

Name: Storybook Village Residential Planning District



Description:

Storybook Village Residential Planning District is a postwar subdivision located in North Hills that is bounded by Plummer Street to the north, Tupper Street to the south, Debra Avenue to the west, and Swinton and Valjean avenues to the east. Irregular in shape, the district consists of 143 flat parcels that are roughly uniform in size. Streets within the district employ a hierarchal structure of grid, crescent, and cul de sacs. The district comprises one-story single-family residences designed in the Mid-Century Modern style, most of which feature attached two-car garages. A handful of residences feature carports in lieu of garages.

The district is characterized by a cohesive architectural cadence in which a limited number of residential floor plans are rotated and applied to the parcels, giving the appearance of individuality to the standardized houses and contributing to a unique sense of aesthetic cohesion within the district.

In addition to its buildings, the district is characterized by several discernible tract features including consistent lot sizes and setbacks, concrete sidewalks, and landscaped parkways. Rows of mature jacaranda trees line the parkways on Gothic and Sophia Avenues. Many parcels include one or more mature orange trees – a feature that was marketed as unique to the tract upon its development in 1956.

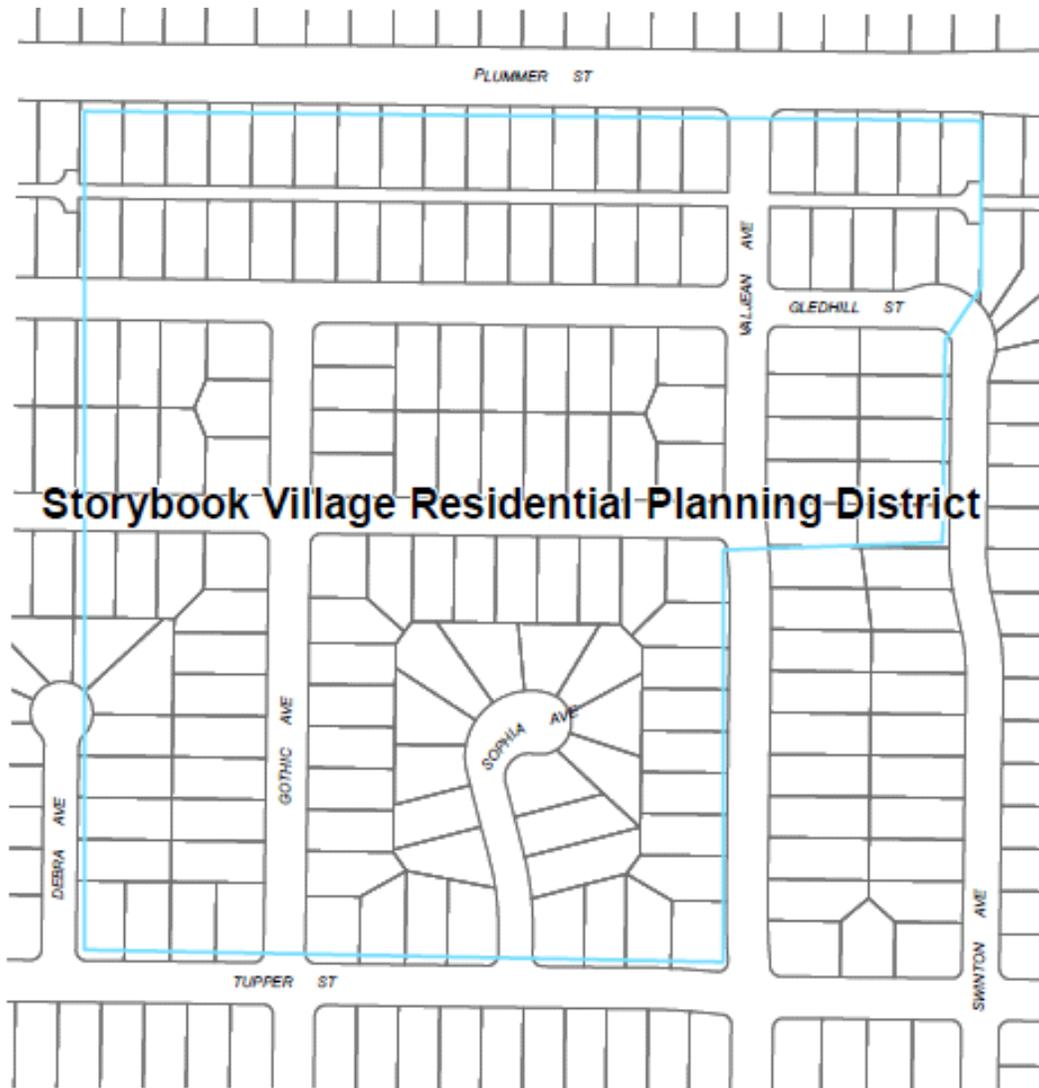
Significance:

Storybook Village Residential Planning District is an example of a post-World War II residential subdivision designed in the Mid-Century Modern style. The district is also significant as a residential subdivision designed by noted architects Palmer and Krisel. Homes within the subdivision originally exhibited character-defining features of Mid-Century Modern architecture including horizontal massing, simple geometric volumes, unornamented wall surfaces, and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Storybook Village was developed in 1956 by the Investment and Building Company, an enterprise that was associated with prolific developer Sanford D. Adler. Adler was involved with the subdivision of numerous postwar residential subdivisions in the San Fernando Valley. Homes within the subdivision were designed by architects Dan Saxon Palmer and William Krisel, notable Los Angeles architects associated with Mid-Century Modern residential architecture. The tract included 20 distinctive models of three and four-bedroom homes, each of which featured large living rooms with wood-burning fireplaces, open beam ceilings, sliding floor-to-ceiling windows, electric appliances, and mature orange trees. Moderately priced, the homes were marketed to and purchased by young middle-class families.

The district retains consistency of massing and scale, but most individual buildings have been materially altered. Common alterations include the replacement of original windows, entrance and garage doors, and wall cladding; the installation of metal security doors; and the addition of decorative elements to the sparsely-ornamented facades. In conjunction, these material alterations have compromised the integrity of the district. A preliminary assessment of the percentage of contributors/non-contributors indicates that Storybook Village does not appear to be eligible for historic district designation.

However, the district remains an important example of a postwar suburban residential tract designed in the Mid-Century Modern style by notable architects, and may thus merit special consideration in the planning process. A total of thirteen parcels within the district retain integrity and were identified as individually eligible for local designation.



Context 1:

Context:	Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980
Sub context:	L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980
Theme:	Post-War Modernism, 1946-1976
Sub theme:	Mid-Century Modernism, 1945-1970
Property type:	District
Property sub type:	No Sub-Type
Criteria:	C/3/3
Status code:	6LQ
Reason:	Good example of a subdivision of Mid-Century Modern houses designed by significant architects Palmer and Krisel; due to material alterations that have been made to many buildings, the neighborhood does not retain sufficient integrity for historic district designation, although it may merit special consideration in the planning process. Thirteen properties within the district remain intact and appear to be locally eligible for listing as individual resources.