

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 13 1986  
date entered SEP 26 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Green Gables (Country Residence of Mortimer Fleishhacker) RECEIVED  
and/or common Green Gables (Fleishhacker Estate) FEB 11 1986

2. Location

OHP

street & number 329 Albion Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Woodside N/A vicinity of  
state California code 06 county San Mateo code 081

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Page 2.  
street & number  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Mateo County Recorder's Office  
street & number Hall of Justice and Record Building  
401 Marshall Street  
city, town Redwood City state CA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Page 3. has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local  
depository for survey records  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Green Gables is a unified country estate in central Woodside, planned and used as a rustic summer residence. About a mile west of the I-280 freeway, the property is an irregular square varying in elevation from about 440 to 610 feet. Most of its 75 acres are gentle hillsides containing no structures and kept as manipulated valley grassland interspersed with trees and denser vegetation along two creek beds. Except in the main gardens, most of the vegetation looks native and unplanned, an appearance carefully nurtured over three-quarters of a century. The property contains nineteen built resources: six contributing buildings, seven contributing structures, three non-contributing buildings and three non-contributing structures. Each building is sited to maximize its country vista, and no house can be seen from any other house. A little west of the estate's exact center, near the crown of a hill, the main house is an attenuated horizontal clustering of numerous curve-edged, gentle-gabled roofs, in English style with greenish creamy tan unpainted gunite walls, trimmed with varigated pink-orange-tan-red brick. Its stretched out Z-plan faces southeast toward the estate's most formally landscaped gardens, which terrace down to a lily pond and after a brick balustrade descend a rocky double staircase to the arcaded Roman pool (water gardens), ending about 800 feet from the house. All the other buildings and structures honor and make way for this grand central design. The fieldstone-bordered main drive begins near the estate's easternmost point, the corner of Albion and Manuella Avenues. It winds indirectly nearly half a mile through grasslands and wooded area to approach the house from the west. Some fifteen feet above and behind the house are the swimming pool and its attendant structures. Farther west and downhill are the modern house of Mortimer Fleishhacker III and the old Butler's (now Groundskeeper's) house. West of the Roman pool is another modern house, for David Fleishhacker, another grandson of the original owners. Northeast of the main house and terraced garden lie, in succession, Bella Fleishhacker's studio, an allee of Camperdown Elms, an early Wurster house for second generation Eleanor Fleishhacker Sloss, and across the main drive a tennis court and a subsidiary drive leading north to the dairy house (Greene's Folly) and the Fleishhacker barn. At the estate's northeastern edge, Albion Avenue jogs away from its straight course to enclose a pre-Fleishhacker farmstead consisting of a Victorian cottage farmhouse, the two-story base of a Victorian water tower, an old auto barn, one badly deteriorated greenhouse and the foundations of three more greenhouses and a lathhouse. Northwest of the main drive, nearly on a line with the house-lilypond-Roman pool axis, lies a small water storage lake with attendant earth dam and pumphouse, on a natural stream. The estate's highest point is at the western corner, near the San Andreas Fault, which is marked by a line of eucalyptus trees, the southwest boundary.

The main house is in Greene and Greene's English style, not that of their more famous, carving-bedecked ultimate bungalows. Interior woodwork has a white laquerlike finish and includes plain broad moldings and two beamed ceilings. The plan combines formality and informality, with the living-room-porch (card room) wing and the servants' (kitchen) wing at different obtuse angles off the main axis of hall, gallery and dining room. Ceilings are of medium height, public rooms ample but not awesome in size. Exterior elevations repose in balance but are decidedly asymmetrical. Dormers, gables, eyelids and clipped gables enliven the imitation thatch roof, which is composed of wood shingles, steam bent around corners and laid in wavy courses.

Only one room displays the expected Greene and Greene treatment of wood surfaces: the card room, a 1923-1924 alteration of the original porch off the living room. Here are

(See Continuation Page 4.)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1911–1935 **Builder/Architect** Greene & Greene; C. S. Greene; Wm. Wurster

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Green Gables merits listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria C, architecture, and B, persons. It is significant as a masterwork, a house and landscape planned as a unified composition by one person, Charles Sumner Greene of the famous architectural firm Greene and Greene, for one patron, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, and kept intact by (so far) three generations of their family. A museum catalogue has said, "Green Gables bespeaks a gracious yet comfortable manner of living, but its particular beauty derives from its harmonious relationship with the land, always a special forte of Charles [Greene]. Here it is a sublime creation."(1) In relation to its area, San Mateo County and the Santa Clara Valley of California, Green Gables can claim the earliest roof of shingles imitating thatch, the first free-form swimming pool, one of the first buildings surfaced with gunite, and the last great estate with land, use and ownership intact.(2) The historic owners, Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr. and Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr., were significant figures in Northern California banking and industry and in San Francisco cultural, charitable and philanthropic organizations. Sketches and correspondence in the Documents Collection of the College of Environmental Design, University of California Berkeley, testify to the relationship of this architect and client, and show some of their design decision process. The estate's period of significance, 1911–1935, covers all Greene's work on the estate, and district contributors are herein defined as those buildings and structures present in 1935 and essentially intact today. Published photographs witness the high esteem held by contemporaries for this design: The Architect and Engineer showed the west corner and northwest facades of the house (construction not quite complete) in April 1912, and the southeast facade (lawns not yet begun) in June 1913; The Architectural Record of October 1916 showed the main plan (see continuation page 1), the living room and the view from the lilypond.(3) The house and gardens have been photographed for the Historic American Buildings Survey, No.CA-2146.

At this date it is hardly necessary to expound upon the significance of the architects Charles Sumner Greene (1868–1957) and Henry Mather Greene (1870–1954), recipients of a special A.I.A. award in 1952. Randell Mackinson has written of Green Gables:

The largest of all Greene and Greene designs, the Fleishhacker estate concept developed vast, formal gardens to contrast with the natural chaparral of the rolling, mountainous site.

The overall size of the Fleishhacker house also allowed for the kind of variation and freedom in the development of the plan form which Charles liked.

Despite the lack of the Greens' usual elaborate interiors, however, careful examination makes it clear here that the restraint was calculated and richly successful.

(See Continuation Page 10.)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Page 18.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 75

Quadrangle name Woodside, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UTM References**

A	1 0	5 6 4 7 5 0	4 1 4 3 2 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 0	5 6 4 7 0 0	4 1 4 2 6 2 0
E			
G			

B	1 0	5 6 5 3 5 0	4 1 4 2 9 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 0	5 6 4 3 9 0	4 1 4 2 9 9 0
F			
H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Green Gables is Assessor's parcels 072-130-160, 072-120-010 and 072-120-020; in shape an irregular square bounded on the northwest by Albion Ave., on the southeast by Manuella Ave., on the southwest by the San Andreas Fault, and on the northwest by an imaginary extension of Olive Hill Le. It is the entire property bought by Mortimer Fleishacker 1910-1915 and owned by the family ever since. Boundaries are shown on attached site plan, Sketch Map of Green Gables.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Bloomfield, consultant

organization N/A date 8 February 1986

street & number 2229 Webster Street telephone (415) 922-1063

city or town San Francisco state CA 94115

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Kathryn Guatieri date 8/5/86

title State Historic Preservation Officer

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	date <u>9/26/86</u>
<u>William B. Bushroy</u>	date
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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Green Gables

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**PAGE** 1

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4. OWNERS OF PROPERTY.

Mrs. Janet Fleishhacker Bates  
c/o Mortimer Fleishhacker  
1 Maritime Plaza, Suite 1150  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Mr. Mortimer Fleishhacker  
1 Maritime Plaza, Suite 1150  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Mr. David Fleishhacker  
c/o Mortimer Fleishhacker  
1 Maritime Plaza, Suite 1150  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Mrs. Delia F. Ehrlich  
c/o Mortimer Fleishhacker  
1 Maritime Plaza, Suite 1150  
San Francisco, CA 94111

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS.

San Mateo County Junior League Survey  
1973  
San Mateo County Museum  
1700 West Hillsdale Boulevard  
San Mateo, CA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
1974-1975  
HABS CA-2146  
HABS/HAER, National Park Service  
Washington, D.C.

Greene and Greene, by Randell L. Mackinson  
1977-1979  
2 volumes, published by Peregrine Smith  
Salt Lake City, Utah

A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco & Northern California  
by David Gebhard, Roger Montgomery, Robert Winter, John and Sally Woodbridge  
1973  
Published by Peregrine Smith, Inc.  
Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City

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7. DESCRIPTION. (continued)

fascias, cupboard doors and panels in natural color woods with Charles Sumner Greene's own delicate carvings of the seasons, gently stained, polished, waxed and rubbed. He also carved the leather-covered main furniture: an armchair, four side chairs and a card table. This room is differentiated from the others by its dark glossy tile floor a few steps down from the living room. Its fenestration and exterior brickwork echo those on the rest of the house.

The gardens begin with a brick terrace along the whole southeast facade of the house, a terrace originally cradling an ancient spreading oak tree around which Greene and Greene planned the house. The original tree died in 1950, leaving a vacancy for several years. Recently a sapling has been planted, a different variety of oak that will grow straighter and taller, to avoid obstructing the vistas, and will have more fall color. From the brick terrace a pair of graveled walks lead through terraced lawns to a formal lily pond, some 250 feet southeast of the house, wide enough to reflect the whole house. Restrained small flower beds, glazed ceramic planter pots and specimen trees border the terraces, walks and lawns. Low brick balustrades with spiky stepped arcading (three brick courses) edge the house terrace and the lilypond's terrace. A witty illusion is created of relaxed Beaux Arts symmetry along three parallel axes: from lilypond's center toward the house, from the hall and from the dining room along their respective gravel paths to the lilypond. The near symmetry continues southeast another 400 feet or so down several flights of double staircase to the long narrow Roman pool, arcaded at each end and executed in three contrasting kinds of roughly cut stones, set in thick bands of mortar. Flagstones from Napa, CA, pave the landings; local fieldstones form the steps and some walls; small pieces of red chert stand edgewise for corners of walls and arcading. The chert also builds up large urns beside the staircase. At the Roman pool's northwest arcade (a blind arcade, functionally a retaining wall) a balustrade of more chert reflects the brick balustrade above the staircase, only the lower one is rougher, wilder, closer in a sense to unadorned nature. There is a gradual transition from the closed house to the open but formal brickwork, to the rough stonework, to the natural vegetation and mountain vista. Similarly a third path descends from the house terrace to the northeast, with trim brick steps and bulkheads near the house, rough fieldstone steps farther away. Southeast of the landing between the two materials runs a wonderful arching allee of Camperdown Elm trees, leading apparently nowhere. The fieldstone steps and gravel path continue northeast to an auxiliary drive that meets the upper floor of the square, stony, tile-roofed dairy house, nestled among trees at the stream's edge. On the knoll behind the main house is a free-form swimming pool with three bathhouses, approached by broad steps of brickwork to match that of the main house and its terrace.

Hidden from the rest by hills, dense vegetation and the visual concentration to the southeast, the north and northeast part of the estate was originally a functioning farm with cows, pigs, chickens and vegetable gardens for home consumption in both Woodside and San Francisco. Mrs. Bates raised her children on its products. The dairy house really

(See Continuation Page 5.)

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7. DESCRIPTION. (continued)

was a place where milk was kept and butter churned, not merely a romantic picnic spot. The Fleishhacker barn was a work place three times its present size, complete with hay loft under a shallow gable roof. Cows lived on one side aisle, chickens, geese and such on the other. The younger generation gave parties inside. One can still see the concrete foundations of stalls and a ramp on one side. Semi-destruction of the barn accounts for its mixed wall surfaces: rustic siding on the end, shingles on the side, and a multi-paneled pair of doors, very rustic, designed by Greene and Greene.

In the northeast nose of land enclosed by the jog in Albion Avenue, there is a group of farm buildings which pre-date Fleishhacker ownership of the property. Their access driveway, virtually a continuation of Albion's straight run, separates an old auto barn on the west from a water tower and farmhouse on the east. This last is a Queen Anne style modest Victorian cottage with hexagonal-shingles, barge boards and an apex sunburst in the south-facing cross gable. The water tower is typical of such structures in rural California, even typical in having lost its water tank. The Fleishhackers used this complex for staff housing and the vegetable garden part of the farm, adding four greenhouses and a large lathhouse. With World War II labor shortages and subsequent labor costs, the farm and these additions were gradually abandoned, the last in the late 1960s, and only some foundations and one greenhouse remain, ready to fall down.

Additional description of the estate and its buildings appears in the Appendix, the photographs and the 1916 plan (see Continuation Pages 6 and 1).



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APPENDIX TO DESCRIPTION.

List of Resources Contributing to the District (numbers refer to sketch map):

1. Main house. Photos 1-5, 8, 10 and 16. Plan, Continuation Page 1.  
Two-story, stretched-out Z-plan; three family bedrooms, two guest bedrooms, five (later six) servants' bedrooms. Interior simple white finishes, beamed ceilings only in gallery and stair hall. Exterior massing low and highly irregular, cladding unpainted pinky-green-tan gunite with brick trim especially on chimneys. Shingle roof with curved edges and wavy courses imitating thatch.  
1911, architects Greene & Greene.  
Addition to servants' wing (one bedroom and bath on 2nd floor) c. 1917, architect C. Sumner Greene. Alteration of porch to card room, 1923-1924, architect and carver C. Sumner Greene. Additions to kitchen (servants') wing, carport, partial enclosure and repaving of northeast end of terrace, c. 1955, architect William Wurster. Roofs replaced in kind, 1985, builder Charles Frost Roofing, Redwood City.
2. Terraced gardens and lily pond. Photos 1, 6-8, 10 and 19. Plan Continuation Page 1.  
Four levels of terracing in Beaux-Arts-inspired near symmetry. Top level near house floored and balustraded with brick. Two center levels are lawn intersected by two gravel paths. Lowest level is elongated lilypond with two inverse corners, plus gravel path, lawn and another brick balustrade. At edges and along paths of all levels are two C.S. Greene designs of glazed ceramic planter pots, specimen trees and a few modest flower beds. Third gravel path and steps off top level at right angle to the other paths.  
c. 1912-1913, landscape architects Greene & Greene.  
Ceramic fountain/bird bath added to brick terrace, 1931, architect C. Sumner Greene. Pair of fountains in lilypond removed c. 1933.
3. Roman pool (watergardens). Photos 9-12.  
A three-feet-deep reflecting pool about 300x60 feet, continuing the axis of the terraced gardens from the house. Along the sides are gravel paths with more Greene glazed ceramic planter pots. Ends both arcaded, southeast one for decoration only (topped with a row of green pots), to enclose the man-made vista before the view of mountains. Northwest blind arcade is "gargoyle"-decorated arched niches in a balustrade-topped retaining wall, part of double staircase descending 50-60 feet from the lilypond terrace. Beside staircase is succulents garden with tall urns of thin stone and mortar used like ancient Roman bricks. At least three kinds of stone used, with emphasis on edge-laid red chert at corners to produce spikiness.  
1928-1929, landscape architect C. Sumner Greene.  
Five broken pots atop southeast arcade replicated and replaced, c. 1981.

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APPENDIX TO DESCRIPTION, continued.

4.    Main drive.    Photos 2 and 13-15.  
      Winding plan, black-top surface bordered by low, mortarless fieldstone walls, except brick retaining wall near the main house. Lined with elm trees about to be replaced because of disease.  
      c. 1912, landscape architects Greene & Greene.  
      Auxiliary drives may predate Fleishhacker occupancy, except for drive over fill at end of Roman pool.
  
5.    Swimming pool and attendant structures.    Photos 16, 2 and 15.  
      Piano-shaped pool atop knoll encircled by main drive. Step-arcaded brick balustrade, brick access steps with Greene pots. Twin bathhouses of gunite and shingled roofs to match the main house. Barbecue of squared stones. Third bathhouse of wood off to one side.  
      1916-1917, landscape architects Greene & Greene.  
      Pool re-edged, third bathhouse added c. 1955, landscape architect Thomas Church.
  
6.    Dairy house (Greene's Folly).    Photo 17.  
      Two-story fieldstone building near a creek. Black glazed tile roof, hipped shape. Recessed arcaded porch, access by curving stone steps down to stream level. Across the road is a barbecue now covered with riparian vegetation.  
      1928, architect C. Sumner Greene.
  
7.    Eleanor Fleishhacker Sloss house.    Photo 18.  
      One- and two-story "modern" house ranged around 2½ sides of a brick courtyard with access through an arch. Courtyard was once a tennis court.  
      1931-1932, architect William Wurster.
  
8.    Camperdown Elm allee.    Photos 19 and 8.  
      Brick path between two parallel lines of low-spreading, twisty-branched Camperdown variety elm trees, grafted onto straight trunks of standard elms about 5-6 feet high.  
      c. 1930, landscape architect C. Sumner Greene (attrib.).
  
9.    Butler's (now groundskeeper's) house.    Photo 20.  
      A one-story and basement simple frame cottage with porch facing east. Small detached garage to the west. Portable greenhouse, kitchen garden and plant nursery to southeast.  
      1931, designer unknown.

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APPENDIX TO DESCRIPTION, continued.

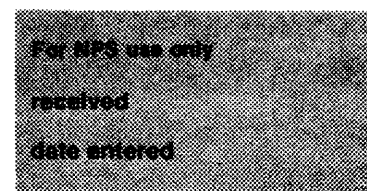
10. Earth Dam, water storage lake and pump house. [no photo]  
A small earth dam stores natural stream water for use in irrigation. Utilitarian pump house nearby, upstream from dairy house.  
c. 1913, landscape architects Greene & Greene (attrib.).
11. Victorian farmhouse. Photos 21-22.  
One-story and basement, cross-gabled, rustic-sided cottage with porch on three sides, hexagonal shingles and bargeboards in southeast gable, and some stick-style porch balustrades. Mature palm trees to east. Recent enclosure of southeast porch now in process of demolition.  
1892-1893, designer unknown.
12. Victorian water tower. Photo 22.  
Support for a water tank typical of nineteenth-century California rural installations. Battered walls clad in rustic, corner boarding, height equivalent to two stories, hip roof in place of missing water tank.  
1892-1893 or c. 1907, designer unknown.
13. Auto barn. Photo 23.  
Simple gabled frame structure with end-width paneled doors, unpainted shingle cladding and irregular fenestration. Across driveway west of Victorian farmhouse. Used until the 1960s to store autos and heavy equipment, now a residence for staff.  
c. 1907, designer unknown.

List of Resources That Do Not Contribute to the District.

14. Greenhouse remnants. Photo 21.  
One badly deteriorating, unused, wood-and-glass greenhouse south of farmhouse. Parallel and to its northeast are wooden foundation remnants of three additional greenhouses and a large lathhouse. Largely unused since World War II.  
c. 1915, designer unknown.
15. David Fleishhacker house. Photo 24.  
Split-level modern house of wood with decks, located south of Roman pool, its living spaces facing southwest.  
1972-1973, architect Jonathan B. Gifford.  
Swimming pool addition, c. 1979, landscape architect Jack Stafford.

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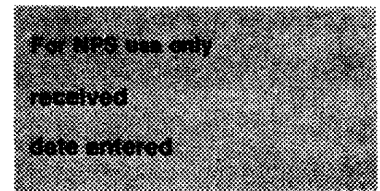
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APPENDIX TO DESCRIPTION, concluded

16. Mortimer Fleishhacker III house. Photo 25.  
Modern house of two wings, small connecting section and partly-roofed patios, facing south. Hidden in west wing is structure of earlier Wurster cottage.  
1962-1963, architect Francis Lloyd.
17. Fleishhacker barn remnant. Photo 26.  
One-story, flat-roofed wooden barn on concrete foundation, side clad in board-and-battens, end in shingles. Pair of tall sliding barn doors on end, 17 panels each, arranged in five rows. Beyond the board-and-batten wall lie concrete foundations for stalls and ramp(s). Original barn was three times present width and had low pitch gable roof over attic hay storage. Nearby was chauffeur's cottage, now demolished.  
1911, architects Greene & Greene.  
Half-demolished c. 1950.
18. Bella Gerstle Fleishhacker's studio. [no photo]  
A small one-room box on a terrace midway between the lawns and the Camperdowns. Northwest side is almost all glass. Replaces earlier studio (ex-playhouse) located near Butler's house.  
c. 1950, designer unknown.
19. Tennis court. Photo 14.  
Modern, enclosed by chain-link fence, located east of intersection of main drive with road to dairy house and brick/gravel/fieldstone third path.  
1965, designer unknown.

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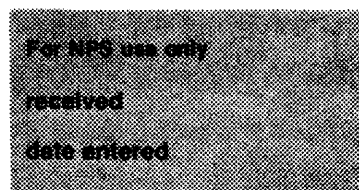
8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

The addition of the reflecting pond [Roman pool] to the Fleishhacker estate is both tranquil and breathtaking—with a suggestion of a Roman aqueduct silhouetted against the rolling hills.

The game room was fully crafted by Charles; it was the only room in the house developed in natural woods, and it was the first time in over two decades that he actually had an opportunity to make client's furniture himself.(4)

Mortimer Fleishhacker, Senior (1866–1953) and Mortimer Fleishhacker, Junior (1907–1976) were both titans of San Francisco's banking, industry, culture and philanthropy. The family fortune had begun a generation earlier with the paper box company of Gold Rush merchant Aaron Fleishhacker, in which his son and grandson continued to be involved. As a banker Mortimer Sr. was president of the Anglo California Trust Co. and vice-president of the Anglo and London Paris National Bank, while his younger brother Herbert (San Francisco's Fleishhacker Zoo and Fleishhacker Pool; also a client of Greene and Greene) was vice-president to his presidency and vice versa. Supposedly the Fleishhacker brothers heavily financed both San Francisco mayor (later governor) James Rolph and shipping magnate Robert Dollar, as well as arousing the ire or jealousy of Bank of America founder A.P. Giannini.(5) Mortimer Sr. also succeeded in the electricity business, with City Electric Co., American River Electric Co., Truckee River General Electric Co. and finally Great Western Power—now components of Pacific Gas and Electric. Mortimer Jr., an economist by training, had his own Chemicals Inc. Both men were directors of several additional corporations, especially Mortimer Sr., whose interests included several insurance companies, a couple of sugar companies, Crown Paper Co. (now part of Crown Zellerbach) and the California Wine Association. Both were, at different times, director or president of Temple Emanu-El and deeply involved in other Jewish charities, Senior especially with the Hebrew Orphanage and Junior especially with Mount Zion Hospital. The father was a University of California Regent for thirty years, the son a University of San Francisco regent. Both led the Community Chest/United Crusade, both were directors of the San Francisco Symphony Association and the San Francisco Museum (now San Francisco Museum of Modern Art). The father was a federal labor mediator in World War I, on that war's Exemption Board and secretary to the California State Council of Defense. The son served two terms on the San Francisco Planning Commission, was vice-president of the S.F. Library Commission, board chairman of educational television station KQED for fifteen of its early years, etc. Mrs. Mortimer Sr., nee Bella Gerstle (daughter of another pioneer merchant), though involved in the founding of the Community Music Center and the Emanu-El Sisterhood Residence Club, was a very private person and a talented painter who had a one-woman show at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in 1955. The Fleishhackers accomplished most of these activities from their principle residences on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco (Sr. at 2418, Jr. at 2600); they moved to Green Gables in the summers for the rest and inner re-creation needed to continue such busy lives.

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8. STATEMENT OF Significance. (continued)

Early in 1911 Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr. commissioned Greene and Greene to design a country house for them, a summer and recreational residence of 45 acres in Woodside that Mr. Fleishhacker had bought the previous autumn. Their desire for an English-style house with light interiors and an imitation thatch roof coincided with ideas maturing in the brain of Charles Greene, who had just returned from a year in England. He spent hours on a knoll, simply studying the site for perfect integration of the design he would create. The house he arranged around an ancient, spreading oak tree near but not at the top of a hill. For exterior material he chose to experiment with a new product called gunite, a concrete mixed with its water under pressure at the nozzle of a "cement gun," a process apparently first used in construction of the Panama Canal and providing uniform, high-quality surface over any shape. In the same year Greene and Greene were using gunite on the Culbertson House in Pasadena. It permitted a wonderful plasticity of form for Greene and Greene's third period, the post-bungalow works. An article on the new product was illustrated with the first published pictures of the Fleishhacker house.(6)

The seven blueprint sheets of the house that survive as file 390 of the College of Environmental Design's Documents Collection show only the building itself, essentially as it exists today. The setting--terraced gardens, drive and swimming pool--may have existed in Charles Greene's mind in 1911, but probably nowhere else. It may have been at his suggestion that on 1 August 1911 Fleishhacker bought 12½ additional acres so the tree-lined main drive could meander through grasslands from Albion Avenue toward the house. The terraced gardens and lilypond followed hard upon the house, for the photo published in 1913 shows the completed brick terrace balustrade and the steps and paths that descend from it, but the lawn itself and the ceramic planter pots were not yet in place.(7)

The Fleishhacker barn was also built in 1911; it would have been needed. One of the four tracing paper sketches for the barn that exist in Documents Collection file 074 is dated 17 June 1911; another is stamped Greene and Greene, Pasadena. The three plans all show a building 65x50 feet with a 25x50-foot center section containing four box stalls. The north side section had three 6x10-foot stalls, the south side five 4x10-foot stalls, and there were four 50-foot-long passages. The elevation shows a gently pitched gable roof and eight openings placed symmetrically. Now though the side sections and gable roof have been demolished, the extant barn doors match the elevation in file 074.

Other early construction must have included damming one of the creeks to make a small lake for storing irrigation water, necessary preliminaries to growing a lawn in the California climate. The original irrigation pipes were well buried: today's grounds-keeper is still finding surprises. Late in 1914 Fleishhacker bought five more acres, located to the northeast inside the jog of Albion Ave. The new property came complete with functioning farm buildings the head gardener was to use; their history is traced below.

By 1916 the terraced gardens and lilypond had been completed; the photographs and plan published in Architectural Record show lawn, pots, lilypond and plantings. The

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

article thus illustrated, "Country House Architecture on the Pacific Coast," implies that its author, noted classical architect John Galen Howard, rated Green Gables a great artistic success, for in addition to using the illustrations he wrote:

It is only within comparatively recent years, in this part of the country, that owners have realized that the garden and landscape about a house are as much a part of the design as the walls and roof. The great artistic successes have been, I think, without exception, cases where the designer of the house has designed the setting as well.(8)

Charles Sumner Greene was to continue designing the setting for the Fleishhacker house. According to Dorothy Regnery, the swimming pool was built about the time the 1916 article came out.(9) The 1916 plan shows neither the twin bathhouses nor room to put them; one suspects the pool was not yet built either. For it, file 074 contains seven drawings on tracing paper and a blueprint labeled "Job No. 280, Sheet No. 1." One unused drawing shows a 75x20-foot pool with straight sides and round ends, evidently a precursor to the free-form shape which was conceived to preserve several old oak trees. There is also a sheet of the bathhouses' plan, elevation and details, all as built. In May of 1917 Charles Greene and his father were corresponding about his bill for the swimming pool work.(10)

On 17 March 1915 Fleishhacker bought the final 11½ acres, the land south of the lily pond where a dozen years later the Roman pool was to raise its lovely arches. The late date of this purchase implies that the water gardens were not part of Greene's original concept, a conclusion reinforced by the change in materials from the teens' brickwork to the twenties' stonework laid to emphasize its rough-cut jaggedness. While the new purchase lay fallow, ideas for its use germinating in both architect and client, Charles Greene was setting up an independent practice in Carmel, CA. He took the Fleishhacker work with him, designing alterations to their San Francisco house in 1913-1915, and for Green Gables several types of ceramic planter pots and in 1917 an addition to the servants' wing. This addition involved another layer of roof at the end of the wing away from the terraced gardens, a minor change to the appearance.(11)

The Fleishhackers essentially supported Charles S. Greene during the interwar years. A letter exists in the Greene & Greene/Mortimer Fleishhacker file at the Documents Collection which enclosed a check for Greene's daughter's musical education in Paris,(12) When Charles came to work at Green Gables, he would stay in a guest room and eat with the family, the butler in attendance. Mrs. Bates (Mrs. M. Fleishhacker Jr.) remembers him as a very quiet man, thoughtful, with a tendency to go off in a dream world of his own. One senses a sympathy between him and Mrs. Fleishhacker Sr., both private, thoughtful people, both artists and interested in metaphysics. She was usually the family representative to write to him, and he to her. Their letters are formal, exquisitely courteous, and limited to the business at hand. For instance, on 19 May 1923 she wrote, "I am hoping that you will be able to send me a little sketch of the work we are contemplating to have done here at Woodside."

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

They were contemplating remodeling the porch off the living room into the card room, constructed 1923-1924. The card room is a very fine reversion to the Greene and Greene woodworking style before 1910. According to letters in the Documents Collection, Charles Greene came up to Woodside at the end of April 1923 to discuss the alteration. On 19 May his letter enclosing the sketches explained:

The little case doors might be made the principal features with the carved boards partly covering the heavy wooden beams. This carving need not be elaborate and if done in low relief and colored slightly would furnish the whole room, but if you wish doors might be left plain. Wicker chairs of simple design could be colored to harmonize with woodwork and a simple table [illegible word] would complete it.

The final choice was to carve the doors but not color them, and to carve wooden chairs rather than try to harmonize wicker. The letter file indicates the four panels were shipped to Charles Greene on 12 Dec. 1923, he started carving on the 15th and finished them respectively on 24 Jan., 2 and 29 Feb. and 23 March 1924. On 27 Nov. 1925 Mortimer Fleishhacker paid Greene \$1300 for one table, four side chairs and one arm chair that he had carved.

On 24 Feb. 1924 Mrs. Fleishhacker had written to Mr. Greene about finding cracked plaster in the ceiling and about her hope that the room could be finished by mid-April. Then she wrote, "If you could arrange to spend a couple of days there now it would also be a good time for directing some pruning of the shrubbery and other garden work." The sole reference found to his work on the actual plants, these words imply Greene designed all the plantings on the property and habitually supervised their shapes as they grew.

For the next project, the dairy house, an unused sketch in file 074, stamped "Greene and Greene, Architects, 215 Boston Building, Pasadena," shows that planning for this building had begun in the mid-teens. Five later linen drawings, in the same file and stamped "C. Sumner Greene, Architect, Carmel," show all four elevations and the two floor plans as built. Correspondence in 1928 seems to indicate construction of the dairy house went on at the same time as that of the Roman pool, but the dairy house was farther advanced. The black roof tiles are Gladding McBean's "hand made salt glazed random laid." (13) The roof was installed by mid-July.(14)

The larger size of the Roman pool sufficiently explains, perhaps, why its construction should have taken longer than the dairy house, although Makinson dates its design a year earlier. Part of the work was earth moving: building up at the southeast end and cutting down at the other. A blue-line topographic map in file 074, by civil engineer C.L. Dimmitt and dated June 1927, shows the proposed pool and steps drawn on the then-existing slope of land; twenty feet of fill now support the pool's southeast end. The correspondence attests to the workmen's dependence upon Greene for every little decision. He was constantly being asked to come up to Woodside. Bills document 16 site visits between 14 March and 16 Sept.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

1928, each from one to four days long. On 12 Jan. 1928 Fleishhacker's secretary Mr. Simons wrote to Greene about resuming pool excavation after the rains, and he pleaded:

Stewart [the foreman or contractor] was there and had hoped to get his men started on picking up the kind of rock you are desirous of securing. Naturally this too will have to wait until you can get up here.

The rock thus to be picked up is the red chert that spikes up from all the stonework corners of the Roman pool area. Mortimer Fleishhacker III remembers as a child finding similar stones about the place.

Many documents exist concerning the decision-making process that resulted in the aqueduct-like arcade at the pool's southeast end. Some scraps of sketches in file 074 show only benches and no colonnade, another one shows a single arch at the end of each path alongside the pool, still another shows a box of arches at each corner, and a final sketch shows what exists today. A letter dated 30 October 1928 from Charles Greene to Mrs. Fleishhacker reveals even more about the decision process, and also incidentally about the architect-patron relationship and Greene's conception of his design:

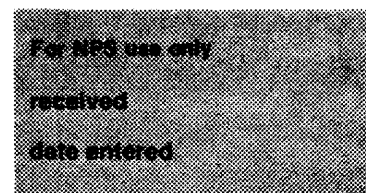
I enclose two sketches of the Arcade for the garden pool. At Mr. Fleishhacker's suggestion one has less arches and four wall spaces. This is shaded to show the effect of the curve. They are both well fitted to give the effect needed from the top of the steps--I am inclined to think that larger number of arches is the better solution as it is lighter and more graceful, the other more monumental--but as I said before they are both good. I feel sure that you would never think that either one was cumbrous or overdone. It is all you see from the top and this, midst a great deal of foliage--and other plantings--the reflection in the water will add much to the general view. I think it will also be needed to screen the roadway at the end of the pool. A low wall or balustrade would be utterly lost in the planting and bigness of it all. If you place the plan straight in front of you it will show how the arches in the center look to be full width and as they occur further from the center line they turn till they almost disappear. In reality they are all the same width but as they take their position further and further from the center line they turn so you see them sidewise. This is the way they are shown on the elevation.

After the Roman pool, Greene's only documented work on Green Gables was a fountain/birdbath on the brick terrace in 1931, and a 1935 project never built.(15) By this date two other structures also must have been in place: the house built for the Fleishhackers' butler Arthur Sharp and now occupied by the groundskeeper, and the alley of grafted Camperdown Elms, both probably influenced, if not designed, by Charles Greene. Other early structures have not survived: the chauffeur's residence near the Fleishhacker barn, a playhouse that became Mrs. Fleishhacker's studio near the groundskeeper's greenhouse, an old Pacific Avenue cable car and an old Yellow cab used as children's playground near the present Mortimer III house. Also by 1935 there was built Green Gable's first house by

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

another architect, the Louis and Eleanor Fleishhacker Sloss house by William Wurster Mrs. Bates reports that Wurster learned to appreciate Greene and Greene only in the 1950s, through designing the kitchen, terrace and carport alterations required to be sympathetic with the main house. For every existing building and structure, dates, architects and alterations are given in the Appendix (Continuation Pages 6-9).

Green Gables is being nominated as a 'district' because it contains both buildings and structures, both contributing and non-contributing. Its boundaries are the boundaries of the Fleishhacker property as they have been ever since Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr. completed acquisition of the land in 1915. At present Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr. (now Mrs. Bates) and her three children own the property in undivided shares. Albion and Manuella Avenues make very clear edges for the district's northeast and southeast sides respectively. Though the northwest and southwest edges are not clear visually except for a carefully designed chain-link fence, their historic function as Green Gables' boundaries justifies their use for the National Register nomination. Seen from public roads the estate blends in with its surroundings by similar vegetation and terrain, like its neighbors in Woodside hiding the best parts from public eye.

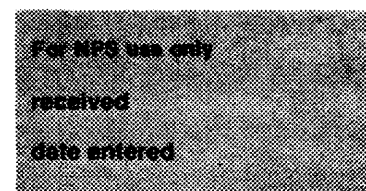
Largely undeveloped before the Fleishhackers came, the land's history is quickly told. It was part of the 12,545-acre Rancho Canada de Raimundo, granted in 1840 by Gov. Alvarado to John Copinger. His widow married John Greer, and the Fleishhacker deeds refer to the lots as part of the Greer lands. About 1890 George C. Ross, Redwood City attorney and land speculator/developer, acquired from Hugh McArthur a relatively narrow strip of the Greer lands parallel to Canada Road. He subdivided it into relatively small parcels, calling it 'Woodside Villas' though the 1891 tax assessments show no improvements in the tract. Many buyers did build on these lots, including on the five-acre plot called the north half of Lot 8 in Woodside Villas Tract, which in 1914 became the part of Green Gables enclosed by the northeasterly jog in Albion Ave.

The rest of Green Gables seems not to have been developed at all, except as ranch-land. The Official San Mateo County Map of 1894 shows these 70 acres as part of the land owned by M.C. Miramontes, presumably Manuela [sic] Copinger Miramontes, the original grantee's daughter for whom two roads in the vicinity were named. On 3 July 1906, shortly after the great earthquake which inspired development all over the San Francisco Bay area, the same George C. Ross, acting as president of Redwood City Realty, filed a subdivision map for Portola Park, in the Miramontes lands just southwest of his earlier Woodside Villas subdivision.(16) The Portola Park Tract consisted of at least 36 lots varying in size from a couple of acres to nearly fifteen; Green Gables consists of its northwest portion, lots 29 through 36 (plus the five acres in Woodside Villas). The Portola Park map shows several meandering, newly dedicated streets in addition to the pre-existing but unnamed Albion Avenue: Manuella Ave. as it exists today, Miramontes Ave. as it exists south of Manuella plus an extension north into Green Gables partly through the Roman pool area and partly perhaps the existing road by the groundskeeper's and Mortimer III's houses. The third new road, Portola Avenue, led north from the intersection of

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE. (continued)

Manuella and Miramontes (south of the Roman pool) out the north corner of the Portola Park Tract, and it exists today as the main drive's branch past the Fleishhacker barn. Ross's Redwood City Realty was able to sell the lots, for Fleishhacker bought them from third parties: lots 32 through 36 (north and central portions of Greene Gables) in 1910, lots 30 and 31 (main drive) in August 1911, and lot 29 (Roman pool) in 1915.(17)

On the Woodside Villas lot, tax assessment records show the Victorian farmhouse was built in 1892-1893 for Fannie I. Schuster or Mrs. J.B. Shuster, who may have been the same person. The San Mateo County Great Register of 1892 lists two George W. Shusters in the Woodside precinct, a 23-year-old native California cabinetmaker with dark complexion and hair, and a 37-year-old, Missouri-born laborer with fair complexion and brown hair. In any case, Mrs. Shuster mortgaged the property for \$1,000 with San Mateo Building and Land Association, possibly the builders. She must have been unable to make payments, for the 1894 tax was assessed to L.P. Behrens, probably Redwood City's first banker.(18) Also in 1894 the improvements assessment had been reduced from \$600 to \$300, indicating perhaps that the house was unfinished or that additional improvements had not been built as planned. By 1896 the owner was Dietrich Henry Meyer, a German-born farmer who stayed through 1906 with improvements assessment unchanged at \$200. This must represent the building with the hexagonal-shingle gable, barge boards and apex sunburst. The 1907 tax record shows a dramatic change: improvements assessment at \$500, owner Mary F. Conolley, presumably the wife of Edward D. Conolley whom the 1914 San Francisco Directory lists as president of the Spring Valley Lumber Co., living in Woodside. The increased assessment probably indicates construction of the auto barn and perhaps also the water tower, though it is hard to imagine Meyer farming these five acres for eleven years without a water tower. The Conolleys sold the land on 24 Nov. 1914. Four days and two owners later, Mortimer Fleishhacker bought it.(19)

Truely, Green Gables belongs on the National Register of Historic Places.

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For full citations of each footnote, please see Block 9, Major Bibliographical References.

- (1) Current, Architects in the Residential Style: 113.
- (2) Regnery, Interview. Shelley, "The Cement Gun": 46.
- (3) Shelley: 39-47, photos 44, 46. In Lindeberg, "Some Observations . . .": 59 ["Illustrations are examples of Southern California houses designed by Los Angeles architects and exhibited at the recent exhibition of the L.A.A.C."]. In Howard, John Galen, "Country House . . .": 322-355, photos 334, 335, plan 333.
- (4) Mackinson, Randell L., Greene and Greene, vol 1: 194, 195, 196, 253; vol. 2: 126.
- (5) Dunlap, Carol, California People: 65.
- (6) Shelley.
- (7) Lindeberg: 59.
- (8) Howard, John Galen: 355.

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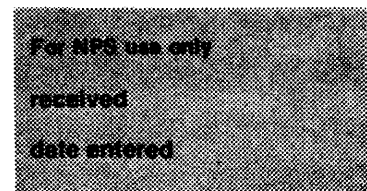
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- (9) Regnery, An Enduring Heritage: 107.
- (10) T.S. Greene to C.S. Greene, 9 May 1917; C.S. Greene to T.S. Greene, 20 May 1917, letter file of Greene and Greene with Mortimer Fleishhacker, Documents Collection, College of Environmental Design, University of California Berkeley.
- (11) Regnery, Heritage: 107. Mackinson, A Guide to the Work of Greene and Greene: 49, 51. Drawings on tracing paper, three of the addition and three of pots, file 074, Documents Collection.
- (12) Mortimer Fleishhacker to C.S. Greene, 13 July 1929, letter file.
- (13) C.S. Greene to Mr. Simons (Mortimer Fleishhacker's secretary), 23 Jan. 1928, letter file.
- (14) Mallott & Peterson to C.S. Greene, 23 July 1928, letter file. Mackinson gives the dairy house a design date of 1928, the pool a design date of 1927, Guide: 59.
- (15) Correspondence with Briscoe Tile Co., 6 Jan. 1931, letter file. Mackinson, Guide: 61, 63.
- (16) "Map of Portola Park," Map Book 4, San Mateo County Recorder's Office: 24.
- (17) Frederick L. Crosby to Mortimer Fleishhacker, 23 Sept. 1910, San Mateo County Deeds Book, 190: 4. Ora C. Smith to same, same date, ibid., 190: 4. Hanna Schlag to same, 19 Nov. 1910, ibid., 187: 493. John D. and Millicent Gish to same, 1 Aug. 1911, ibid., 199: 283. Albert Brown to same, 17 March 1915, ibid. 245: 227.
- (18) San Mateo County Great Registers of the 1890s list no Behrens in Woodside, but in 1892 one Ludwig Phillip Behrens was a bank cashier in Redwood City. A reminiscence states, "L.P. Behrens . . . started the first bank here and was president of the State Banking Association," Mary W. Cereghino, "Gay Nineties Shaving Mugs Recapture Memories," Redwood City Tribune, 3 Sept. 1945: 1, 5.
- (19) E.D. Conolley and wife to H.C. Sawyer, 24 Nov. 1914, San Mateo County Deeds Book, 241: 132. H.C. Sawyer to O.C. Pratt Jr., 24 Nov. 1914, ibid., 241: 133. O.C. Pratt Jr. and wife to Mortimer Fleishhacker, 28 Nov. 1914, ibid., 221: 95.

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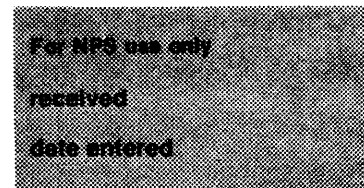
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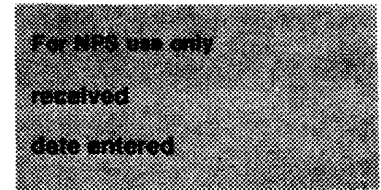
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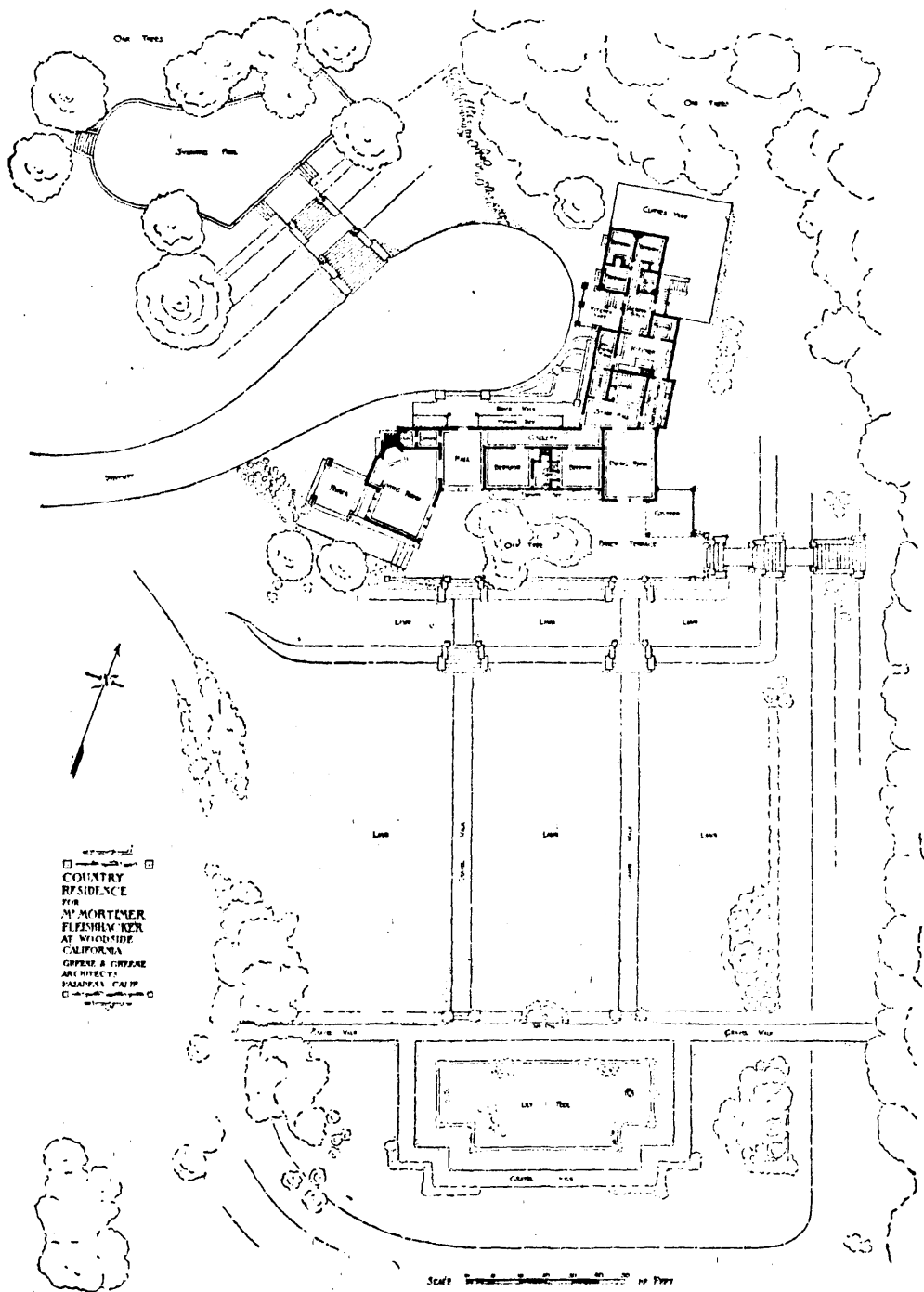
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet Green Gables, Woodside, CA Item number

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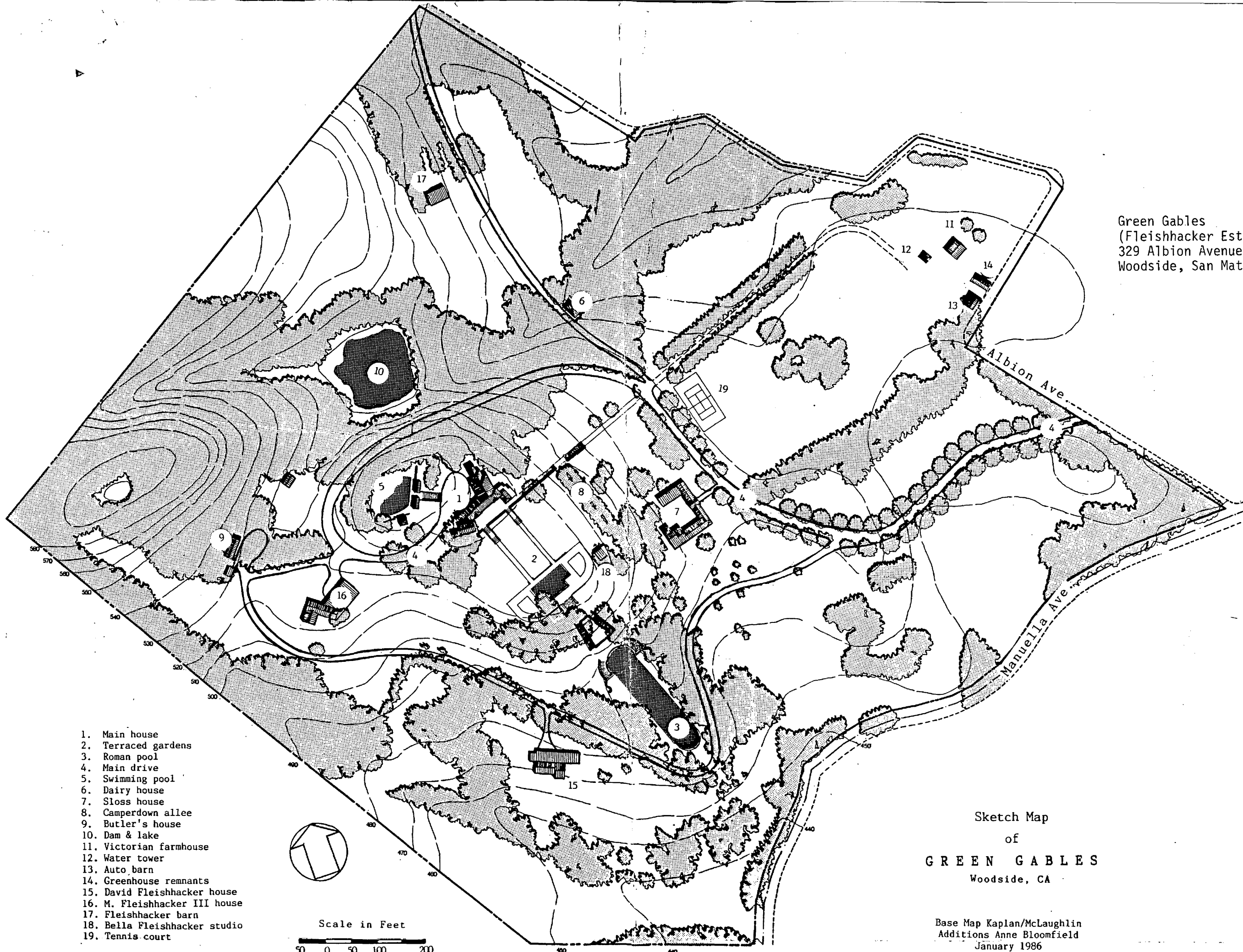


BLOCK PLAN—HOUSE OF MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER, ESQ.,  
WOODSIDE, CAL. GREENE & GREENE, ARCHITECTS.

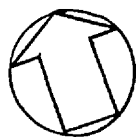
Plan published in The Architectural Record, vol. 40 (Oct. 1916): page 333



Green Gables  
 (Fleishhacker Estate)  
 329 Albion Avenue  
 Woodside, San Mateo County, CA



1. Main house
2. Terraced gardens
3. Roman pool
4. Main drive
5. Swimming pool
6. Dairy house
7. Sloss house
8. Camperdown allee
9. Butler's house
10. Dam & lake
11. Victorian farmhouse
12. Water tower
13. Auto barn
14. Greenhouse remnants
15. David Fleishhacker house
16. M. Fleishhacker III house
17. Fleishhacker barn
18. Bella Fleishhacker studio
19. Tennis court



Scale in Feet  
 50 0 50 100 200

Sketch Map  
 of  
**GREEN GABLES**  
 Woodside, CA

Base Map Kaplan/McLaughlin  
 Additions Anne Bloomfield  
 January 1986