



City of Phoenix
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Staff Report: Z-58-18-4
October 8, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Z-58-18-4 is a request to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the property known historically as the Park Lee Alice Apartments, located at the southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street. Maps and photos of the subject property are attached.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that rezoning request Z-58-18-4 be approved.

BACKGROUND

In April 2018, the City Historic Preservation Office received a request from Cindy Stotler, City of Phoenix Housing Department Director, for HP overlay zoning for the property, which is owned by the PCCR Park Lee, LLC (City). At Ms. Stotler's request, the City's HP Commission formally initiated HP overlay zoning for the Park Lee Alice Apartments on May 21, 2018.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria for HP overlay zoning and listing on the PHPR are set forth in Section 807.D of the City of Phoenix Zoning Ordinance. To qualify, a property must demonstrate significance in local, regional, state, or national history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, according to one or more of the following criteria:

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

In addition to the significance requirement, the property must also be at least 50 years old or have achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. The property must also possess sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

DESCRIPTION

The Park Lee Alice Apartments (Park Lee Alice) is a 1955 garden apartment complex located on a 38.84-acre rectangular site just south of Camelback Road bounded by 15th and 17th Avenues on the east and west and Pierson and Hazelwood Streets to the north and south. Highland Street bisects the development and segments of Elm Street, 16th Avenue, and 15th and 16th Drives also provide circulation within the development. Park Lee Alice is comprised of 34 apartment buildings with 43 carport structures (some with storage areas) behind the buildings. A 3.4-acre park that is part of the original development is located near the center of the complex and has a community center, laundry building, child care center and recreational amenities, including three pools, tennis courts, a basketball court, and playground.

SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

At the time it was built in 1955, Park Lee Alice was the largest apartment complex in the state, with 523 one- and two-bedroom apartments in 34 one and two-story buildings. The development is eligible for listing on the Phoenix Historic Property Register under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and specifically as a significant example of a large, post-World War II Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured multi-family rental housing development for low-to-moderate income households. In addition, it is significant as one of the first developments in the state to plan its conversion from apartments to condominiums, taking encouragement from a new FHA-backed program after it was sold in 1966.

Park Lee Alice is also eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of a garden-style apartment development. It is unique among post-World War II garden apartment developments in Phoenix for its inclusion of a centrally-located 3.4-acre community park with a community center, laundry building, child care center, and recreational amenities for residents.

Park Lee Alice is eligible as a multi-family residential historic district. Its period of significance is 1955, when construction was completed, to 1966, when the building exteriors were modified to add entry porticos and other front façade details as part of a planned condominium conversion that apparently did not happen.

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development History

Park Lee Alice was a project of Samuel G. and Jerry (Gerald) Bialac, father and son developers from Los Angeles who were well established in the residential construction business. Samuel, an immigrant from Poland, named the project after his wife Lee and his daughter Alice.

The Bialics were developers of large FHA single-family and apartment projects in the Southwest. One of their projects, Lincoln Place Apartments, was built under the FHA Section 608 multi-family rental housing program in the Venice Beach area of Los Angeles between 1949 and 1951. This development was the prototype for Park Lee

Alice. Advertised as “modern garden apartments,” Lincoln Place Apartments comprised 795 one- and two-bedroom apartments in 52 buildings on 38 acres. In addition, the development offered numerous amenities including carports, garages, laundry rooms, and mature landscaping. These amenities plus other, special design features served to make Lincoln Place a highly successful multi-family housing project that is operating to this day. The Lincoln Place Apartments were placed on the California Register of Historical Resources in 2003 and on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

The Park Lee Alice Apartments was not the first project in Phoenix attempted by the Bialacs. In mid-1953, Samuel and Jerry were poised to develop a similarly-designed but much larger project of 1500 units on 120 acres at Thomas Rd. and 32nd St. Projected to cost \$12 million, FHA financing for that project fell through and the land was subsequently sold to Ralph Staggs. Two years later in July 1955, the Bialacs, working with a scaled down project roughly 1/3 the size of the original Thomas Road project, opened Park Lee Alice Apartments at its present location.

After arriving in Phoenix in 1953, the Bialacs formed the Rental Development Corporation of America to handle the financing and development for Park Lee Alice. The Bialacs hired local architect Ralph Haver to design the site plan and buildings and Rubenstein Construction Company as the general contractor. Haver’s site plan for Park Lee Alice differs from Lincoln Place, though the staggered fourplex building plans at Park Lee Alice as well as the individual apartment unit plans are very similar to those used by the Bialacs at Lincoln Place, which was designed by Los Angeles-based architectural firm Wharton & Vaughn, Associates.

Local architect Ralph Haver was engaged by the Bialacs for both iterations of Park Lee Alice. A native Californian with a degree in architecture from the University of Southern California, Pasadena, Haver settled in Phoenix after the war, joining his father and brother who were already involved with construction and development in the Phoenix area. One of Haver’s signature professional interests was creating affordable housing that offered a modern, casual living style suitable for the postwar years. Although Haver frequently designed single-family houses, he was involved in other Phoenix area multi-family housing projects including the Country Club Apartments, built in 1949, and later Dell Traylor’s Golden Keys condominium development, built in 1964 as well as the design of educational and commercial buildings.

The initial investment in Park Lee Alice Apartments was reported to be \$5 million. This amount included \$3,749,900 backed by FHA Section 207 mortgage insurance that set forth standards and guidelines for development of multi-family rental housing for low-to-moderate income households.

Promotional materials for the Park Lee Alice Apartments in the 1950s convey an image of a clean, modern apartment community, with one- and two-story red brick apartment buildings placed in a landscaped, park-like setting with grass and trees throughout, and complemented by many amenities. In the center of the complex was a nearly 4-acre recreational area with a swimming pool, snack bar, game courts and public green space. The apartments featured brick exterior walls, picture windows, patios and

balconies that all fronted grassy landscaped areas, reinforced concrete stairs for quiet and fire-safety, oak flooring, garbage disposals, built-in breakfast nooks, covered parking and storage spaces for each unit. Laundry rooms were also incorporated into some of the carport structures.

Unfurnished units were offered for rent starting at \$67.50 per month in 1955; furnished units were slightly higher. Initially, only 27 (out of 523) apartments were rented as furnished, but within 10 months of opening, Sam Bialac realized the demand was greater than anticipated and made plans to furnish an additional 100 units. By 1959, advertised rents were \$79.50 for a one-bedroom and \$89.50 for a two-bedroom apartment. In addition, central refrigeration was now available in some units for a small extra cost.

In comparison, advertised rates for nearby complexes were higher, suggesting that Park Lee Alice rents were indeed targeted to low-to-moderate income households per the requirements of the FHA Section 207 program. One-bedroom apartments at Park Central Lanai at 7th Avenue and Flower Street were \$105 per month in 1956. Del Webb built Camelback Village apartments at 11th Avenue and Camelback Road in 1959 and advertised rents were \$150 for a one-bedroom and \$200 for a two-bedroom.

Reportedly, there were plenty of ready tenants. Owner Sam Bialac reported on July 31, 1955, that the response to their advertising had been great and that approximately 100 leases had been signed in the first week after the grand opening on July 24. In March 1956, eight months after opening, Bialac reported "Practically every apartment in the huge Park Lee Alice apartments, 17th Ave and Camelback, has been rented." Early ads consistently touted both "resort-type living" and "luxury living at low cost."

Residents of the Park Lee Alice were a mix of adult singles, couples, and families with children. Although the complex was designed to accommodate all, advertisements also stated that residents without children would be in buildings separate from those with children. The first tenants to move in were Mr. & Mrs. E. M. Griffin, who moved into a unit on N. 17th Ave. in July 1955. Mr. Griffin was a supervisor at AiResearch.

In 1958, a couple who would later figure prominently in Arizona and U.S. history, moved into Apartment No. 3 at 1642 W. Hazelwood, namely John and Sandra Day O'Connor. According to a 2010 interview with retired Justice O'Connor, the couple lived at Park Lee Alice upon their return from Germany, where they had worked after the war. They were in the apartment only a brief time while their new adobe block home was being built in Paradise Valley.

City directories listing early apartment residents show a variety of trades and professional interests, including supervisors and managers, engineers, sales reps, owners of small businesses, insurance agents, attorneys, school and office workers, and retirees. Employment information also revealed a broad variety of business and industry, including Arizona Public Service Co., Sperry Rand, AiResearch, Globe Furniture Co., Arizona Title Guarantee & Trust Co., Reynolds Metals Co., and General American Life Insurance Co. Additionally, after the city annexed the Park Lee Alice

area in April 1959, ads frequently noted that city employees were now eligible to live there.

A shopping center was also planned on seven acres at the southeast corner of 17th Ave. and Camelback Rd. that was designed to meet the daily shopping needs of Park Lee Alice residents and was integral to the project; construction of the center proceeded apace with the apartments. Eventually, multiple stores located in the center, including a Fry's Food Store and a SuperX Drugstore.

It is likely that the Park Lee Alice apartments and shopping center helped spur other development along west Camelback – in 1959 Del Webb built Camelback Village Apartments to the northeast at 11th Avenue and Camelback; Ralph Staggs built affordable single-family houses in his Westown subdivision to the east of Park Lee Alice. In 1956, the Robert Hall Store, a national chain store for men's and women's clothing, sited a new store on the southwest corner at Camelback & 13th Ave., because it was “convinced the population center of Phoenix is moving northwest and will continue to do so.”

Park Lee Alice was successful as a large-scale rental property development. The Bialacs were experienced developers with political and public relations savvy. Various articles in the Arizona Republic and local trade publications promoted the project while it was under construction and it was often mentioned in later years in discussions about the boom in multi-story apartment projects in Phoenix.

FHA Section 207 Program

Population growth in the Valley was explosive during and after World War II. Active military, returning veterans, and workers for the Valley's growing high-tech industry flooded into the area after the war, putting a severe strain on the limited housing supply. As a result, starting in the mid-1940s, housing resources were increasingly devoted to multi-family housing.

Even as new housing was built at an ever-increasing rate, the needs of low- and moderate-income families were especially acute and much of the federal housing assistance authorized through the FHA and the Veterans Administration (VA) was focused on stimulating private sector investment in affordable housing. The FHA Section 207 mortgage insurance program used by the Bialacs to finance the Park Lee Alice Apartments was key to the success of their project.

Since the first national housing legislation was passed in 1934, federal funding has influenced housing development in many important ways. By the mid-1950s, the Phoenix housing market, bolstered by federal dollars and significant postwar population growth, tilted toward large-scale projects by large-scale developers, many of whom were from out of state. While the over-arching goal of the federal assistance was to increase homeownership, some federal financing programs were available for multi-family rentals and cooperatives, including the FHA Section 207 program that backed the Bialacs' project. Section 207 covered properties with five or more units.

To further encourage multi-family construction, in 1954 the Internal Revenue Code was changed to allow greater tax advantages for the apartment complex owner. With equity requirements dropping to three percent and using a double-depreciation rate, it became possible for a developer to recoup his total equity investment in three or four years and to own their complex free and clear within ten years.

The influence of the federal role in housing extended beyond financial assistance. Federal funding directly impacted the quality of the nation's housing stock as well as the look and feel of housing development. This was done in part through the use of detailed design standards and development guidelines that were required when federal funds were involved. Standards did not dictate style but did specify architectural and construction requirements needed to ensure decent, safe and affordable housing.

Standards specific to FHA Section 207 were applied in the construction of the Park Lee Alice Apartments, and are reflected in the location, site planning, building design, unit plan, and even the early resident demographics. FHA-backed rental projects also had operational restrictions and regulations placed on the completed projects. Under Section 207, the FHA restricted the rents developers could charge to reasonable and moderate rates and required that all projects admit children.

The FHA encouraged sites for new multi-family development that were located not far from business districts, in distinctly residential areas, with apartment buildings set back from the street, and outside living spaces separated from service areas, and where tenants' income and ability to pay rent were not dependent on the success of a single industry. The FHA guidelines further noted that open spaces and low density were essential for garden type apartments. These guidelines were clearly followed in the siting and construction of Park Lee Alice. Parking structures were also encouraged to be placed around the project perimeter rather than at the center; the carports at Park Lee Alice are placed along the rear perimeters of the buildings, in service-area spaces formed by the building arrangements, thereby reducing their streetscape visibility and separating the parking areas from the public spaces.

In its 1947 guide "Planning Rental Housing Projects" the FHA states that "housing is meant to mean dwelling unit for families – quarters which offer complete facilities for family life." Living rooms were "the meeting place of the family group" and as such, FHA guidelines required them to be the largest room in the unit, which is reflected in the Park Lee Alice unit plans. Family interactions were also fostered at Park Lee Alice with the indoor-outdoor design of the apartments that integrated lawn and play areas with apartments and outdoor patios and balconies. The large community park at Park Lee Alice with all its amenities also catered to a family lifestyle and early display ads for Park Lee Alice use imagery of grinning families frolicking or lounging by the pool.

The FHA guidelines also stated a preference for architectural unity within a project based on mass, scale, and proportion. Excessive ornamentation was discouraged. Building designs were encouraged where each unit had its own separate entrance (versus a shared corridor of entries). Patios, balconies, and large living room windows were also encouraged as part of the postwar emphasis on indoor-outdoor living.

In terms of the actual unit design, simple plans were favored under FHA guidelines with rooms conveniently and logically arranged. In the three plans offered at Park Lee Alice the public living room and kitchen spaces are separated on one side of the plan by a hallway from the private areas where the bedrooms and bathrooms are located. Rooms with “desirable proportions” were also encouraged and again, Park Lee Alice reflects this influence with the size of its rooms – the living rooms are 14’ x 18’ and the bedrooms range in size from 10’5” x 13’1” at the smallest to 10’11” x 16’9” at the largest. FHA guidelines also advocated for kitchens with ample light and ventilation; each Park Lee Alice apartment has two windows and an exterior door in the kitchen.

New Owner – Planned Condominium Conversion

By the mid-1960s, the housing mix for Phoenix had broadened considerably since the pre-war days. Condos, townhouses, and cooperatives, including both new-builds and conversions, were becoming more prevalent as were the large apartment complexes of 100 units or more in multiple buildings or high-rises. FHA encouraged these types of construction as a lower cost housing option, although not all Phoenix projects used federal financing. Some of the prominent multi-family developments of this era include the following:

- Country Club Apartments – opened in 1948 as the then-largest apartment development in Phoenix with 94 units; expansion in 1962 added new units for a total of 166. Unfurnished apartments rented for \$145 per month in 1962.
- Park Central Area – several large apartment complexes were built in this area beginning in 1954 as part of an overall development plan that also included construction of Park Central Mall and many single-family homes. The first complex built was Park Central Terrace Apartments, a 95-unit development that later converted to a “motor hotel” serving the need for accommodations related to development of St. Joseph’s Hospital. Other Park Central area apartments included Park Central Lanai Apartments, built in 1959 with 90 units and Park North Lanai Apartments built in 1957 with 108 units.
- Executive Towers – A 22-story high-rise apartment building designed by Phoenix architect Al Beadle opened in 1954 with 95 units; converted to condominiums in 1971.
- Phoenix Towers – Luxury 14-story high-rise built by Del Webb; opened as a co-operative in 1956 with 60 units.
- Villa del Coronado – Built by Lionel V. Mayell, a Los Angeles builder-developer who had been building co-operatively owned apartments in California for over 30 years; opened in 1956 with 72 units.
- Golden Keys 1 – Phoenix’s first townhouse development, designed by Ralph Haver and built by Dell Traylor in 1964.
- Regency House –A 22-story high-rise condominium opened in 1966 with 118 units.

In January 1966, the Bialacs sold the Park Lee Alice Apartments for \$5 million to Harsh Building Company, a division of the Harsh Investment Corp., out of Portland, Oregon.

The new owners, experienced in multi-family development, promptly announced “a reconversion and expansion program,” pledging \$1.5 (\$2.4 in another account) million for interior, exterior and landscaping improvements and converting all units from rentals to condominiums. As one of the first FHA-accepted projects of its kind in the state, the new work on Park Lee Alice was guided by a regulatory agreement with FHA that stipulated that Harsh would “establish a plan of apartment ownership, within two years of completion of the construction work, under which each family unit in the Project will be eligible for individual mortgage insurance under Section 234(c) of the Act.” Wasting little time, the company formalized its plan in September 1966, with an “Enabling Declaration Establishing a Plan for Condominium Ownership” that included four detailed site plans and by-laws for Park Lee Alice Condominium, prepared in March 1966 and recorded in September 1966.

Perhaps the most dramatic physical change made by Harsh involved giving the entire development a new look – featuring what was described as “an Old New Orleans motif with wrought iron railing and fountains.” Other improvements made by Harsh included adding a second swimming pool, tennis courts, and community club house. Also, extensive work was done on the individual units, including installation of new stoves and refrigerators, new carpet, and refrigerated air conditioning for all units. Architect for the remodel was William Hirsch AIA of Allen Shaw Associates of Los Angeles, CA. The changes as proposed in 1966 are documented in renderings prepared by Hirsch and hanging on the Park Lee community center walls today.

The permit for the extensive remodeling of the building facades at Park Lee Alice was pulled in December 1965, work began in spring 1966, and the final inspection was completed in December 1966. The final inspection for the new clubhouse occurred in October 1966. The new owners continued to rent apartments through the construction period and beyond. This was allowed if not encouraged by FHA as a way of securing future sales to qualified individuals.

Even before all the remodeling was completed, condo sales were kicked off with a “Grand Opening Soon!” ad on July 24, 1966. Ads from later that year specified FHA financing at 5-1/4% --a very competitive rate at that time--and payments as low as \$97/month which included not only principal, interest, taxes and FHA insurance, but also exterior maintenance, water, and other costs associated with condo ownership. Sales of units were promoted to current residents, winter visitors, widows (for “low monthly cost”) as well as to “individual investors who may use one unit themselves and lease the remaining three.” According to a December 1966 column by the *Arizona Republic*'s Real Estate Editor Mal Hernandez, “32 units were spoken for” following a recent open house. Prices were advertised in May 1967 at \$10,400 (\$93/month) for a one-bedroom and \$12,500 (\$112/month) for a two-bedroom.

Also in 1966, newspaper display ads referred to the Park Lee Alice Estates, Park Lee Alice Condominiums, or the Park Lee Alice Condominium Estates. However, by 1967 the “Alice” had generally been dropped and the development was now typically called Park Lee Apartments or Park Lee Estates.

There are indications that Harsh's plan to convert to condos was never realized for reasons unknown. While no paperwork documenting this change has been located, there are no *Arizona Republic* ads for condo sales after May 1967, and no records of sale located, but Harsh does publish numerous and frequent ads for rentals, beginning in December 1966 and continuing into the 1990s. In addition, a review of the 1967 City Directory — the second year of Harsh ownership — reveals only tenants (not owners). Except for a few addresses marked as “no returns,” most units were identified as vacant. While some of the vacancies could be attributed to potential ongoing construction work, the vacancy rate seems high, and suggests an apparent lack of income for the property, which may have prompted Harsh to start offering units for rent again.

Post-1966

Harsh Building Company was new to the Phoenix market in 1966, but had developed large properties elsewhere, including the Stardust Hotel in Yuma, a 26-story medical building in San Francisco, the Claremont Hotel in Oakland, CA, high rise apartments in San Diego and Portland, and shopping centers in Portland. Nonetheless, it appears the Park Lee project was a challenge for them, for reasons not fully understood, and, ultimately, the company filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 in 1992. Approved by the court, this action allowed them to acquire new financing thru a partnership with LEECO Investment Company of Phoenix, an arrangement that continued at least into 1999.

Newspapers ads from the mid-1980s appear to indicate a resurgence in advertising and other efforts to attract new renters starting with yet another “grand opening” for “newly remodeled apartments” in October 1985. Ads and articles up to 1994 entice with lists of features and amenities, e.g., close to downtown, on the bus line, 24-hour security, large park and recreational area with planned activities. In addition, ads in 1986 and beyond often appeared in tandem with ads for Sylmar 1-2-3-bedroom patio/garden apartments, another Harsh Investment Corp.-owned property that was located at 38th Ave. and Camelback. Based on help wanted and other advertising by Harsh, it appears as though they tried to combine marketing and leasing functions for the two complexes for a time, although the question remains if this was helpful to their bottom line.

Despite the challenges and set-backs, the Park Lee Alice Apartments remained a unique property in Phoenix, distinguished by low-density design, buildings spread over large acreage, solid brick construction, and a park-like setting. In an *Arizona Republic* column in 1972, Henry Fuller pointed to Park Lee Alice as an example of the type of development no longer possible (or likely) in Phoenix due to changing economic factors, not the least of which was the high cost of land. He specifically commented on two properties then-recently built — “Somerset Villa with 384 units on Colter, between 7th and 11th Avenues” and “Family Suntempo on Glendale Avenue, between 15th and 16th Ave,”— noting similarities of the two: financed by outside capital, wood-stucco construction, high density, painted light tan, and consisting of “parallel rows of buildings, with staggered residential promenades between them.” While Fuller acknowledged the realities of the “full-land use construction trend in the Valley,” he also expressed his lack of enthusiasm for the new apartment exteriors. In his final comment, he observed that

“In becoming a metropolis Phoenix has become so valuable that space for utility is shoving space for attractiveness right off the stage.” Similar sentiments were expressed in another feature article over twenty years later (1994), extolling Park Lee’s quiet, garden-like environment and unique New Orleans-style.

Purchase by City of Phoenix

In 2008, using funds from the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, the city of Phoenix purchased the Park Lee Apartments for about \$5.2 million. Additional funds were invested for repairs and maintenance. Park Lee Apartments reopened in 2011 to provide affordable housing opportunities to qualifying households and has a nearly-continuous occupancy rate above 95% and a waiting list. It is now commonly referred to as Park Lee.

Criterion C: Garden Style Apartments

Park Lee Alice is significant as a large, garden style apartment complex. Garden apartments were a popular type of multi-family complex constructed in the first two decades after World War II. These were walk-up buildings, usually one or two stories. The buildings were arranged to provide clustered areas of open space for walkways, lawns, trees, shrubs, and recreation that were available to the occupants of each unit. Each unit was designed with the entire floor plan on one level.

The size of the individual buildings in a garden apartment project steadily grew in the postwar years. While it was a common practice in the late 1940s and early 1950s to arrange one-story duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in a corridor, “L”, or “U”-shaped courtyard plan, by the late 1950s and early 1960s the individual buildings in a complex were often two stories with a minimum of eight units each. In the 1950s, structures with up to 50 units per building were introduced into the garden apartment complex as part of the trend toward larger projects.

Often garden apartments conveyed a cosmopolitan, western, or colonial theme through the varied use of materials and workmanship on the façade. This image helped in their ongoing marketing to prospective tenants. A dramatic entry was another technique apartment builders employed in the design and marketing of their projects. This was frequently achieved with modern signage, lush landscaping, fountains, decorative block grills, or sculptures, mosaics, and mural artwork. Other features included decorative terraces, stairways and balconies. Recreational amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, shuffleboards, putting greens, and barbecues were also incorporated into the design to attract renters.

An emphasis on indoor-outdoor living and views were important in the postwar design of both multi-family and single-family housing. To achieve these effects, multi-family builders used window walls, sliding glass doors, balconies, and landscaped terraces and courtyards. Postwar apartments were designed to have these balcony, patio, and courtyard spaces function as outdoor living rooms, uniting them with indoor spaces through the use of windows. In fact, balconies were even encouraged by the FHA, who counted them as a room for loan purposes.

The Park Lee Alice site plan is designed as a modified superblock with separate circulation for pedestrians and automobiles. The staggered buildings are arranged in a serpentine or modified serpentine pattern, with the buildings fronting public streets or each other. Staggering creates multiple corner units at Park Lee Alice and allows for placement of additional side windows.

The apartment buildings are primarily comprised of two-story fourplex building modules that are combined with other modules to create chains of buildings generally arranged in C, E, I, L, U, and Z plans. There are also 19 one-story cottages attached to the end of some two-story building module chains, which provide variation in the scale and massing at Park Lee Alice. These building arrangements create deep front yard setbacks for those buildings that face the road and large courtyards for those buildings that front each other. These public open areas are landscaped with turf, shrubs, and mature trees. Service areas with paved alleys and concrete block carport structures are located in the private spaces behind the apartment buildings.

Buildings at Park Lee Alice vary in number of apartment units. The development had 523 apartments in 34 buildings when it first opened in 1955. North of Highland Avenue where the serpentine building arrangement is interrupted by the park and city roads that run through the development the smallest buildings have 5 apartment units, including a two-story fourplex building with a walk-up central entry and an attached one-story end cottage with its own entry. Other buildings have 9 to 24 units per building with four units clustered around each two-story walk-up entry. South of Highland Ave., the serpentine layout creates chains of attached buildings ranging from 16 to 33 units, again with an entry for each fourplex grouping of apartments, except for the occasional end-unit cottage. The repeating building modules help maintain architectural cohesiveness throughout the development despite the various building arrangements on the site.

The basic apartment building module is a two-story rectangular mass with an occasional one-story rectangular block attached at the end of a series of two-story buildings. The buildings are constructed with brick on a concrete foundation; some buildings are painted, which may have originally been the case based on how the buildings are shown in a 1950s postcard. The roofs have very low-slope hipped roofs with broad overhangs sheathed in 3-tab asphalt shingles. The roofs may have originally been sheathed with a built-up material. Some of the roofs have been modified with the addition of a mansard shape parapet at the perimeter in anticipation of converting the apartments to condos in 1966. The windows are aluminum sliders and likely date to the 1966 remodel.

The carports are low-slung, rectangular structures located behind the apartment buildings. North of Highland Avenue the carports have low-slope shed roof forms with parking stalls on one side; south of Highland the carports have low-pitch gable roofs to accommodate parking stalls on both sides. In contrast to the apartment buildings, which are built with brick, the carports were constructed with concrete masonry blocks – the most common material for exterior walls used in postwar Phoenix and cheaper than brick. The carports are enclosed on three sides. Some of these structures also have a

small room at one end that originally functioned as a caretaker shop or laundry room according to Haver's site plan.

The community center, laundry building, and child care center in the park are all one-story rectangular plan buildings constructed with painted concrete block. They have flat roofs with mansard parapets.

As part of the plan to convert from apartments to condominiums in 1966 the building facades were also modified and adorned with distinctive French New Orleans and Neo-Classical motif entries and balconies. This resulted in the addition of different porticos and other entry treatments to the main facades of the apartment buildings, introducing Neo-classical design elements such as columns, pilasters, entablatures, and pediments. The "Old New Orleans" look was achieved with the addition of mansard roof parapets and porticos and decorative wrought-iron look steel columns and balcony railings on some apartment buildings. In addition to the fountains, which have been filled with dirt, decorative metal lollipop lights are also believed to have been installed throughout the site as part of the Harsh remodel.

There are balconies at the second-story one-bedroom apartments and patios for the ground floor one-bedroom units. The balcony railings vary in design and materials, ranging from modern tapered wood spindles to brick laid to create small square openings near the top (believed to be original to the Haver design) to painted metal railings with decorative turned posts (added when Harsh remodeled in 1966). The patios have low concrete block walls; on the "Old New Orleans" styled units a decorative wrought-iron look metal railing has been added at the top of the patio wall.

Amenities for residents at Park Lee Alice include the 3.4-acre park located near the center of the development. The park includes a community center (originally the Clubhouse built in 1966 by Harsh), a laundry building (originally the pool house built in 1955), child care center (built c. 1966), three pools, tennis courts, a basketball court, and playground.

INTEGRITY

The Park Lee Alice Apartments retains remarkable integrity with very few alterations since 1966 when Harsh completed their major remodel of the grounds and building exteriors.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Section 807.E states that, when applying the evaluation criteria in Section 807.D, the boundaries of a historic district should be drawn as carefully as possible to ensure that:

1. The district contains documented historic, architectural, archaeological or natural resources;
2. The district boundaries coincide with documented historic boundaries such as early roadways, canals, subdivision plats or property lines;

3. Other district boundaries coincide with logical physical or manmade features and reflect recognized neighborhood or area boundaries; and
4. Other non-historic resources or vacant land is included where necessary to create appropriate boundaries to assist in meeting the criteria in Section 807.D.

The proposed HP zoning boundary follows the current parcel boundary. It includes the apartment buildings, carport/storage structures, and park with the clubhouse, laundry building, child care center, and recreational amenities, and associated site and landscape features. The total area to be rezoned is 38.84 acres. This boundary is recommended by staff and supported by the property owner.

CONCLUSION

The rezoning request Z-58-18-4 to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the subject property should be approved for the following reasons:

1. The property meets the significance, age, and integrity requirements for HP overlay zoning set forth in Section 807.D of the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. The proposed boundaries meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 807.E.

Writers

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10/8/18

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M. Dodds

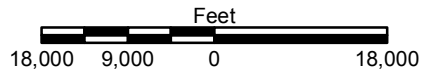
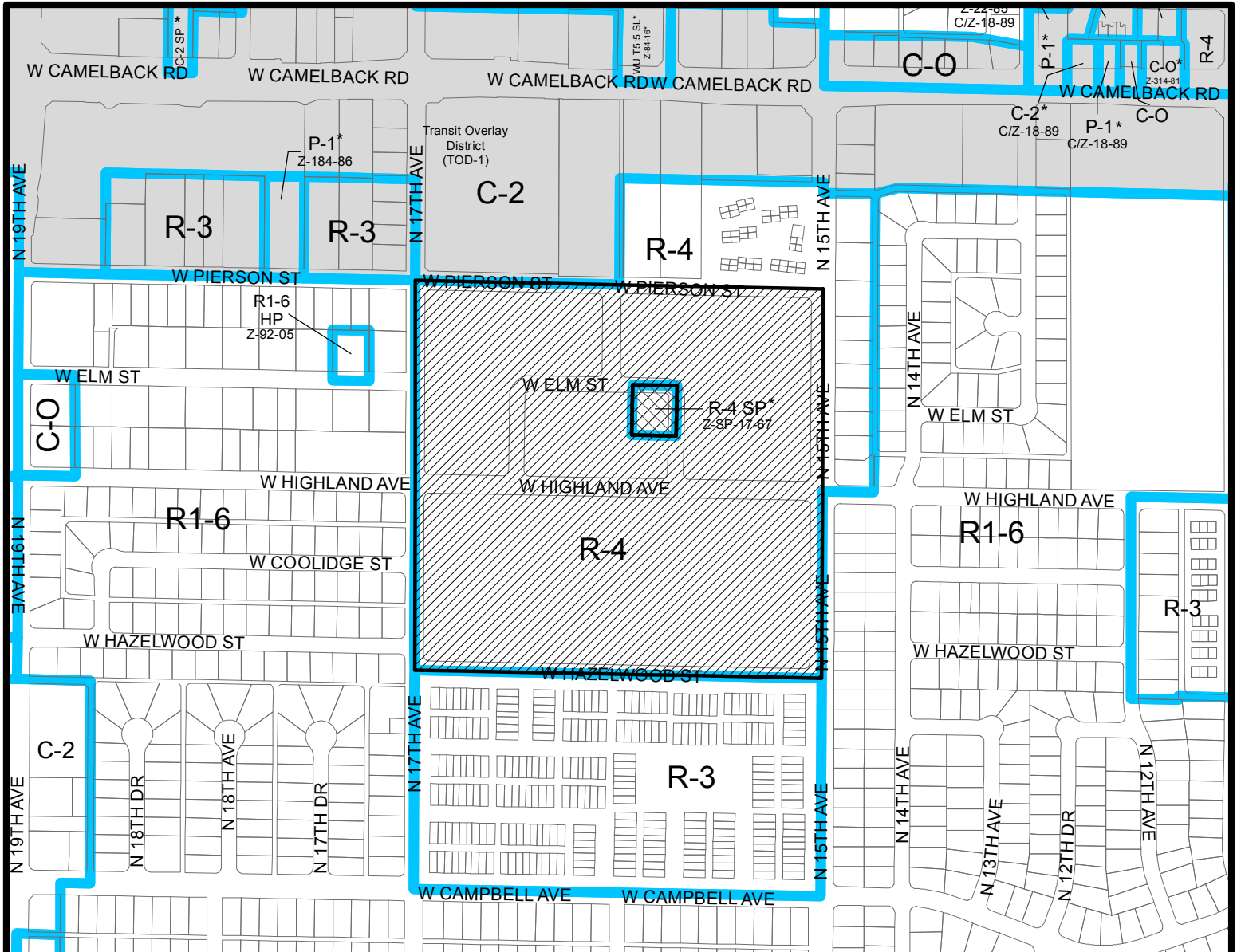
Attachments:

Sketch Map (1 page)

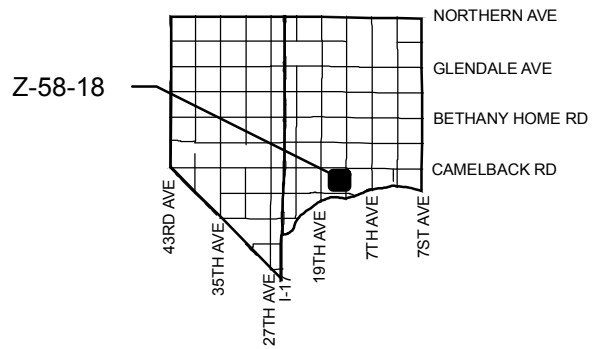
Aerial (1 page)





Photos (15 pages)

Articles and Ads (3 pages)

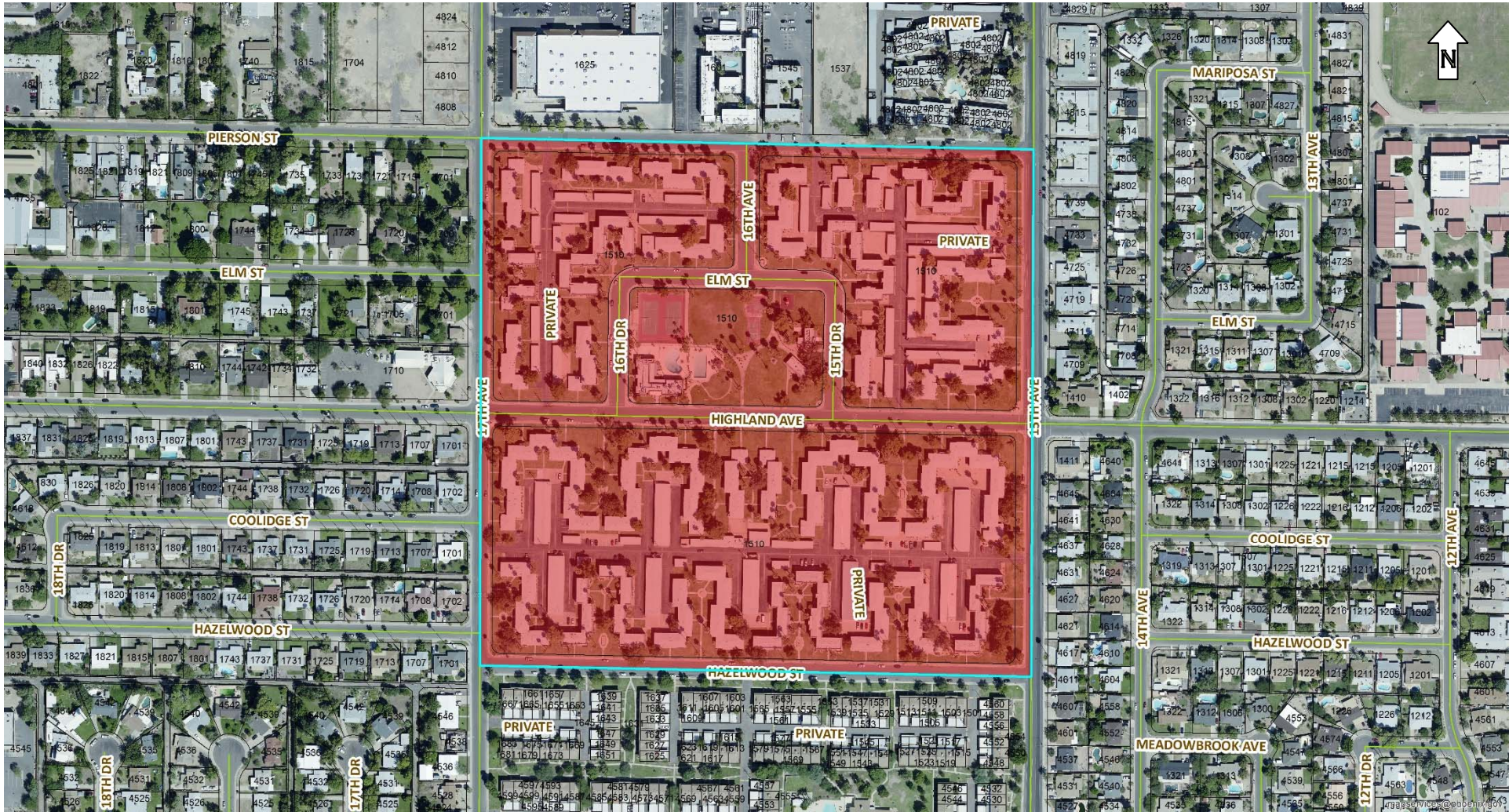


ALHAMBRA VILLAGE
CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT: 4



APPLICANT'S NAME: City of Phx Hist Pres Commission		REQUESTED CHANGE:	
APPLICATION NO. Z-58-18	DATE: 8/24/2018 <small>REVISION DATES:</small>	FROM: R-4 (38.29 a.c.)  R-4 SP (0.55 a.c.) 	TO: R-4 HP (38.29 a.c.)  R-4 SP HP (0.55 a.c.) 
<small>GROSS AREA INCLUDING 1/2 STREET AND ALLEY DEDICATION IS APPROX.</small> 38.84 Acres	<small>AERIAL PHOTO & QUARTER SEC. NO.</small> QS 18-25	<small>ZONING MAP</small> H-7	
MULTIPLES PERMITTED R-4, R-4 SP R-4 HP, R-4 SP HP	CONVENTIONAL OPTION 1,110, 16 1,110, 16	* UNITS P.R.D. OPTION 1,332, 19 1,332, 19	

* Maximum Units Allowed with P.R.D. Bonus



Park Lee Alice / Park Lee Apartments
1600 W. Highland Ave.
Proposed Historic Preservation (HP) Zoning Overlay
(shaded in red)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 1. Entry sign (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)



Photo 2. “Old New Orleans Style” apartment building (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 3. One-bedroom fourplex apartment building (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 4. Two-bedroom cottage end unit (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 5. Apartment building (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 6. Apartment building (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 7. Apartment building (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)



Photo 8. Apartment building (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 9. Staggered apartment buildings (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 10. Staggered apartment buildings (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 11. Staggered apartment buildings (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)



Photo 12. Courtyard building arrangement (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/>)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 13. Courtyard building arrangement (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 14. Open space area (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 15. View of the park facing northwest (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 16. View within park facing west (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 17. Community building (Google Street View, 2018)



Photo 18. Pool and community building (<https://www.apartments.com/park-lee-apartments-phoenix-az/8sxst80/> 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 19. Laundry building, originally the pool house (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 20. Child care center (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 21. Rear parking area (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 22: Cottage apartment with adjacent carport (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 23: Rear alley carport structure (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 24: Carport structure with parking stalls on both sides (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4
Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 25: Rear of apartments (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 26: Rear façade of apartment building

Z-58-18-4

Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 27: 15th Avenue streetscape (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 28: Hazelwood Street streetscape (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Z-58-18-4
Southeast corner of 17th Avenue and Pierson Street (1600 W. Highland Ave.)



Photo 29: 15th Drive streetscape (City of Phoenix, 2018)



Photo 30: Highland Avenue streetscape (City of Phoenix, 2018)

Sunday, May 15, 1955



Progress Report First apartments in the huge Park Lee Alice project are to be ready for tenants in June. In the picture above the shopping center foundations at the corner of 17th Avenue and Camelback, are seen in the lower right corner. The street across lower part of view is Pierson. The construction yard in center will become a three-acre park. It faces on Highland. The approximately 30 vacant acres at top are owned by corporation and apartments may be built there also. (Aerial Photo, Donn Nobles)

First Apartment House Project Units To Be Ready Next Month

The state's biggest apartment house project, Park Lee Alice, involving 550 units at Camelback and 17th Avenue, will have its first apartments ready for lease early in June.

The \$5 million development, headed by Samuel Bialac, spreads over 40 acres with 34 major structures, most of them two-story. The site occupies four full city blocks, exclusive of seven acres devoted to a shopping center.

Although still in a rough construction stage as far as exterior surroundings are concerned, landscaping and lawns are due to be installed soon. In the center is a three-acre tract used as a materials supply base.

THIS, IN DUE time, will become a community park with swimming pool and appropriate landscaping.

The apartments will start at \$67.50. Some will be furnished, others unfurnished.

These units will have such features as oak flooring, garbage disposal units, indirect

lighting, and picture windows. Sound-proof stairs of reinforced concrete, make for quietness as well as fire safety.

Some units will be for families with children, while others will be for childless couples who don't want children banging into them at every turn.

The streets bounding this huge development are Pierson, on the north, and Hazelwood, and 15th and 17th avenues.

BIALAC HAD a long hard row to hoe to make this Phoenix project a reality. Builder of 795 similar projects in Los Angeles, he came to Phoenix two years ago with the idea of making a similar development on 120 acres at the corner of Thomas and 40th Street.

Ralph Haver, architect, was employed to draw up the plans for the buildings. Bialac set his goal at 1,500 apartments on the tract, with financing provided by Irving Trust Co., New York City.

But the FHA financing fell through and the plan was abandoned. Ralph Staggs took over the land, which now is covered with single dwellings. Thwarted temporarily, Bialac

revamped his program for a smaller number of units and set up Rental Development Corporation of America to handle it.

HE ACQUIRED the present tract which had been relinquished by the Del E. Webb Corporation. Last September he was able to announce FHA had approved mortgage insurance on the job in the amount of \$3,749,900.

Rubenstein Construction Co. was given the building contract and the work has progressed steadily ever since. The first apartments available to tenants will be those along Pierson Street, the north side of the tract.

Ten of the 34 buildings are not yet under roof. These are on Hazelwood. The firm owns another 20 acres between Hazelwood and Campbell, which may be devoted to further apartment construction if demand warrants, Bialac said.

Foundations for the shopping center just have been poured. Construction on the entire project is scheduled to be completed in the fall.

ALL EDITIONS

NOW RENTING
1 and 2 BEDROOM APARTMENTS
Unfurnished as low as **\$67⁵⁰** PER MONTH
FURNISHED APARTMENTS SLIGHTLY HIGHER

FOLLOW THE ORANGE & BLACK ARROWS

TO YOUR OWN PARK LEE ALICE APARTMENT

SWIMMING POOL & SNACK BAR

AT 17th AVENUE AND CAMELBACK ROAD

Imagine your own swimming pool and snack bar, your own patio or balcony and a caretaker for your grounds... all the advantages of resort living that normally would cost \$50 per day... for as low as \$67.50 per month.

These are just a few of the advantages when you live at Park Lee Alice! Section 1 of this huge, beautiful and modern apartment development, largest in Arizona, now is available to you.

You'll love the beautiful, spacious landscaped lawns, the attractive design of each apartment. When you see them you'll agree that here are the outstanding rental values in Arizona!

Park Lee Alice is located at Camelback Road and 17th Avenue. It's away from the city's bustle, yet just a few minutes from downtown Phoenix. What's more, Park Lee Alice is building its own shopping center to provide your daily needs.

Transportation, churches and schools are immediately available to you.

Check These Features!

- Private Swimming pool
- Snack Bar and Park area
- Garbage Disposal
- Formica Kitchen and Bath
- Furniture pullman sink
- Plyline retractable dining table
- Loads of Closets
- All one-bedroom units with own patio or balcony.
- Venetian Blinds
- Laundry Room with Automatic Laundromat. Play Pen for Children Adjoining
- All Walls painted
- Metal Kitchen Cabinets
- Landscaped Gardens
- Wading Pool for Infants
- Parquet and stripped oak floors on main floors.
- Reynolds finest Aluminum Frame Windows
- Wide Paved Alleys and Streets
- TV and Phone outlets in each apartment
- Built-in breakfast nook
- Spacious cabinets and drawers
- Specially designed furniture by Sobel's of Phoenix

The swimming pool is L-shaped, permitting a special area for divers, away from those who want to swim. There is a separate wading pool for children. A snack bar, with beautiful landscaping complete the recreation area. These facilities are available only to tenants of Park Lee Alice.

Rentals begin at \$67.50 for unfurnished apartments. Furnished facilities, available at a slightly higher figure, have the finest of appointments. All divans and mattresses feature foam rubber. Only the most modern of furnishings are provided.

We Love Children

However, we have separate buildings for those families who have no children, who wish quiet surroundings.

Park

Lee Alice

17th Avenue and Camelback

Furnished Apartments Beautifully Decorated by Sobel's of Phoenix

Park Lee Alice IS LUXURIOUS LIVING WITH PRICES THE SAME THE YEAR AROUND

Park Lee Alice Remodelling Nears Completion



The one and a half million dollar reconversion and expansion program at Park Lee Alice Apartments in Northwest Phoenix was recently toured by city and state officials.

Headed by Mayor Milton Graham, City Manager Robert Coop and State Registrar of Contractors Roy Thornborough, the delegation viewed work in progress on the forty-one acre development. One of the first FHA-accepted projects of its kind in the state, Park Lee Alice is being converted from rental properties to condominium apartments. A fully equipped 4½ acre recreational park, landscaping, fountains, statuary and completely redesigned exteriors in the style of "Old New Orleans" are included in the reconstruction plans.

Conducting the tour were Robert Marsh, assistant secretary for Harsh Building Company of Portland, Oregon, owners of Park Lee Alice; and Samuel and Jerry Bialac, original developers, who recently sold the property to Harsh.

Marsh, who acted as official representative for Harold Schnitzer, president of Harsh Building said, "Our study of the Phoenix area showed it to have one of the most promising futures in the nation. This multi-million dollar investment not only backs up our faith, but should act as a stimulus to the local construction industry."

The first section of the 523-unit apartment project is scheduled for completion in early May, and will then be offered on FHA, VA or Conventional financing.



Robert Marsh (left), assistant secretary of Harsh Building Company, owners of Park Lee Alice Apartments, 4702 No. 15th Ave., explains miniature replica of the project's 4½ acre recreational facilities to: (left to right) Jerry Bialac, former owner of the development; Ray Thornborough, State Registrar of Contractors; Mayor Milton Graham; and City Manager, Robert Coop.