99005439</p> |
| 2000 | <p>Permit issued to remove existing built-up and slate roofs and replace with B.U.R. and underlayment/slate. Permit No. BS0000419</p> <p>Plans approved for landscape renovation by Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture. Much of the existing planting dates to this time, including boxwood and annual color shrubbery that lines the perimeter of the courtyard fountains and the rows of American sycamores that border the courtyard. Olive trees are planted consistently along the west façades of 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard and 360 N. Crescent Drive, as well as along the curving path in the northeast corner of the parcel and in front of the east façade of 360 N. Crescent Drive. Oleander screening is planted along the south façade of the building.²³</p> |
| 2003 | <p>Building purchased and occupied by Paradigm Talent Agency and Platinum Equity.²⁴</p> |
| 2007 | <p>Window at the center of the east projecting volume at the north façade replaced with a compatible multi-light door.²⁵</p> |
| 2003-2010 | <p>Permits issued for major tenant improvement/interior remodeling for new building owner Platinum Equity.</p> |
| 2017 | <p>Paradigm relocates to another site in Los Angeles, leaving Platinum Equity as the sole owner and occupant of the property.²⁶</p> |

²³ Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture, "Global Crossing Corporate Headquarters Landscape Renovation."

²⁴ Claude Brodesser, "Paradigm Shifts into MCA Digs."

²⁵ "Window to door modification," drawing, Platinum Equity, April 20, 2007.

²⁶ Justin Kroll, "Paradigm Talent Agency Moving to New Los Angeles Headquarters."

4.3. 375 N. Crescent Drive (Parking Garage)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1957 | “Movie [sic] Corporation of America” covenants Lots 21, 22, 23, and 24 in Block 5 of the Beverly tract limiting the use of those lots to automobile parking. ²⁷ |
| 1967 | Permit issued for new building (parking structure) at 375 N. Crescent Drive. Litton Industries Inc. is the owner and C. L. Peck is the contractor. Paul R. Williams is the architect, per newspaper articles. ²⁸ Permit No. 670904 |
| 1968 | Permit issued for final inspections at 375 N. Crescent Drive. Permit No. 670904 |
| 1973 | In 1973, the City of Beverly Hills presents Litton with an architectural award for the parking structure. ²⁹ |
| 1994 | Sign permit issued to reface existing signs. Permit No. 94005612 |
| 1998-1999 | Structure purchased by Crescent Pacific Partners and used by telecommunications company Global Crossing as a parking lot. ³⁰ |
| 2000 | Plans approved for landscape renovation by Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture. Olive trees and natai plum shrubs planted consistently along the east and north façades. ³¹ |
| 2003 | Structure purchased and by Paradigm Talent Agency and Platinum Equity. ³² |
| 2004 | Permit issued to repave and replace concrete slab and brick paving. Permit No. BS 0407517. |
| 2017 | Paradigm relocates to another site in Los Angeles, leaving Platinum Equity as the sole owner and occupant of the property. ³³ |

²⁷ City of Beverly Hills, Covenant (To Limit the Use of Lots 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in Block 13 of Beverly, Lots 13, 14, and 15 in Block 12 of Beverly, Lots 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 in Block 5, of Beverly to Automobile Parking and to Develop Public Parking Facilities Thereon by November 1, 1957), May 13, 1957.

²⁸ “Architectural Group Gives Awards in B.H.” *Los Angeles Times*, February 4, 1973.

²⁹ “Beverly Hills Gives Architectural Awards.”

³⁰ “Global Crossing’s Posh Beverly Hills HQ on Sales Block.”

³¹ Dennis Hickock Landscape Architecture, “Global Crossing Corporate Headquarters Landscape Renovation.”

³² Claude Brodesser, “Paradigm Shifts into MCA Digs.”

³³ Justin Kroll, “Paradigm Talent Agency Moving to New Los Angeles Headquarters.”

Historic Photos and Images



9370 Santa Monica Boulevard (then Burton Way), 1939. Courtesy Huntington Library.



9370 Santa Monica Boulevard (then Burton Way), 1939. Courtesy Huntington Library.



Paul R. Williams Poster. Note the description of the 1938 building: "the most beautiful building in Beverly Hills." Courtesy Office of War Information, 1943. Accessed January 2020, <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/california/articles/paul-revere-williams-master-builder-of-los-angeles/>.



Rendering of MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex, then known as Litton Plaza, 1960s. Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library.



Rendering of landscaped courtyard between 9370 Santa Monica and 360 N. Crescent, 1960s. Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library.



Rendering of landscaped courtyard between 9370 Santa Monica and 360 N. Crescent, 1960s. Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library.



Rendering of 9370 Santa Monica, 1960s. Courtesy of Platinum Equity.

5. Historic Contexts

5.1. Commercial Development in Beverly Hills

The subject properties are located in the business district of Beverly Hills, adjacent to the famed shopping mecca known as the Golden Triangle. Located near the center of Beverly Hills, the Golden Triangle is bounded by Santa Monica and Wilshire boulevards and Canon Drive, while the greater business district – which includes the subject property – extends northeast to North Rexford Drive. The area is densely developed with various commercial and institutional uses and serves as the city’s central civic center.

In spite of its present-day associations with luxury, glamour, opulence, and wealth, Beverly Hills had inauspicious beginnings. In 1907, landscape architect Wilbur D. Cook was hired by investors organized as the Rodeo Land and Water Company to plan the community of Beverly Hills.³⁴ Cook balanced residential areas with a commercial section between Santa Monica and Wilshire Blvd. The first house was constructed in 1907, but overall development activity in the nascent community was slow. The Beverly Hills Hotel was constructed between 1911-1912 in an attempt to lure in prospective buyers. In its early years, the sprawling Mission Revival style complex not only served as a luxurious hostelry, but also functioned as a *de facto* community center for area residents.³⁵ Since the hotel was located amid what was then a swath of peripheral, undeveloped land, an auxiliary rail line called The Dinky was built to convey people between the hotel and the Pacific Electric Railway line nearer the center of town.³⁶ The Dinky traveled down the center of Rodeo Drive, originating at its intersection with Santa Monica Boulevard and terminating at the hotel on Sunset Boulevard.

Beverly Hills formally incorporated as an independent city in 1914, but development – and particularly commercial development – remained sluggish. Aside from the hotel, the city’s only commercial buildings were clustered near the intersection of Beverly Drive and Burton Way (now South Santa Monica Boulevard). At this time, the business district consisted of a small handful of one and two-story business blocks that were occupied by grocers, barbers, hardware stores, a bank, a post office, and other enterprises that served residents’ day-to-day needs. A Pacific Electric Railway station was located just to the north, on Santa Monica Boulevard. Elsewhere within the Golden Triangle, the blocks were sparsely developed with a smattering of small, humble bungalows for those of more modest means.³⁷

Just to the south of the business district and Golden Triangle, where the Beverly Wilshire Hotel and Beverly Hills High School are located today, a wood plank track for automobile racing was built between 1919-1920. Known as the Beverly Hills Speedway, it became an immediate attraction and was ranked second in race quality only to the famed Indianapolis Motor Speedway.³⁸ But as popular as the speedway

³⁴ Beverly Hills Historical Society, “Beverly Hills, A Brief History,” accessed January 2020, <http://www.beverlyhillshistoricalsociety.org/history>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Water and Power Associates, “Early Views of Beverly Hills,” accessed January 2020, https://waterandpower.org/museum/Early_Views_of_Beverly_Hills_Page_1.html. Additional information about development patterns in Beverly Hills was gleaned from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps dated 1922.

³⁸ Susan King, “Speedway Brought Life in the Fast Lane to 1920s Beverly Hills,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 24, 2014.

was, rising real estate costs and mounting development pressures meant that it was a short-lived endeavor. The racetrack was demolished in 1924, and the land was subdivided shortly thereafter.³⁹

Like most communities in Southern California, Beverly Hills witnessed an unprecedented amount of growth and development in the 1920s. It was during this time that the community truly came of age, shedding its roots as a small, peripheral outpost and asserting itself as one of Southern California's premiere residential communities. Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Will Rogers, Rudolph Valentino, and other A-list celebrities built stylish mansions in the community, cementing its reputation as a haven for the entertainment elite.⁴⁰ As Beverly Hills's population grew, its small commercial node evolved into a discernible central business district. A number of new commercial buildings arose in the triangular-shaped section between Santa Monica and Wilshire boulevards. Buildings like the exotic Beverly Theatre (1925, L.A. Smith, not extant) and the posh, Renaissance Revival style Beverly Wilshire Apartment Hotel (1928, Walker and Eisen) attested to the quality of commercial architecture in the city at this time.

In the early 1930s, two civic buildings were constructed at the northeast corner of the business district: the Spanish Renaissance style Beverly Hills City Hall (1932, William J. Gage and Harry G. Koerner), and the Italian Renaissance style Beverly Hills Post Office (1934, Ralph Flewelling and Allison and Allison). These buildings denoted the civic and political heart of the burgeoning city and represented significant new additions to its commercial and institutional core.

When the headquarters of the Music Corporation of America were constructed between 1937-1938, the Beverly Hills business district was developing in civic and architectural stature. Beverly Hills entered into another period of remarkable growth after World War II. Parcels that had remained undeveloped prior to the war were swiftly purchased and improved, and the character of commercial development also began to visibly transform at this time, with development in the Golden Triangle and nearby streets taking on an increasingly posh and sumptuous character. In 1967, 360 and 375 N. Crescent were built to form a complex with a stately landscaped courtyard. The development of this two-acre site was heralded as a way to upgrade the less auspicious quadrant to the east of the central business district, which had previously been zoned for industrial use.⁴¹

5.2. Music Corporation of America (Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman)

Music Corporation of America (MCA) was founded in Chicago in 1924 by Julius Caesar Stein, an ophthalmologist and musician who abandoned his medical career when he launched his music booking agency. Originally booking singers and bands at nightclubs on Chicago's south side, by the mid-1930s, MCA represented more than half of the bands in America and had expanded to include offices in New York City and Los Angeles. In 1936, Stein hired Lew Wasserman who quickly ascended the company ranks to become vice president and moved to Los Angeles to head the agency's West Coast operations.⁴² In

³⁹ Pacific Coast Architecture Database, "Beverly Hills Speedway, Beverly Hills, CA (1919-1920)," accessed January 2020, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/3272/>.

⁴⁰ City of Beverly Hills, "History of Beverly Hills."

⁴¹ "Litton Plans for New B.H. Offices Welcomed by City and Chamber," *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1967.

⁴² Jane Applegate, "The History of MCA," *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1990.

1938, Stein moved MCA's Los Angeles branch, located in a modest building downtown, to Beverly Hills, a strategic location that distinguished MCA from its competitors on the Sunset Strip and enmeshed its agents in its clients' social web. Stein hired noted Southern California architect Paul R. Williams to design its new West Coast headquarters. Williams already had the reputation of architect to the stars, and his designs reflected the elegance and gravitas of old money and East Coast mansions, a fitting aesthetic for the then largest talent agency in the world.⁴³

Through Williams's imposing Period Revival design, nicknamed the "white house" by MCA employees, as well as Stein's prolific collection of English antiques (including a reassembled 18th century drawing room that served as the executive office and purportedly a 125-year-old fountain and peristyle previously located at the Santa Monica beach house of Marion Davies), Stein and later his protégé Lew Wasserman strategically sought to cultivate an imperious, elegant air at a time when talent agencies had a reputation of vulgarity. An association with English gentility also allowed Stein and Wasserman to obscure their Jewish heritage, permitting them to make headway in Los Angeles high society in an era of rampant anti-Semitism.⁴⁴

The grandeur of MCA's "white house" played an essential role in the company's deal-making technique: as an early employee recalled, surrounded by "décor [that] signified quiet, well-mannered wealth...[Wasserman would] welcome visitors warmly, seat them in a straight-backed chair, offer them Scotch from Waterford crystal. Then he'd negotiate a cruel, lopsided deal so smoothly that the other party would suspect nothing until it was too late."⁴⁵ The architecture of the MCA offices served a rhetorical purpose. Broadcasting refinement and power, it set the stage for MCA's meteoric rise from talent agency to major content producer and successor to the studio system.⁴⁶

In the 1940s, Wasserman, who became the company's president in 1945, further expanded the agency with the acquisition of film and television stars. The corporation often acquired clients by buying out smaller agents. Wasserman worked to deconstruct the seven-year studio contract that had previously been standard in Hollywood. This endeared the agency to many stars, and MCA's popularity and profitability continued to grow.⁴⁷ Expansion continued further as the corporation began producing its own radio shows and soon became a direct producer of film and television. This obvious conflict of interest was circumvented by an exemption to union rules forbidding talent agency production given by the Screen Actors Guild. In 1958 MCA bought the syndication rights to all Paramount films made before 1948, and in the same year the company purchased the 420-acre Universal Studios Lot. By the end of the 1950s, MCA was the biggest buyer and seller of Hollywood talent, and the company had incorporated as MCA Inc.⁴⁸

⁴³ Frank Rose, "Twilight of the Last Mogul," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1995.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Kathleen Sharp, *Mr. and Mrs. Hollywood: Edie and Lew Wasserman and their Entertainment Empire* (Ashland, OR: Blackstone, 2003), 18.

⁴⁶ Dennis McDougal, *The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood* (New York: Crown, 1998), 75-77 and Sharp, *Mr. and Mrs. Hollywood: Edie and Lew Wasserman and their Entertainment Empire*, 15-18.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Kandell, "Lew Wasserman, 89, Is Dead: Last of Hollywood's Moguls," *New York Times*, June 4, 2002.

⁴⁸ Janet Wasko, *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, ed. Steve Neale (New York: Routledge, 2012), 383.

In 1962 MCA purchased Universal Pictures and parent company, Decca Records. Soon the corporation was forced to give up its talent agency business due to criminal anti-trust charges.⁴⁹ This divestment of the booking agency precipitated the consolidation of corporate operations on the Universal Lot, and the office headquarters at 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard was sold to Litton Industries in 1964.⁵⁰

5.3. Litton Industries

Litton Industries was founded in 1953 by Charles B. “Tex” Thornton, a business manager looking to build a conglomerate. Prior to founding Litton, Thornton had a notable job in management specialization and served as a U.S. Army colonel in the Office of Statistical Control during World War II. Thornton founded Electro Dynamics Corporation with business partner Roy L. Ash, but changed the name to Litton after acquiring a small electron tube company from Charles Litton. Litton Industries was initially backed by a \$1.5 million loan from Lehman Brothers, and within three years the new company’s sales were over \$100 million. Thornton’s intention was to build a balanced company that would become a strong blue chip in the burgeoning field of technology.⁵¹

In the 1950s and ‘60s, Litton grew to be one of the most advanced corporations in the country by absorbing dozens of smaller companies, particularly those involved in defense and spacecraft technologies. In 1960 Litton Systems Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary was formed to expand the company’s defense equipment and systems activities. The company was also active in the research and production of electronic counter measures, instrument landing systems, microwave antennas, navigation equipment, and missile control systems.⁵² At this time, Litton was one of a growing number of major electronics firms with corporate offices in Beverly Hills.

At the company’s annual meeting in 1963, it was disclosed that the Litton headquarters would be moving from 336 N. Foothill Rd. to 9370 Santa Monica Blvd. Four years later, Litton announced a multimillion-dollar expansion of the site including two new buildings and a landscaped plaza. Beverly Hills officials were eager for the prestigious new complex to revitalize the then industrially zoned area to the northeast of the city’s civic and commercial center. City Council re-zoned part of the two-acre site and granted several building code variances to permit the construction of the new office building, parking lot, and landscaped mall.⁵³ Paul R. Williams was again selected as the site’s architect and precisely continued the Classical Revival theme he had begun at the original office building. Landscape architect Paul Shipley was contracted to design the new mall, a symmetrical courtyard complete with brick paving, rectangular pools, and manicured hedges, anchored by a semicircular peristyle and fountain.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Kandell, “Lew Wasserman, 89, Is Dead: Last of Hollywood’s Moguls.”

⁵⁰ Frank Rose, “Twilight of the Last Mogul.”

⁵¹ David Bird, “Charles B. Thornton Dead at 68; Was a Litton Industries Founder,” *New York Times*, November 26, 1981.

⁵² “Litton Ind. Forms Defense Subsidiary,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1960.

⁵³ “Litton Plans for New B.H. Offices Welcomed by City and Chamber,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1967.

In 1994, Litton, now a multi-national conglomerate, plead guilty to federal fraud charges, and a period of internal reform and streamlining followed.⁵⁴ The company sold its Beverly Hills complex in 1998 to Global Crossing, an international telecommunications company, who later sold it to Paradigm Talent Agency and current owner, Platinum Equity.⁵⁵ Litton Industries was purchased by defense industry titan Northrop Grumman in 2001.

5.4. Classical Revival Architecture

The Classical Revival style, which includes the variants of Neoclassical Revival, Beaux Arts, and Greek Revival, was very popular across the United States from the turn of the twentieth century into the early 1950s. The resurgence of interest in Classical Revival architecture is often attributed to the City Beautiful movement as popularized at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Similar to the American Colonial Revival style, which was popular during the same period, the Classical Revival idiom was more formal and monumental in its design.⁵⁶ The style is characterized by symmetrical facades, massive columns, and pediments on buildings that are usually two stories in height.

Common character-defining features of the Classical Revival style include:

- Massive symmetrical and rectilinear form
- Low-pitched roofs
- Masonry walls
- Color schemes indicative of stone and masonry construction
- Triangular pediments supported by classical columns
- Large rectangular multi-light windows, usually arranged singularly
- Elaborate, decorative door surrounds
- Ornamental classical elements, including entablatures, cornices, dentils, columns, pilasters, and stringcourses

Buildings within the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex (including the north and south office buildings and parking garage) retain the essential character-defining features of the Classical Revival style. Though a considerable amount of time passed between the construction of the north office building (1938) and the south office building (1969) and garage (1968), the complex maintains a cohesive aesthetic thanks to the consistency of design afforded by their single architect, Paul R. Williams.

⁵⁴ Art Pine, "Defense Giant Litton Pleads Guilty to Fraud," Los Angeles Times, January 15, 1994, OCA1-A24 and James F. Peltz, "New Litton CEO Plans to Buy Other Defense Businesses," Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1994, OCD2.

⁵⁵ "Global Crossing's Posh Beverly Hills HQ on Sales Block," *Commercial Real Estate Direct*, September 18, 2002, https://www.crenews.com/general_news/general/global-crossings-posh-beverly-hills-hq-on-sales-block.html.

⁵⁶ Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "Classical Revival Style 1895-1950," accessed January 2020, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/classical-revival.html>.

5.5. Paul R. Williams, Architect

All three of the subject buildings were designed by Paul R. Williams (1894-1980), an esteemed architect who mastered an array of architectural styles, broke down racial barriers in the white-dominated architectural profession, and left an indelible imprint on Southern California's built environment. With a career that spanned more than five decades and resulted in some 3,000 individual buildings, Williams was, without question, one of Southern California's most highly influential architects of the early to mid-twentieth century, and perhaps of all time.

Paul Revere Williams was born in 1894 in Los Angeles. Orphaned at the age of four, he was raised by a foster family. He excelled in school and studied architecture at Los Angeles's Polytechnic High School, where he graduated in 1912.⁵⁷ Though many of Williams's professors doubted that he would be able to make a career as an architect due to his African American heritage, the young designer nonetheless pursued his passion by attending classes at the Los Angeles School of Art and the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, and by producing monograms for women's purses and watch fobs.⁵⁸ His first known architecture job was with planner and landscape architect Wilbur D. Cook, Jr., where he contributed to the designs of a town called Planada, and the gardens of Irving J. Gill's Dodge House.⁵⁹ He also worked for Pasadena architect Reginald Johnson, where he became acquainted with the Spanish Colonial Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles.⁶⁰ Also at this time, Williams studied engineering at the University of Southern California (USC), though he did not receive a terminal degree.

Williams was able to expand his repertoire when he landed a job as Chief Draftsman in the office of prominent Los Angeles architect John C. Austin. When he worked with Austin between 1919 and 1921, he was introduced to a wider variety of projects including offices, hotels, multi-family residences, and public and civic buildings.⁶¹ He became a licensed architect – and was notably the first licensed African American architect west of the Mississippi River – in 1921, a noteworthy feat in an era when racism within the profession was blatant and rampant. With his architectural license in hand, Williams founded his own eponymous firm in Los Angeles in 1923.⁶²

By this time, Williams had won several competitions and had earned myriad accolades for his high-quality residential designs, which became the bread and butter of his practice. His early commissions generally included single-family residences in Southern California that reflected a slightly modern take on the Tudor Revival, French Norman, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Mediterranean Revival styles that were popular at the time.⁶³ Many of these houses were located in Los Angeles's affluent neighborhoods including the Wilshire area and the Hollywood Hills, though his work could also be found in other Southern California communities.

⁵⁷ Karen E. Hudson, *Paul R. Williams, Architect: A Legacy of Style* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 11.

⁵⁸ Hudson (1993), 11; David Gebhard, foreword to *Paul R. Williams, Architect* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 20.

⁵⁹ Gebhard, foreword to *Paul R. Williams, Architect* (1993), 20.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid, 21.

⁶² Los Angeles Conservancy, "Paul R. Williams," accessed January 2020, <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects/paul-r-williams>.

⁶³ Gebhard, foreword to *Paul R. Williams, Architect* (1993), 21.

Known for his astuteness and the exceptional quality of his work, Williams “masterfully navigated the business and social circles of the day.”⁶⁴ His penchant for designing houses that possessed graceful, elegant proportions also attracted those with money and status. He was quickly thrust into the upper echelons of Los Angeles’s architectural scene and counted wealthy businessmen, celebrities, and socialites amongst his clientele. Some of his clients were celebrities from the Golden Age of Hollywood including comedians Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, actors Lon Chaney and Barbara Stanwyck, crooner Frank Sinatra, comedian Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, and others.⁶⁵

By the 1930s, owning a Paul Williams house was considered to be a badge of prestige. Though he rarely deviated from Period Revival styles at this point in his career, the architect went to great lengths to customize details for each of his clients, ensuring that all of his buildings were unique. He also worked in an array of Period Revival idioms and demonstrated mastery and virtuosity in virtually all of them.

These qualities ensured that Williams remained successful amid the hardships imposed by the Great Depression, during which time his firm continued to thrive.⁶⁶ While residential commissions continued to be an important part of his firm’s body of work, Williams diversified his repertoire to include commercial and institutional designs; notable examples include the Angelus Funeral Home (1934) in Los Angeles; and Saks Fifth Avenue (1939), the remodel of the Beverly Hills Hotel (1940s), and the Music Corporation of America (MCA) Building (1938; later owned by Litton Industries), all in Beverly Hills. Williams prided himself in his consideration of his clients’ “specific needs”: his original design for the MCA building, from its grand, porticoed entrance that opened onto a sweeping staircase, to its screening and broadcasting rooms that foreshadowed MCA’s foray into film and television production, suggested the ambition of a company that sought to ascend to the top of its industry.⁶⁷ By 1940 his firm’s output was estimated to be 40 percent residential projects and 60 percent commercial and institutional work.⁶⁸

As his career progressed, Williams continued to adapt his repertoire to account for shifts in architectural taste and the introduction of new methods and materials. After World War II he experimented with and mastered multiple iterations of the Moderne and Modern styles which had grown in popularity during the postwar period. However, he on occasion would return to the Period Revival idiom, as with 360 and 375 N. Crescent Dr. (1968-1969), in order to meet the desires of a client.

The overtly racist environment within which Williams worked made his contributions to Southern California architecture all the more remarkable. Incisive, astute, and determined, he broke barrier upon barrier throughout course of his career. In 1920 he was appointed to serve on the first Los Angeles City Planning Commission; in 1923 he became the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA); and in 1957, he became the first African American member of the AIA to be inducted into the organization’s College of Fellows.⁶⁹ In addition to building up and presiding over one of the most

⁶⁴ Los Angeles Conservancy, “Paul R. Williams.”

⁶⁵ The Paul R. Williams Project, “Paul R. Williams, Architect.”

⁶⁶ Gebhard, foreword to *Paul R. Williams, Architect* (1993), 23-24.

⁶⁷ “Architectural Problems Told: Paul R. Williams Gives Views on Style and Design,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1938; Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King: The Reign of Lew Wasserman, Who Leveraged Talent into Power and Influence* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2004), 50-52.

⁶⁸ Hudson (1993), 14.

⁶⁹ The Paul R. Williams Project, “Paul R. Williams, Architect.”

esteemed architectural firms in Southern California, Williams was a loyal civic leader. He served on multiple national and statewide commissions, campaigned for presidential candidate Nelson Rockefeller in the 1960s, and held the post of Los Angeles Municipal Art Commission president for eleven years.⁷⁰

Williams retired in 1973, fifty years after founding his practice.⁷¹ He died in 1980 at the age of 85. In 2017 he was posthumously awarded the AIA's Gold Metal, the institution's highest honor.

5.6. Philip A. Shipley, Landscape Architect

Born in Santa Paula, California, in 1913, Philip A. Shipley attended UC Berkeley, where he received a degree in landscape architecture in 1933. Following graduation, he moved to Southern California to set up his practice, Philip Shipley and Associates. Known for his simple yet unusual landscape plans, Shipley created residential landscapes for the wealthy and famous, from presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, to celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Clark Gable, Walt Disney, and Lew Wasserman.

In addition to his residential commissions, Shipley designed the landscapes for several commercial and research complexes including Palm Springs' Eldorado Country Club (1957), Las Vegas' Tropicana hotel (ca. 1957), the Southern California headquarters for automotive and aerospace conglomerate TRW (1980s), and Litton Plaza (1969). Philip Shipley died in 2001 at the age of 88.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Los Angeles Conservancy, "Paul R. Williams."

⁷² "Philip A. Shipley; Did Landscape Design for Presidents, Celebrities," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 2001.

6. Regulations and Criteria for Evaluation

6.1. City of Beverly Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance

Historic preservation in Beverly Hills is governed by Title 10, Chapter 3, Articles 32 and 32.5 of the Beverly Hills Municipal Code (referred to hereafter as the Ordinance). The Ordinance authorizes the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) to recommend the nomination of properties as local landmarks and historic districts to the City Council. To facilitate this process, the Ordinance establishes requirements a property must meet in order to qualify for designation as a landmark listed in the City of Beverly Hills Register of Historic Properties. The 2012 Ordinance was revised and updated in 2015, with an additional amendment in 2016; all criteria and definitions used in this document are effective as of April 1, 2016.

To be eligible for local designation as a historic landmark, a property must satisfy the following sets of requirements (A and B) as noted:

A. A landmark must meet all of the following requirements:

- (1) It is at least forty five (45) years of age, or is a property of extraordinary significance;
- (2) It possesses high artistic or aesthetic value, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or architectural type or architectural period;
- (3) It retains substantial integrity⁷³ from its period of significance; and
- (4) It has continued historic value to the community such that its designation as a landmark is reasonable and necessary to promote and further the purposes of this article.

B. In addition to those listed above, a landmark must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- (1) It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- (2) It is an exceptional work⁷⁴ by a master architect⁷⁵;

⁷³ In BHMC 10-3-3202, the Ordinance defines “substantial integrity” as “Integrity that is considerable in importance, value, degree, amount, or extent, and that continues to exist, or would have continued to exist, but for work done without appropriate permits after the enactment of this article.”

⁷⁴ A 2016 amendment to BHMC 10-3-32 in Ord. 15-O-2700 defines “exceptional work” as “A remarkably superior example of architectural work that has been recognized as such by members of the architectural community. At a minimum, the work’s exceptional quality shall have been documented by at least one of the following: a) it was the subject of a major architectural award; b) it was substantively discussed (i.e., not just mentioned) and photographically depicted in a monograph on a master architect’s career; or c) it was substantively discussed or photographically depicted in at least two (2) publications (e.g., a book, treatise, trade magazine article, film, or set of photographs made available to the public by an institutional archive) authored by acknowledged experts in the field of architecture. A monograph or publication made available to the public solely in electronic form and without any reasonable expectation of compensation to the author, or substantially authored by the architect of the work, shall not count toward this minimum.”

⁷⁵ In BHMC 10-3-3202, the Ordinance defines “master architect” as “An architect of widely recognized greatness in the field of architecture whose individual genius influenced his or her age.”

- (3) It is an exceptional work that was owned and occupied by a person of great importance, and was directly connected to a momentous event in the person's endeavors or the history of the nation. For purposes of this subsection B3, personal events such as birth, death, marriage, social interaction, and the like shall not be deemed to be momentous;
- (4) It is an exceptional property that was owned and occupied by a person of great local importance;
- (5) It is an iconic property⁷⁶; or
- (6) The landmark designation procedure is initiated, or expressly agreed to, by the owner(s) of the property. (Ord. 15-O-2682, eff. 11-19-2015).

Mirroring the National Register and California Register, the Ordinance requires that a resource retain integrity. The Ordinance defines integrity as “the ability of a property to convey its historical significance through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, relevant association, and character defining features.”⁷⁷ This builds upon the definition that is used by the National Register.

⁷⁶ In BHMC 10-3-3202, the Ordinance defines “iconic property” as “A property that has been visited and photographed so often by residents and visitors to the city that it has become inextricably associated with Beverly Hills in the popular culture and forms part of the city's identity to the world at large.”

⁷⁷ BHMC 10-3-3202, Definitions.

7. Evaluation of Significance

7.1. Previous Evaluations

The properties at 360 N. Crescent Drive and 375 N. Crescent Drive were first identified in the 1985-1986 Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey by Johnson Heumann Research Associates, through which they were both assigned the California Historical Resource Status Code 3D (appears eligible as a contributor to a National Register-eligible district through survey evaluation).⁷⁸ In 2004, the properties were re-evaluated through a survey update by PCR Services Corporation.⁷⁹ Through the survey update, both properties were assigned a new status code of 3S (appears individually eligible for listing in the National Register through survey evaluation).⁸⁰

In October 2019, the City of Beverly Hills Cultural Heritage Commission concurred with the 2004 survey findings, stating that both properties remain eligible for the National Register and California Register. The report also stated that the properties preliminary appear to meet all the required criteria for local landmark designation, per Beverly Hills Municipal Code, Section 10-3-3212 (Landmark Designation Criteria).⁸¹

7.2. Evaluation of Eligibility

City of Beverly Hills Landmark Criteria

ARG concludes that the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex (consisting of the two office buildings at 360 N. Crescent Dr./9370 Santa Monica Blvd. and parking garage at 375 N. Crescent Dr.) appears eligible for local listing as a Beverly Hills Landmark, as follows:

Part A Eligibility Criteria (resource must meet all four of the following requirements):

Criterion A.1: it is at least forty five (45) years of age, or is a property of extraordinary significance.

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex consists of two office buildings (one built in 1938 and the other in 1969) and a parking garage (built 1968). All buildings are over 45 years of age and thus satisfy Criterion A.1.

⁷⁸ Johnson Heumann Research Associates, "Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey, 1985-1986," prepared for the City of Beverly Hills, 1986.

⁷⁹ The 1938 building (9370 Santa Monica Blvd.) was evaluated as part of the 360 N. Crescent Dr. property.

⁸⁰ PCR Services Corporation, "Historic Resources Survey Report: Part I: Historic Resources Survey Update, Part II: Area 4 Multi-Family Residence Survey," prepared for the City of Beverly Hills, Planning and Community Development Department, June 2004.

⁸¹ City of Beverly Hills, Planning Division, Cultural Heritage Commission Report, "360 North Crescent Drive and 375 North Crescent Drive Landmark Initiation," October 2, 2019.

Criterion A.2: *it possesses high artistic or aesthetic value, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or architectural type or architectural period.*

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is an excellent example of Classical Revival architecture, designed by master architect Paul R. Williams. The buildings embody the distinctive characteristics of the Classical Revival style, including monumental symmetrical façades, brick cladding, pedimented entries, multi-light wood windows and paneled doors with decoratively carved wood surrounds, and applied classical ornamentation (entablatures, columns, pilasters, dentils, cornices, stringcourses). Additionally, the landscaped courtyard at 360 N. Crescent Dr., comprising herringbone brick paving, rectangular pools, a semi-circular Ionic peristyle with a fountain and bronze sculpture of the Roman god Neptune, epitomizes the formal symmetry and distinguishing materials of classical design. The complex, therefore, appears to meet Criterion A.2.

Criterion A.3: *it retains substantial integrity from its period of significance.*

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex has been minimally altered since the period of significance (1938-1969). The complex appears almost exactly as it did when its second phase of construction was completed (1969) and continues to express the definitive aesthetic and architectural principles that influenced its original design. It, therefore, appears to meet Criterion A.3.

Criterion A.4: *it has continued historic value to the community such that its designation as a landmark is reasonable and necessary to promote and further the purposes of this article.*

The properties at 360 and 375 N. Crescent Dr. are excellent, intact examples of Classical Revival architecture, deftly executed by master architect Paul R. Williams. Known for his prestigious residential designs by the 1920s, Williams's commercial commissions had expanded considerably by the late 1930s. His Period Revival edifices were crucial to the development of Beverly Hills's as well as Southern California's built environment through the postwar period, and his designs for the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex reflect an important time period and architectural aesthetic within Beverly Hills's rich architectural history. As a result, the complex has continued historic value to the community such that its designation as a landmark is reasonable and necessary to promote and further the purposes of the City of Beverly Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance. It, thus, appears to meet Criterion A.4.

Part B Eligibility Criteria (resource must meet at least one of the following requirements):

Criterion B.1: *it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

None of the buildings at 360 and 375 N. Crescent Dr. are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore the complex does not meet Criterion B.1.

Criterion B.2: *it is an exceptional work by a master architect.*

All three buildings within the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex were designed by Paul R. Williams, who is listed in the City of Beverly Hills's list of master architects and whose Period Revival designs are recognized as excellent examples of his individual influence on Beverly Hills's as well as Southern California's built environment. Widely recognized as one of his greatest architectural accomplishments, the north office building (1938), the original headquarters of the MCA, earned Williams the AIA Award of

Merit, Southern California Chapter. Shortly after its completion, the building was showcased on the front cover of the preeminent *California Arts & Architecture* magazine in October 1938, and a 1943 poster from the Office of War Information described it as, “the most beautiful building in Beverly Hills.”⁸² The office complex (including the north and south office buildings) is also featured in *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles* (2003) by distinguished architectural historians David Gebhard and Robert Winter. Gebhard and Winter state the “collection of buildings and gardens marks a high point of Traditional image architecture.”⁸³

Though not as well-published as the office complex, the parking garage has also been recognized for its architectural merit. It received an architectural award from the City of Beverly Hills in 1973. It is also mentioned in *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles* for displaying a unified architectural vocabulary in relation to the associated office buildings.⁸⁴ Furthermore, period renderings of the complex (including the two office buildings and parking garage) are available to the public through the Los Angeles Public Library. The Huntington Library holds exterior and interior photographs of the 1938 building. For these reasons, the complex appears to meet the definition of an “exceptional work” per the Beverly Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance and thus appears to meet Criterion B.2.

Criterion B.3: *it is an exceptional work that was owned and occupied by a person of great importance, and was directly connected to a momentous event in the person's endeavors or the history of the nation. For purposes of this subsection B3, personal events such as birth, death, marriage, social interaction, and the like shall not be deemed to be momentous.*

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is directly associated with the lives of Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman as they presided over the Music Corporation of America through its massive growth and transformation of the American film industry. Established in 1924, MCA had become America’s largest talent agency by the 1930s. In 1938, Stein moved the MCA’s West Coast headquarters from a modest office building in downtown Los Angeles to Beverly Hills and hired noted architect Paul R. Williams to design a new office building reflecting the grandiosity and hopeful future Stein intended for his company.⁸⁵ Through Williams’s imposing Period Revival design, as well as Stein’s prolific collection of English antiques, Stein strategically sought to cultivate an imperious, elegant air at a time when talent agencies had a reputation of vulgarity. At the offices at 9370 Santa Monica Boulevard, Stein and his successor Wasserman honed a performance of grandeur, refinement, and power that helped catapult their company into dominance. In the 1940s, Wasserman, who became the company’s president in 1945, further expanded the agency with the acquisition of film and television stars. Expansion continued further as the corporation began producing its own radio shows and soon became a direct producer of film and television. By the end of the 1950s, MCA was the biggest buyer and seller of Hollywood talent. Under the leadership of Wasserman, MCA continued to own and occupy the subject property for over 25 years, with MCA’s corporate identity closely intertwining with its Classical Revival headquarters. The location and

⁸² “Music Corporation of America,” *California Arts & Architecture*, October 1938: Cover.

⁸³ David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, 6th ed. (Santa Monica, CA: Angel City Press, 2018), 222.

⁸⁴ Gebhard and Winter (2003), 222.

⁸⁵ Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King: The Reign of Lew Wasserman, Who Leveraged Talent into Power and Influence*. (New York: Penguin Random House, 2004), 50.

design of the original MCA headquarters (north office building) was integral to MCA's capacity to distinguish itself from its competitors, seduce its clients, intimidate its rivals and amass a media empire. For this reason, the subject property is directly connected to the lives of two persons of national importance, Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman, and thus meets Criterion B.3.

Criterion B.4: *it is an exceptional property that was owned and occupied by a person of great local importance.*

As discussed under Criterion B.3, the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex was owned and occupied by significant individuals Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman. Both men served as president of Music Corporation of America and were responsible for the considerable growth and transformation of the media empire during the 1930s and into the postwar period. For this reason, the property appears to satisfy Criterion B.4.

Criterion B.5: *it is an iconic property.*

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is an iconic property as defined by the Ordinance. The complex has been widely visited and photographed, as indicated by its extensive presence on image hosting web-based platforms such as Flickr and Pinterest. It is also highly publicized on websites such as Hollywoodhistoricphotos.com and pbsocal.org for its association with Paul R. Williams. Lastly, it has been included as part of the City of Beverly Hills's walking tours. Located across the street from the Civic Center, the complex is a highly visible, monumental property that is inextricably associated with Beverly Hills's identity. It, therefore, appears to meet Criterion B.5.

Criterion B.6: *the landmark designation procedure is initiated, or expressly agreed to, by the owner(s) of the property. (Ord. 15-O-2682, eff. 11-19-2015).*

The Landmark designation procedure has been expressly agreed to by the owner(s) of the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex. It, thus, appears to meet Criterion B.6.

Summary of Local Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for local listing, a resource must meet all four of the above-listed Part A requirements, and at least one of the above-listed Part B requirements. The complex appears to meet Criteria A.1-A.4 and Criteria B.2-B.6. It therefore appears eligible for listing as a Beverly Hills Landmark.

7.3. Evaluation of Integrity

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex appears to meet the necessary City of Beverly Hills Integrity Criteria as defined in the Ordinance. The following discussion evaluates the complex under the National Register's seven elements of integrity, and the local integrity element of character-defining features.

Location: the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The complex remains at its original location and retains this element of integrity.

Design: the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The buildings at 360 and 375 N. Crescent Dr. have experienced no exterior alterations affecting their form, plan, space, structure, or style since the second phase of construction (ending in 1969). Minor exterior alterations, including replacement of entrance and egress doors, replacement of a window with a compatible door at the 1969 office building, and sign refacing and re-roofing at all buildings, have had no impact on their Classical Revival design. A 2000 landscape renovation by Dennis Hickock introduced new plantings, while maintaining the plan and style of a formal garden. Thus, the complex retains this element of integrity.

Setting: the physical environment of a historic property.

The complex's commercial setting, within the central business district and across from the city's civic center, has remained the same since its period of significance (ending in 1969). Thus, it retains integrity of setting.

Materials: the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

A few material alterations have occurred to the complex, including the replacement of entrance doors at the 1969 office building, sign refacing and re-roofing, repair/replacement of some brick paving, and removal of the fountain statuary in the landscaped courtyard. However, the vast majority of its original materials (brick cladding/paving, wood windows and doors, and smooth stucco classical ornamentation) remain. As a result, the complex retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

Due to retention of original materials and features as described above, the complex retains integrity of workmanship. Its craftsmanship continues to be conveyed through elements like the buildings' painted brick walls; brick brise soleil panels at the parking garage; smooth stucco pediments, entablatures, columns, pilasters, and other classical ornamentation; and formal courtyard and manicured landscape. The complex retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

As a readily recognizable example of Classical Revival architecture, the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex is a direct expression of the monumental architectural aesthetic that defined the commercial and institutional development of Beverly Hills during the 1930s and into the postwar period. It has experienced few alterations and continues to express the aesthetic and historic sense from its period of significance (1938-1969). Thus, the property retains this element of integrity.

Association: the direct link between an important historic event or person and a property.

While no singular historic events are known to be associated with the complex, the campus is closely associated with Beverly Hills's downtown commercial development in the 1930s and continuing through the postwar period. It retains its location and overall setting and is recognizable as a monumental

commercial complex in the city's central business district. The complex provides a direct link to this historic pattern of development and retains integrity of association.

Character-Defining Features

The MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex retains nearly all of its original character-defining features, as described in *Section 3.4: Character-Defining Features* of this report. The complex possesses sufficient character-defining features to express its original architectural character, and as a result it retains this element of integrity.

8. Conclusion

As a result of background research, site inspection, and evaluation under local eligibility criteria and integrity considerations, ARG finds that the MCA/Litton Headquarters Complex satisfies the City of Beverly Hills' landmark designation criteria as stipulated in the Ordinance (BHMC Section 10-3-3212). It appears to meet the required Criteria A.1-A.4, as well as Criteria B.2-B.6. As a result, the complex appears eligible for listing in the City of Beverly Hills Register of Historic Properties.

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