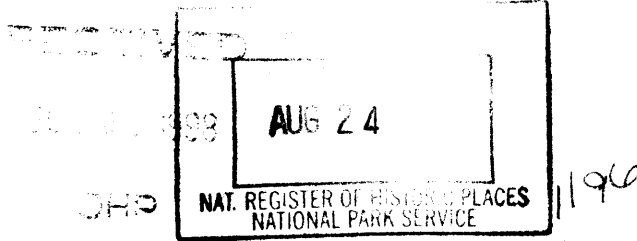


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kress, George R., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 2337 Benedict Canyon Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Los Angeles (Beverly Hills Post Office) vicinity N/A

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90210

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official [Signature]  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

August 11, 1998  
Date

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for this  
National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall

9-25-98

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Kress, George R., House

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing

20002

Noncontributing

0 buildings0 sites1 structures0 objects1 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETEroof TERRA COTTAwalls BRICKother CAST STONE**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Kress, George R., House

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1931-1940

**Significant Dates**

1931

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Kress, George R.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Muck, Harry I.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
Rodney Kemerer & Lindsay Doran Kemerer

Kress, George R., House

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>367665</u>	<u>3775445</u>
2			
3			
4			

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Leslie Heumann

organization Leslie Heumann and Associates date May 22, 1998; revised July 10, 1998

street & number 600 N. Sierra Bonita Ave. telephone (213) 651 0399

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90036

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Rodney Kemerer and Lindsay Doran Kemerer

street & number 2337 Benedict Canyon Drive telephone (310) 271 8880

city or town Beverly Hills state CA zip code 90210

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 7  
Page 5

**Description**

**Materials (continued)**

walls: STUCCO  
WEATHERBOARD  
SANTA RITA STONE

other: COPPER  
FLAGSTONE

**Narrative Description**

**Summary:**

Located on the west slope of Benedict Canyon, two miles above the Beverly Hills city limits, the George R. Kress House is a two story plus basement residence in the Tudor Revival style. It is rectangular in plan, of wood frame construction, and is capped by a tiled hipped and gabled roof. Above a concrete basement level, the principal exterior materials are brick studded with stone on the first floor and decoratively half-timbered stucco and wood on the second floor. Notable design elements include a quoined, cast stone entry surround, large living room bay window, three chimneys, and an extensive use of wood, carefully finished and detailed, on both the interior and exterior. Principal interior spaces feature generous proportions, beamed or trussed ceilings, arched doorways, and variations in levels. Flagstone and brick terraces, built concurrently with the house, surround the building on three sides. River rock retaining walls, located west of the house, and a brick and concrete shed, located northwest of the house, are also original. On the south, a swimming pool was added to the property after the period of significance. The sixty-eight year old house is particularly remarkable for its integrity; the interior layout and finishes are almost exactly as they were when first constructed and the exterior is virtually intact. Set amidst eucalyptus and oak trees, the house sits on an acre of land, hidden from view from the street.

**Description:**

The George R. Kress house is a two story plus basement, free-standing, single family residence set on a sloping, one acre property in the Benedict Canyon area of Los Angeles, near Beverly Hills. It has a rectangular plan measuring 98 by 27 feet and rises to a height of 40 feet. To accommodate the site, the basement is partially subterranean, so that the house is three stories on the north and two in the middle, with a one story extension on the south. The house is oriented to the east, with the principal entry located on that elevation and elevated above ground level. All four facades are asymmetrically composed, and each one has a different design. A complex roof consists of a hipped north end and side gables over the middle and south sections of the building. It is further complicated by a pair of small, wall dormers on the east, a row of three front-facing gables on the west, and a small dormer vent which marks the transition between the hip and the gable. Chimneys punctuate the roofscape, the tallest one rising from the central section on the west elevation, another set above the gable end on the south elevation, and a third, non-functional, decorative one located above the north-facing gable end of the central section near the east side of the house. The working chimneys are brick and stone while the north one is stuccoed. Each chimney is capped by multiple chimney pots. Unusual tile shingles, ranging in color from light red to fumed brown and laid irregularly to produce a random and patched effect, cover the fairly steeply pitched roof. Of terra cotta composition, the tile was manufactured by the Gladding-McBean Company of California under the trade name "Fumed English shingle tile." Rounded rafter tails,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 7  
Page 6

**Description (continued)**

stained dark brown, are located beneath the modest roof overhangs. The gable ends, finished with darkly stained redwood horizontal siding, are pierced with small, square vents arranged in a triangular pattern near the apex of each gable.

Of frame construction, the house rests on a concrete foundation and basement. The choice of materials plays a critical role in the design. Where it is completely above ground on the north, the basement concrete structure has been left exposed, the horizontal form markings suggesting stone masonry. The first floor and portions of the upper level are faced with red brick, laid in stretcher bond and randomly studded with irregularly shaped, Santa Rita stones. Mortar composed of one part Portland cement to six parts lime has been liberally applied, so that the combination of bricks, stones, and mortar imparts a rustic, hand-made character to the brickwork. Rows of soldier bricks mark the tops of most window and door openings and raised header courses provide window sills. The central portion of the second story, visible on the east and south elevations, is half-timbered with dark brown planks, placed vertically and on angles, juxtaposed against roughly finished stucco. Both the texture of the stucco and the small irregularities in the timbers suggest hand craftsmanship. Wood beams border the tops and bottoms of the half-timbered areas; pairs of small wood pegs anchor the planks to the beams. The remaining sections of the upper story, as well as the previously mentioned gable ends, are sheathed in wood siding.

The entry provides a focal point for the east elevation. Reached by an attached staircase that parallels the house, it is distinguished by a quoined, cast stone surround. The asymmetrical arrangement of the quoining is echoed by the door itself, in which a small, lookout window has been offset to the left. A wrought iron grille with a heraldic design is set into the opening. The door is made of darkly stained planks of sugar pine and is recessed 17 inches. Illuminating the entry, a wrought iron and glass sconce is attached to the wall south of the doorway by means of a scrolled iron bracket. Both the stairs and the terrace that extends to the south from the entry are paved with flagstones. Jutting out onto the terrace south of the entry, a large, rectangular bay is completely glazed with multi-paned steel sash. Copper-roofed, the bay is trimmed with a fishscale molding, weathered to a verdigris finish. Above the bay, the half-timbered portion of the upper story projects from the facade, supported by a row of carved beam ends. Fenestration on this elevation is varied in size, grouping and placement. All of the windows are steel casements divided into rectangular panes, and the larger ones are topped by non-operative transoms. To the north of the entry, a row of three windows is adorned with wood shutters. Upper level windows are set high up on the facade, so that their lintels are tucked under the eaves of the roof.

The one story wing comprises the south end of the house. Containing the library, this wing features doors onto the terrace on the east and south and to a loggia on the west side of the house. On the east, a continuous, heavy wooden header has been set into the brick above the door and the band of casements windows adjacent to it. The door is planked on the bottom half, with a diamond-paned, leaded glass window on the top. On the south elevation, two pairs of French doors, paneled and glazed, flank the flush chimney.

Bordered by a brick walkway that separates the house from the hillside to the west of the building, the west elevation is the least seen of the four. It features a loggia, accessed from the entry hall, living room, and library, recessed beneath the second story overhang. Wooden posts support the overhang, and are anchored to the beam atop them by arched brackets. The joints of these two wooden elements are carefully detailed, with the ends of the brackets notched out to partially wrap the posts. Three bays wide, this space contains an outdoor fireplace on the rear side of the living room chimney. Composed of brick and accented with stone, the fireplace has a raised hearth and a corbeled base and hood.

Visible on first arrival at the Kress House, the north elevation is anchored by the basement level. Three garage door openings defined by flattened arches span the building. The solid redwood doors are deeply recessed, operate with the original hardware, and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 7  
Page 7

**Description (continued)**

contain offset, four light windows. Curving muntins lend an unexpected note to these windows.

The Tudor Revival design of the building has been enhanced with references to the Germanic and French medieval traditions. Tudor characteristics include the combination of brick with stone, stucco, and wood; the emphasis on chimneys and gables; and the character of the fenestration. Another signature element, a "jetty," the projection of a portion of the upper story of a house, has also been incorporated. Details such as the notched wood joinery and the composition of the north elevation, with arched openings spanning the ground level, appear to derive from German precedents. The massing of the house, a rectangular block with the entry on the long side accessed by a lateral staircase, suggests the French "high house" variant of the typical farmhouse.

These features can be appreciated today because of the extraordinary exterior integrity of the Kress House. The only known alteration to the building envelope, a replacement of an upper story window on the south elevation, has been reversed by installation of a window by the original manufacturer. The setting has been somewhat modified by the addition of a traditionally shaped, 16' by 36' swimming pool, concrete and brick deck, and brick bar in 1975, but these do not detract from the design of the house. To the west of the house, the property rises steeply up the slope of the canyon, supported by brick and river rock retaining walls. These walls, and a two room concrete and brick woodshed integrated into them to the northwest of the house, were built during the same period as the residence.

The interior displays a similar integrity and is characterized by graciously scaled rooms, several with notable treatments of the high ceilings, and a generous use of wood. Walls are generally hand troweled plaster and trimmed with baseboards. Floors in the downstairs public rooms are pegged oak. Windows have wooden sills and are set into 3 to 6 inch plaster reveals. Most of the original hardware appears to be in place, including heat registers, electrical switchplates, roll-down window screens, and window fastenings. Wrought iron drapery rods and sconces are mostly original.

Located approximately in the center of the main floor, the large entry separates the living room and library on the south from the dining room, breakfast room, kitchen and service areas on the north. It contains the staircase with a turned railing and newel posts of mahogany. Mahogany was also used for the paneling which sheathes the lower wall of the staircase and the wall opposite the front door. Heavy wooden beams with chamfered edges support the second story hallway, and the ceiling above the stairway is trussed. A leaded glass window illuminates the stair landing. Below the staircase, on axis with the front door, a tripartite opening consisting of a six-light casement window flanked by fixed, three-light sidelights is glazed with mottled, picturesque, old glass. From the entry, flattened arches span openings to the living room and dining room. A narrower, pointed arch doorway on the north wall provides access via two steps down to a small hallway, a powder room, and the kitchen.

The largest room in the house at 28 by 18 feet, the living room is notable for the 13½ foot long glazed bay which occupies much of its east wall, for the fireplace centered opposite the bay on the west wall, and for the treatment of the ceiling. A heavy wood beam with decoratively sawn edges and arched brackets spans the 9 foot high bay opening. Chamfered ceiling beams span the room at right angles to the bay. The fireplace opening is embellished with a cast stone surround which has a floral bas relief design, a raised stone hearth, and a slanted and tapered hood. Double doors to the west loggia flank the fireplace; another set of doors leads to the south. Also on the south wall, two steps lead up to a pointed arch doorway and the library.

Rising 17 feet above the floor at the ridgeline, a dramatically peaked and trussed ceiling is one of the highlights of the library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 7, 8  
Page 8

**Description (continued)**

The trusses are attached with elaborate iron flanges and bolts. At 24 by 17 feet, this room is nearly as large as the living room and is lit by seven glazed doors and five windows. Framed by the entry arch, a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace on the south wall is the focal point of the room. It has a flagstone hearth and a corbeled cast stone mantel.

On the north side of the entry, two more steps lead down to the dining room. Another nicely scaled room, this space opens to the breakfast room with a groined vault ceiling. One of the few alterations to the house was made in the mid 1960s when the wall between the breakfast room and the butler's pantry west of it was removed and the resulting space was paneled with dark wood. The nickel sink and original cabinets were left in place. Some cosmetic changes have also been made to the kitchen, as well.

Upstairs, the house contains four bedrooms and a small, low-ceilinged office set above the loggia. Notable features include pointed arch openings and coved ceilings. There are three bathrooms on the upper story and a half bath on the main floor. All are intact, with original fixtures including pedestal sinks, cast iron tubs, and flushometer toilets. Tiled wainscoting in different color schemes--aubergine and yellow, black and white, and seafoam green and black--distinguishes the upstairs bathrooms.

All of the character defining spaces, features, and materials of the interior are intact, clearly showing the designer's intentions. Alterations include the aforementioned butler's pantry, replacement of the kitchen appliances and counters, and some modifications of the upstairs dressing rooms, all of which were done in the mid 1960s by the third owners. Previously, the second owners had sealed the door between the master bedroom and the adjacent bedroom. These minor changes do not impair the integrity of the house.

The Kress House is enhanced by its surroundings which manage, in the midst of Los Angeles, to retain the semi-rural quality which characterizes many of the canyons of the Santa Monica Mountains. Eucalyptus and native oak trees are scattered throughout the property and screen the view of the newer homes to the east. These houses were built following the subdivision of the property in 1975. The Kress House still occupies a sizeable parcel; its size, along with the landscaping and the locations of the newer buildings at lower elevations allows the property to retain its integrity of setting. The unobstructed views of the canyon from the windows of the house remain the same as when the house was first built. Moreover, the careful siting of the house, the generous provision of 56 windows augmented by 16 glazed doors, and the free-flowing space of the "see-through" plan of the main floor, have resulted in a light-filled interior regardless of the time of day.

**Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

The George R. Kress House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under both Criterion B, for its association with an individual who made a noteworthy contribution to local history through his skills as an engineer, and Criterion C, for its exemplification of a building type associated with a particular era in regional architectural development, the period revival house of the 1920s and 1930s. A "house-mover" by trade for over a half of a century, Kress was president of his own Los Angeles based company. His professional achievements during that time, moving literally hundreds of buildings, made a significant impact on the built landscape of the Los Angeles region during an era of tremendous growth. When the engineering experts of the day concluded that certain structures could not be raised or transported, Kress followed his own instincts and invented methods and devices to accomplish what popular wisdom said could not be done. This 1931 residence is the most personal statement of Kress, a self-made and largely self-educated man,



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 9

**Significance (continued)**

who worked with architect Harry J. Muck on the design. A Tudor Revival retreat in then undeveloped Benedict Canyon above Beverly Hills, the Kress House represents a late flowering of the revivalist tradition in architecture which peaked in Los Angeles during the boom years just prior to the stock market crash in 1929. The period of significance for the Kress House under Criterion B corresponds to the Kress association with the property, the years 1931 to 1940. The date of construction, 1931, marks the period of significance under Criterion C.

**Historical Context**

The George R. Kress House was built in 1931, twenty-five years after the founding of Beverly Hills a few miles to the south. Initial development in the new town was desultory, picking up some momentum with the construction of the Beverly Hills Hotel in 1911. It was not until 1920, when screen idols Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford moved into a Tudor styled hunting lodge in Benedict Canyon, that the association with the Hollywood community really began and the legend of Beverly Hills was born. During the next two decades, intense development of the area north of Santa Monica Boulevard included a high proportion of homes built for and lived in by Hollywood notables. Although the official city limits of Beverly Hills are about two miles down Benedict Canyon from the Kress House, the common perception of Beverly Hills included the hills and canyons of the Santa Monica Mountains above it. In fact, several of the estates most often publicized as being in Beverly Hills--Thomas Ince's "Dias Dorados", Rudolf Valentino's "Falcon's Lair", and John Barrymore's "Belle Vista" to name a few--were actually outside the Beverly Hills borders, but, like the Kress House, share Beverly Hills addresses.

The presence of such luminaries notwithstanding, Benedict Canyon remained a rural area, with isolated homes scattered among the eucalyptus trees and native oaks. In October, 1930, George R. Kress purchased six acres of undeveloped property on the west side of Benedict Canyon from F. B. Yoakum and Ethel Yoakum, members of the family of one of the principal land owners in the area. The deed contained the condition that the acreage would be used for the construction of a single family residence costing not less than \$10,000. In November the property was surveyed by the C. W. Cook Company. Seven months later, on June 23, 1931, Kress applied for a building permit to construct a "two story, eleven room residence and garage" at 2337 Benedict Canyon Road [sic]. The permit described a frame building which would have a stucco and brick veneer and would cost an estimated \$20,000. On the permit, Kress was shown as both owner and contractor. No architect was specified, although the permit was signed by Harry Muck, who prepared the plans. A second permit, this one for a woodshed, was obtained later that year, on October 3, 1931; again, Kress was itemized as the owner and builder, while Blaine Noice signed as the Civil Engineer.

Following completion of the house on November 12, 1931, Kress and his wife, Wanda Cooper Taylor Kress, moved in, decorating it with furnishings purchased from Los Angeles's premier retailers of the period, Barker Bros. and W. J. Sloane. In 1935 their daughter, Wanda Dianne Kress ("Dianne"), was born. The Kresses lived in the house, joined occasionally by various family members and retainers, until 1940, when business reverses resulted in the loss of the house and the Kresses were compelled to move.

In 1940, orchestra leader and M.G.M. musical director, George ("Georgie") Stoll purchased the house and its six acre parcel, augmenting the property later with an adjoining six acre lot, and began a residency that lasted until 1965. Stoll and his wife, Merian Davis ("Dallas") Stoll, essentially left the house as it was, making only interior cosmetic changes. When the Stolls moved out of the area in 1965, the property was sold to a subdivider. Eight lots were created, including a one acre parcel containing the Kress House. Television director Claudio Guzman and his wife, singer and actress Anna Maria Alberghetti, bought the house in 1966 and moved in.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 10

**Significance (continued)**

They installed the swimming pool in 1975 and made some changes to the butler's pantry and breakfast room. Alberghetti sold the house in 1992 to the current owners, designer Rodney Kemerer and United Artists Pictures President Lindsay Doran Kemerer, making them only the fourth occupants of the house in sixty-one years.

**Engineering Achievements of George R. Kress, Jr.**

More than anything else, the house appears to be the expression of the achievements of its original owner, George Kress, a man without formal education and a self-taught engineer who delighted in solving problems that others said were impossible. George Richard Kress, Jr. was born in Pittsburgh in 1882, the son of George Richard Kress, Sr. and Martha Lowrie Kress. At the age of 14, George Jr. left his father's home to live and work with his older brother, Alfred. Alfred was the proprietor of the Kress House Moving Company of Pittsburg [sic], Pa., whose motto was "If we had room to work, we could move the world." The company advertised that it "raised, lowered, moved, shored, or underpinned" buildings of all kinds, regardless of materials of construction, size, or weight. In their brochure, several of its projects were pictured, including passenger stations for the Pittsburg & Lake Erie Company and the Pennsylvania R. R. Company, a church, a Carnegie Steel Company building, several schools, and numerous houses. One brick residence was moved on water for the H. J. Heinz Company; it was the building in which the company had been founded.

In 1913, George Kress, Jr. decided, for reasons of health, to move to California. Upon his arrival in Los Angeles he acquired an established house moving firm, the D. R. Tripp Company at 755 Maple Avenue, and renamed it the Kress House Moving Company of Los Angeles. The business of moving buildings was thriving in the Los Angeles region, particularly as the city expanded in all directions from the historic core. Over a half dozen moving firms were consistently listed in the Los Angeles City Directory Classifieds during the first several decades of the twentieth century. The frequency of building moves led one newspaper reporter to write, tongue-in-cheek:

"Reports from southern and eastern cities tell of cyclones that vary their demolishing habit by literally and bodily removing buildings from the countryside. . . . Humph. They've nothing on Los Angeles. And we don't wait for a cyclone to move our buildings. So restless has become this hurry-scurry age that large hotels, apparently tiring of the spots they have occupied for years, have been inoculated with the moving germ.

"They say, those wise ones, that there's nothing new under the sun. But I discovered recently that a new business has been built up in Los Angeles, assuming greater proportions here during the last few months than anywhere else in the country--that of moving houses. Every kind of structure is being moved here intact--frame, brick, concrete. . .

"Yesterday I saw a postman standing forlornly before a vacant lot on Hollywood Boulevard. "Now, where in the dickens has it gone to?" he scratched his red thatch thoughtfully. "There was a house here yesterday. It's getting so now a feller never knows when he starts out on his route how many houses he'll find at home."<sup>1</sup>

In a more serious vein, The *Los Angeles Times* reported:

<sup>1</sup>. Gebhart, Myrtle, "Homes That Wander." Unidentified newspaper article, circa 1926-27.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 11

**Significance (continued)**

"Los Angeles has long ranked near the top among American cities in construction of buildings, but probably few people realize it has an equally high place in the conservation of buildings. In this conservation of structures it has developed an important industrial factor--the house moving industry--an industry that has grown steadily, quietly, usefully yet largely unnoticed and that, probably, because it is mostly prosecuted in the hours when a majority of the population is wrapped in the arms of Morpheus."<sup>2</sup>

There were several reasons for the boom in building relocations, not the least of which was the evolution of residential areas into commercial zones. Interviewed for a widely reprinted, 1925 newspaper article, George Kress observed:

"For one thing, the growth of business districts is overlapping even the more recently established residential districts. On the main traffic arteries one and two story stores and office buildings have supplanted homes. In many instances the onrush of business demands the departure of fine modern houses. Owners have found it highly profitable to sell the lots for business purposes, move their homes which have been built exactly to their desires, purchase sites in outlying sections and in many instances have enough funds left over from the sale to renovate and repair their houses."<sup>3</sup>

A related phenomenon, the establishment of zoning that transformed low density property to higher density uses, provided Kress with the opportunity to reposition buildings on lots to make way for new construction or even to raise existing structures to enable the erection of new ground floors. In addition, Kress provided seismic and geologic stabilization assistance to property owners; for example, after a 1921 earthquake, Kress was credited with saving Inglewood property owners "no less than half a million dollars by his expert advice as to the restoration of business buildings" when Los Angeles architects had recommended demolition.<sup>4</sup>

By 1925, Kress could claim that he had moved more than \$1 million worth of buildings--over 350 structures--during the previous year.<sup>5</sup> Judging by the high visibility of many of his projects, an impressive clientele, the amount of newspaper coverage devoted to his accomplishments, and the sheer quantity of his jobs, Kress had emerged, in the decade since he relocated to Los Angeles, as a leader in the house moving industry. Over the course of a distinguished career, many of Kress's projects were documented in photographs that were preserved by his family and have now been returned to the Benedict Canyon house.

Kress also derived quite a bit of business from the street widenings that accompanied the emergence of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. When roads were already built up, owners often chose to push back their structures instead of demolishing them to build anew. This was the case with the 1929 expansion of Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena; Kress either moved or

---

<sup>2</sup>. "Feats of Modern House Movers Make Archimedes Roll Over in His Grave." *Los Angeles Times*, 7/25/26, pt. II p.9.

<sup>3</sup>. "House Moving a Big Business Here." *Los Angeles Citizen*, circa January 1925. Also quoted in the *Pomona Bulletin*, 1/22/25, and the *Builders' Exchange Bulletin*, 2/25.

<sup>4</sup>. "George R. Kress Joins Maring-Lewis as Director," *The Inglewood News*, 11/7/24.

<sup>5</sup>. "Lots Sold and Homes Are Moved," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, 1/18/25.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 12

**Significance (continued)**

cut a slice from the middle of at least three buildings, the Dobbins Building at 53 West Colorado, the Stanton Building at the corner of Colorado and Raymond, and 316-326 West Colorado. In an illustrated brochure documenting the removal of a twelve foot section of the W.C.T.U. building at the corner of Temple and Broadway in Los Angeles, Kress claimed that "The advantage in using this method of altering buildings for the widening of streets are many: the out-standing points being that the alteration is made in about half the time required to tear down and rebuild the wall, the architecture of the building is preserved and considerable saving of money is possible to the owner."<sup>6</sup>

In part, Kress's client list read like a Who's Who of Los Angeles. For John C. Bullock, the founder and president of Bullock's Department Store, Kress moved a three story, twelve room house and two story, detached garage from 627 South Ardmore Street to 605 South Plymouth Boulevard, a distance of more than a mile, in 1925. About the same time, Marco Hellman, scion of a prominent banking family, commissioned Kress to transport his two and a half story, forty room, Beaux Arts styled mansion three miles to the elite Fremont Square subdivision. A greenhouse was moved to the Westwood estate of Arthur Letts, Jr., heir to the Broadway Department Stores, in 1926. King C. Gillette, the "Razor Blade King," sought Kress's advice about shoring up his residence.<sup>7</sup> According to newspaper accounts, one large residence, the twenty-four room Howard Verbeck house, was transported from Wilshire and Rampart to 637 South Serrano while the owners and their guests celebrated the occasion inside, undaunted by the move.

Public buildings also received Kress's attentions. For the County of Los Angeles, Kress moved the Alhambra Hotel, a six story concrete building, a distance of 110 feet in preparation for its conversion into county offices, freeing the previous site at Temple and Broadway for a new Hall of Justice. Similarly, the Brunswig Drug Company building was turned ninety degrees, moved out of the way of the northerly extension of Spring Street from Temple, and altered for reuse as County offices. An account of this operation, entailing the shifting of a five story, 10,000 ton structure onto 2,000 steel rollers, was published in the *Illustrated London News* (9/12/31). Several school districts utilized Kress's services, including the move of the Lankersheim school in North Hollywood, a facility constructed of concrete; projects were also completed at Gardena High School, Compton High School, and Union High School in Orange.

The peripatetic nature of the young film industry in and around Hollywood provided further outlets for Kress's skills, as studios moved buildings all over the basin. When Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was formed in 1924, four stages and two dressing rooms were moved from the Metro Picture Corporation lot in Hollywood twelve miles to the Culver City home of M.G.M. According to Kress, one of the glass stages weighed nearly 200,000 tons and was moved without a single crack in any of the glass or the shifting of any of the bolts.<sup>8</sup> A letter of appreciation from M.G.M. was proudly pasted by Kress in his scrapbook. Kress's interest and involvement with movie production apparently lasted through much of his career; his grandson recounts that Kress was often on the sets of films where the moving of scenery utilized his professional abilities.<sup>9</sup> In 1936-1937, Kress raised and buttressed Stage 7 (now Stage 16) at Warner Bros.

<sup>6</sup> Brochure, Kress House Moving Company, undated.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Dianne Kress Franklin, 5/10/97.

<sup>8</sup> "George R. Kress Joins Maring-Lewis as Director," *The Inglewood News*, 11/7/24.

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with Skip Franklin, 5/10/97.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 13

Significance (continued)

in Burbank, making it, at 92 feet high, one of the tallest soundstages in the world.

No structure, regardless of size, materials, or use, seemed to faze Kress. Commercial and industrial buildings constructed of brick, such as the Patten & Davies Lumber Company on San Pedro Street in Los Angeles, were moved on steel tracks, allowing the office staff to continue working during the process. The Catholic Women's Club (formerly the Friday Morning Club) was cut into five sections and moved four miles from 940 S. Figueroa Street to the corner of San Marino and Menlo in Los Angeles. A 350 foot wooden ship buried in sand was raised at the Chandler shipyards, a stone arch was moved at the Tropic branch of the Forest Lawn cemetery, and a massive gas tank, long considered an eyesore in Palm Springs, was moved over large boulders and deep ravines to a new location behind a hill.

In terms of national recognition, Kress's career reached a high point in 1935. In October of that year, Kress successfully cut the Commercial Exchange building into two parts, removed an approximately 8½ foot section from the interior of the 55' by 168' by 160' structure, and reunited the two parts of the building. Located on the southeast corner of Olive and Eighth streets in downtown Los Angeles, the Commercial Exchange building is a thirteen story, Beaux Arts styled office building of reinforced concrete and brick. When it was decided to widen Olive Street in 1930, Kress persuaded the owners, architects, and engineers that removal of a portion of a bay from the Eighth Street frontage would not only save the Olive Street facade, the most desirable office spaces at the west end of the building, and the corner store, but would also cost half as much as replacement of the building. The 160 foot cut was made 50 feet back from Olive Street and went through a light court. After bracing each side of the building, an 8'6" section, measuring the full height of the building, was cut out. It was necessary to excavate to a depth of ten feet below the subbasement to accommodate new concrete pilings and the manipulation of jacks, rollers, tracks and other equipment. Without requiring tenants in either portion of the building to vacate the premises, the 5,000 ton western section of the building was moved and re-attached to its mate. The entire operation required seventy days of preparation, nine hours for the actual move, and a crew of seventy-five men. It attracted a great deal of attention both from onlookers and the press; indeed, articles were published in *The Los Angeles Times* (10/14/35, 10/18/35), the *Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express* (10/17/35), the *Los Angeles Examiner* (10/18/35), the *Southwest Builder and Contractor* (10/25/35), the *Christian Science Monitor* (11/21/35), *Buildings and Building Management* (December 1935), and *Construction Methods* (February 1936).

Over the course of his career, Kress worked on buildings created by some of the most respected architects in the region, in many cases enabling the preservation of the buildings. The Bullock House was designed by noted Pasadena architects Arthur and Alfred Heineman and is considered one of the best extant examples of their Craftsman aesthetic outside of their home town.<sup>10</sup> Across the street from the Bullock House, the Sarah Hall House was also moved to Plymouth Boulevard; Kress apparently worked with the original architects Sumner Hunt and Silas Burns, designers of such noteworthy Los Angeles structures as the Automobile Club of Southern California and the Ebell Club, on the relocation. Walker and Eisen, whose illustrious portfolio included the Fine Arts Building in downtown Los Angeles and the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, provided architectural services for both the original design of the Commercial Exchange Building and for Kress's remarkable intervention in 1935.

Kress attributed his successes to an intuitive ability to sense the interior specifications of a building and his study of mechanical

<sup>10</sup>. Gebhard, David and Winter, Robert, *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide*. Salt Lake City, Gibbs-Smith, 1994, page 196.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 14

**Significance (continued)**

stresses and strains. During the course of his career, he invented several new tools and techniques. It was reported in 1925 that Kress had designed a one-of-a-kind truck, made of steel and having 1,000 rollers, which had successfully been used to move several two story, twenty-room residences.<sup>11</sup> He filed for and received three U. S. patents, two for "Means and Methods for Moving Large Buildings" (granted 8/6/29 and 11/26/29) and another for Building Wall Moving Devices (1/7/30). Kress often developed specialized devices for individual jobs, as he did with the screw jacks used to move the Commercial Exchange Building.

The Kress House was built when George Kress's career appeared to be on a continuous spiral of expansion. During the first seventeen years of his residency in Los Angeles, Kress had changed dwellings almost yearly. Divorced in 1924 from his first wife, he lived for two years at the downtown Los Angeles Athletic Club. After another couple of years in rented quarters, he moved into another exclusive downtown facility, the Jonathan Club. On August 15, 1930, he married Wanda Cooper Taylor of San Francisco; the site in Benedict Canyon was purchased a few months later.

Kress chose to build a retreat that reflected current architectural tastes and ensured its longevity with thorough engineering. Possessed of what he himself described as "engineering second sight," Kress apparently was personally involved in the design, making notes and changes on the plans and specifications. At the time, the Kresses were renting a nearby house in the Canyon, so he would have had ample opportunity to supervise the construction at the building site everyday. It is the exceptional character of the engineering compared to that found in the majority of Class D residential construction at the time that most clearly reveals Kress's hand. He had a keen awareness of seismic safety, both as a professional and also in response to his wife's concerns stemming from her experience in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Several points were made in a recently completed seismic analysis<sup>12</sup> emphasizing the unusual character of the construction:

1. Complete drawings and specifications were used to construct the residence. The 10 pages of drawings and 73 pages of specifications saved by Kress's daughter, Dianne Kress Franklin, were more typical of commercial construction than residential with regards to the extent of their documentation.
2. The foundation system is *reinforced* concrete and includes continuous footings which are typically 22" wide.
3. The perimeter wall plates and sills are bolted to a depth of at least 6 inches, according to the specifications, to the continuous foundations. It should be noted that building codes did not require that plates and sills be bolted to foundations until 1933.
4. The exterior brick wall veneer is anchored to the brick frame by means of galvanized iron crimped ties attached to each brick in every fourth course. The interior finish of plaster over metal lath (instead of the more common wood lath) is also anchored to the frame.

<sup>11</sup>. "Movers Have Unique Job," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, 2/22/25.

<sup>12</sup>. Englekirk & Sabol Consulting Engineers, Inc., "Seismic Probable Maximum Loss Study for Kemerer Residence," June 1997.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

Section 8

Page 15

**Significance (continued)**

In addition, top quality materials were used throughout the residence, and the specifications stipulated that skilled, experienced workmen perform the construction. The result of the exceptional engineering has been the survival of the house intact through several seismic events. (Some damage was sustained by one chimney during the 1994 Northridge earthquake.) Judging by the physical evidence, Kress, the house mover, apparently wanted to ensure that he built a solid, strong house which could not be moved by the hand of man or nature.

Kress's career as a pre-eminent house-mover in Los Angeles culminated during his residency in the Kress House, the first and the only house that he built. The Kress family left Benedict Canyon in 1940. During World War II, George Kress contracted with the Navy, using his engineering skills to launch ships out of Wilmington harbor. After the war, Kress disassembled and moved the entire camp of Manzanar, used for the wartime internment of Japanese-Americans, to assorted military bases.<sup>13</sup> The house moving business continued until the early 1950s, with the participation of additional members of the family. Moving buildings had become progressively more complicated and expensive and consequently less of an everyday occurrence in the years immediately before the war and became even more rare after it. Two projects in the postwar era were typical of the time: bungalows were moved from the site of the new Bullock's in Pasadena in 1945 and from the property of the Maryland Hotel, also in Pasadena, in the early 1950s. George Kress does not appear to have been as deeply involved in the business during this period, turning his attention instead to real estate development in Orange County. He died in 1972, seven weeks shy of his 90th birthday.

**The Kress House: Architectural Context**

Kress chose Harry J. Muck to design his house. The two may have met through Kress's acquaintance with Karl Muck, presumably Harry's brother, who was the Los Angeles County Architect in the late 1920s and early 1930s and who was in charge of the Brunswick Drug move and probably the Alhambra Hotel project as well. Little is known about Harry Muck. He came from a family who had been involved in the construction industry in Los Angeles at least as early as 1907. Peter A. Muck, Harry's father, was listed as a contractor and then as a carpenter in the Los Angeles city directories from 1907 through 1931. Following two years during which Harry was listed as a draftsman, the partnership of Peter Muck and Son appeared in the 1911 classified section under the heading of "Building Contractors." Around this time, Peter Muck was credited variously as contractor or architect on several Craftsman homes in the then developing West Adams and Highland Park neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Harry went on to become a draftsman at two other building companies in the mid 1910s, then abandoned the industry to become a salesman until 1923 when he again was listed as a draftsman. Over the following several years the listings for Harry Muck switched from draftsman to architect and back again until he died in 1937. At least three other extant homes in Beverly Hills have been confirmed as Harry Muck's work: the John J. Reeves House at 605 North Linden Drive (1924), the A. H. Waddington House at 628 Foothill Road (1925), and the Seymour Thomas House at 611 Walden Drive (1927). Pictured in the 1926 *Architectural Digest* and in an advertisement for Portland Cement published in the September 1927 *Pacific Coast Architect*, the Reeves House was designed for the nurseryman and landscaper who had developed the master tree planting program for Beverly Hills' founders, the Rodeo Land and Water Company, in 1906. All three Muck homes in Beverly Hills exhibit various interpretations of the English Revival. A fourth house, the Sarah Chalfin residence built in 1922 at 629 Foothill Road, has been demolished; it was Spanish Colonial Revival in style. In addition, a house in the Hollywood Hills (7387 Woodrow Wilson Drive), Muck's residence at the time the Kress House was built, also shows his hand in the design.

<sup>13</sup>. Rodney Kemerer interview with Dianne Kress Franklin, 5/21/98.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 16

**Significance (continued)**

Based on what can be gleaned about Muck's architectural career, it can be asserted that it reached an apogee with the Kress House. Given a more generous budget than that provided for any of his previous known commissions, an evocative site, and an interested client, Muck produced an elegant and harmonious design. Its stylistic precedents were medieval European, with aspects of the English Tudor, Germanic vernacular, and French farmhouse construction. In this approach towards architecture, Muck was operating within the tradition of eclecticism, defined by Walter C. Kidney as "an affair of taking up the forms of proven and mature beauty from the formal and the vernacular architectures of the past and adapting them, learnedly but with personal touches, to modern building programs."<sup>14</sup> Eclecticism was wholeheartedly embraced in Beverly Hills, whose primary period of development, the 1920s and 1930s, coincided with the golden age of eclectic design in Southern California.

What distinguishes the Kress house from its contemporaries is its extraordinary and highly picturesque combination of stylistic elements and detailing. For example, a signature feature of all three of the European antecedents, half-timbering, is of course used here for decorative rather than structural purposes, but has been given a deliberately rustic and seemingly hand-hewn appearance. The mixture of building materials, another typical characteristic, is made distinctive by the random incorporation of stones with the brick. While some attributes of the house--the half-timbering, the juxtaposition of materials, the high-pitched gables, the use of multiple chimneys, the inclusion of a second story "jetty"--were common to revivals of European architecture, other features were more rare. These features include the Germanic and French precedents for the ground level design on the north, the wood joinery on the west, and the massing and arrangement of the entry staircase on the east elevation. Regardless of ancestry, all elements of the house were rendered with outstanding accuracy of detail: the half-timbering is "pegged" at its joints with beams, porch posts and brackets are skillfully notched together, the first floor ceiling beam project on the exterior where the ends are carefully carved, and the gables are slightly bellcast.

This attention to quality is equally apparent in the interior. The amply proportioned spaces are flooded with light and incorporate notable architectural features and finishes, including remarkable beam and truss work, fireplaces embellished with cast stone mantels, wood paneling and flooring, and polychromatic tiling. Changes in level enhance the interior plan of the main floor. On the interior, the Tudor Revival was the dominant inspiration; the paneling in the entry is reminiscent of the traditional linenfold design, both Tudor and Gothic arches provide vistas into several of the rooms, and a groined vault caps the breakfast room. Materials were carefully chosen and installed, so that details such as the chamfered edges of the beams, the notched wood joints, and distinctive iron hardware were not ignored.

As the dominant domestic building type in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles during the 1920s and 1930s, examples of period revival homes are abundant in the region. However, few can equal the Kress House in terms of its combinations of forms and materials, its remarkable qualities of light and air, its sensitive siting, or its integrity. The design was executed with unusual craftsmanship and attention to detail, using the highest caliber of materials. And, unlike many period revival homes from the era which closely resemble each other, the Kress House is clearly one-of-a-kind.

**Postscript**

---

<sup>14</sup>. Walter C. Kidney, *The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880-1930*. New York, George Braziller, 1974.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8  
Page 17

**Significance (continued)**

That all of these features can still be appreciated today is due to the remarkable integrity of the Kress house. The home seems to have engendered special feelings in the Kress family. Not long after the house was completed, Kress purchased from artist Andreas Roth a painting of the estate in the California *plein air* style. Kress kept all of the documents associated with the construction of the house and passed them down to his daughter, along with photographs, the oil painting, and most of the furnishings and accessories which George and Wanda had purchased at Barker Bros. and W. J. Sloane and Company. Some of these items, including draperies, a lamp, and china, as well as the oil painting and personal items belonging to George Kress, have recently been returned to the house by Dianne Kress Franklin.

The feelings that the house inspired in the Kresses were apparently shared by its next owners. Georgie Stoll, born George Stolberg in Minneapolis in 1905, first came to the public's notice as a radio orchestra leader. After touring North America as a violin soloist, Stoll joined M.G.M. as a musical director, orchestrating numerous films over a thirty year period beginning in the late 1930s. Many of the films and musicals that made M.G.M. famous were among his credits, including *Broadway Melody of 1938* (1937), *Babes in Arms* (1939), *Strike Up the Band* (1940), *Ziegfeld Girl* (1941), *For Me and My Gal* (1942), *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1945), *Music for Millions* (1945), *Neptune's Daughter* (1949), *The Kissing Bandit* (1949), *The Toast of New Orleans* (1950), *I Love Melvin* (1953), *The Student Prince* (1954), *Hit the Deck* (1955), *Meet Me in Las Vegas* (1956), *Jumbo* (1962), *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* (1963), *Viva Las Vegas* (1964), *Girl Happy* (1965), and *Made in Paris* (1966). Stoll won the Academy Award in 1945 for his orchestral score of *Anchors Aweigh*. He also recorded with Bing Crosby on the Decca label, accompanied Judy Garland at the Palace on Broadway in 1940, and starred in a short film, *Swing Banditry*, in 1936. Divorced when he purchased the Kress House, Stoll remarried in 1942. His wife, Dallas Stoll, recalls that Georgie liked to work in the living room, composing scores at the piano.<sup>15</sup> The Stolls furnished the house elegantly, supplementing their own belongings with purchases from the estates of Hollywood luminaries, including a bust of Chopin once owned by John Barrymore, medieval armor from Valentino's Falcon's Lair, and various items from Jean Harlow's home. Georgie even drove Clark Gable's Model SSJ Duesenberg. The Stolls stayed in the Kress House over 25 years. Like the Kresses, the Stolls saved most of the furnishings from their Benedict Canyon residence, and Dallas Stoll, Georgie's widow, has presented the current owners with some pieces to reinstall in the house.

The Kress House's Hollywood pedigree continued with its next residents, Claudio Guzman and Anna Maria Alberghetti. Alberghetti began singing on the stages of Europe at the age of 12, making her American debut at Carnegie Hall in 1950. She appeared in several films and plays over the next decade, and won a Tony award for her performance in the Broadway production of *Carnival* in 1962. During her residency in the Kress House she became well known to American audiences through her work in television and commercials.

The current owners of the Kress House also have film industry connections as well as a deep appreciation for the quality and integrity of the house. They have located and contacted all of the previous owners, who have returned several items to the house and provided information for restoration activities. Upon seeing the house for the first time since she left it as a child, fifty-seven years earlier, Dianne Kress Franklin, George and Wanda's daughter, confirmed that the Kress House has remained remarkably the same as it

<sup>15</sup> Rodney Kemerer telephone interview with Dallas Stoll, 3/6/97.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 8, 9  
Page 18

**Significance (continued)**

was first envisioned by her father in 1931.<sup>16</sup> The Kress House possesses all of the seven aspects of integrity in abundance. It is in its original location, and its setting, incorporating an acre of land, carefully tended landscaping, and the natural features and topography of Benedict Canyon, is a matured version of the surroundings of the Kress era. Its design, materials, and workmanship are virtually intact. And it is deeply evocative, in terms of feeling and association, of the man who was responsible for its construction.

**Bibliography**

**Books:**

Donald, Elsie Burch, *The French Farmhouse*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1995.

Ehrhardt, Gunter, et al, *Fachwerkbauten in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thuringen, Sachsen*. Berlin: Verlag fur Bauwesen, 1992.

Kidney, Walter C., *The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880-1930*. New York: George Braziller, 1974.

**Periodicals:**

"Building to be Utilized by County," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1931?

"Concrete Structure 160 ft. High Moved Five Feet in Nine Hours," *Southwest Builder and Contractor*, October 25, 1935, p. 12-13.

"Engineer of Moving Gets Car," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, February 8, 1925.

"Feats of Modern House Movers Make Archimedes Roll Over in His Grave," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1926.

"Gas Tank Goes Over the Hill," *The News, Los Angeles*, October 7, 1940, p. 3.

"George R. Kress Joins Maring-Lewis as Director," *The Inglewood News*, November 7, 1924, p.1.

"Half of Thirteen-Story Building Pushed Back Eight Feet," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 21, 1935, p. 3.

"House Moving a Big Business Here," *Los Angeles Citizen*, circa January 1925.

"Lots Sold and Homes are Moved," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, January 1, 1925.

"Movers Have Unique Job," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, February 22, 1925.

"Presto! Great Building Simply Folds Up," *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 18, 1935, Section 1.

"Section of Skyscraper Being Moved," *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1935, p. 1.

"The Odd Side of Things," *The Illustrated London News*, September 12, 1931, p. 397.

"Thirteen-Story Building Moved Five Feet, Joining Severed Parts," *Los Angeles Times*, ~~October~~ October 18, 1935, p. 1.

"13-Story Building Cut In Two And Set Back 5 Ft. To Widen Street," *Construction Methods*, February 1926, p. 33.

"5000-Ton Bldg. 'Reunited' By Man Power," *Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express*, October 17, 1935, p. A-2.

Gebhart, Myrtle, "Homes That Wander," Unidentified newspaper article, circa 1926-27.

Reid, Thomas P., "The World's Biggest Moving Job," *Buildings and Building Management*, December 1935, pp. 18-23, 60.

<sup>16</sup>. Interview with Dianne Kress Franklin, 11/10/96.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section 9, 10  
Page 19

**Bibliography (continued)**

**Advertisements and Brochures:**

Kress House Moving Co., Pittsburg, Pa. (no date).  
Kress House Moving Co., Inc., 728 Sunset Boulevard (between 1922 and 1928).  
"Kress House Moving Company, Incorporated," *Los Angeles Times Annual Midwinter Number*, 1931, Section 4 (advertisement).  
Brochure illustrating the W.C.T.U. Building, Kress House Moving Company, no date.

**Other:**

Building Permits, City of Los Angeles, 1931-1975.  
California Birth (1935), Death (1972), and Marriage (1955) Records.  
Interviews with Dianne Kress Franklin and other members of the Franklin family, 1996-1998.  
Rodney Kemerer and Lindsay Doran Kemerer Interviews with Dallas Stoll 1996-98.  
Los Angeles City Directories 1913-41.  
Residence for Mr. and Mrs. George Kress, drawings and specifications, 1931.  
Englekirk & Sabol Consulting Engineers, "Seismic Probable Maximum Loss Study for Kemerer Residence," June 1997.

**George R. Kress Collection:**

A collection of scrapbooks, photograph albums, loose photographs, invoices, business correspondence and papers, newspaper clippings, and other items related to the Kress House Moving Company and the George R. Kress, Jr. family.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

That portion of Lot 79 Block 12 of Tract No. 4311, in the City of Los Angeles, in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 89 Pages 62 to 69 inclusive of maps, in the Office of the County Recorder of said county, described as follows:

Beginning at the northeast corner of said lot 79; thence south 86° 55' 17" west along the northerly line of lot 79, 190.00 feet to the true point of beginning; thence south 3° 04' 43" east 47 feet; thence south 15° 23' 30" west 169.48 feet; thence north 87° 09' 00" west 75.04 feet; thence south 86° 55' 17" west 115.00 feet; thence north 3° 04' 43" west 200.00 feet to the northerly line of said lot 79; thence north 86° 55' 17" east 243.33 feet to the true point of beginning.

(Los Angeles County Assessor's Parcel Number 4383-027-014)

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes a one acre parcel containing the house, woodshed, retaining walls, terraces and gardens that have historically been part of the Kress House and that maintain historic integrity. The portions of the original six acre parcel that have been excluded were subdivided in 1975 and developed with more recent homes.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section Photographs  
Page 20

**Photograph Labels**

Name of Property: Kress, George R., House  
City: Los Angeles (Beverly Hills Post Office)  
County and State: Los Angeles County, CA  
Name of Photographer: Elliott Marks  
Date of Photographs: March 27, 1997  
Location of Original Negatives: Rodney Kemerer, 2337 Benedict Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills 90210

The above information applies to all photographs, except as noted. Photograph numbers are keyed to sketch map.

1. View: Looking southwest at the north and east elevations.
2. View: East elevation.  
Date: February 18, 1998.
3. View: Front door on east elevation.  
Date: February 18, 1998.
4. View: Looking north along the east elevation.
5. View: Looking southwest at the south end of the east elevation.
6. View: Looking north at the south wing and the south elevation.
7. View: Looking northeast at the south and west elevations.  
Photographer: Rodney Kemerer.  
Date: June 1992.
8. View: Loggia on west elevation.  
Date: February 18, 1998.
9. View: North elevation.
10. View: Garage doors on north elevation.  
Date: February 18, 1998.
11. View: Interior view of entry.
12. View: Living room, showing bay window on east wall.  
Date: February 18, 1998.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kress, George R., House  
Name of Property

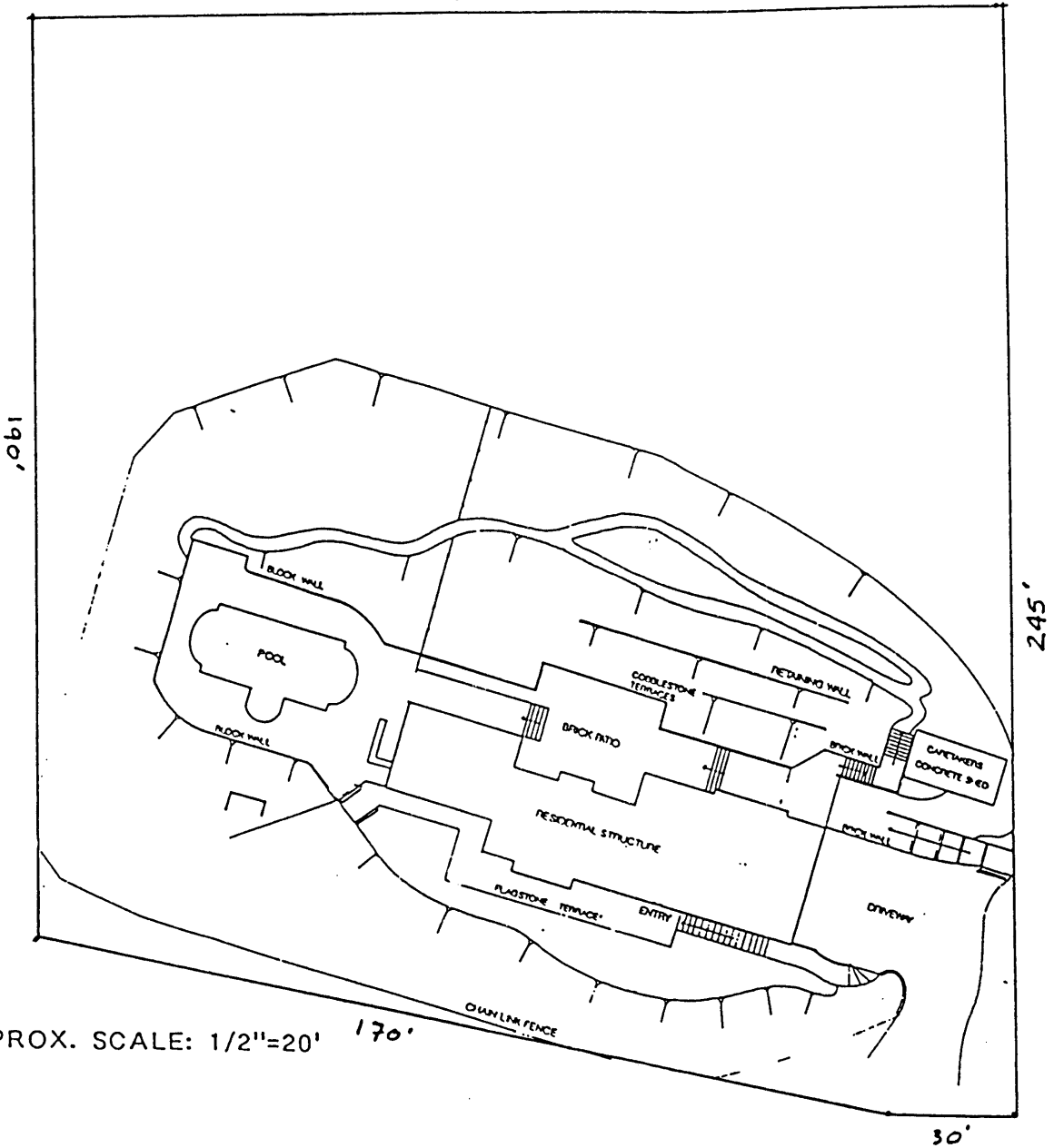
Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Section Photographs  
Page 21

**Photograph Labels (continued)**

13. View: Living room, showing fireplace on west wall.  
Date: February 18, 1998.
14. View: Library.  
Date: February 18, 1998
15. View: Bathroom.
16. View: Photograph of circa 1932 painting of the east elevation of the Kress House.  
Date: April 1998.
17. View: Living room, circa 1945.  
Date: Circa 1945.  
Photographer: Unknown.

APPROX. 200'



APPROX. SCALE: 1/2"=20' 170'

KRESS, GEORGE R., HOUSE  
 2337 BENEDICT CANYON DRIVE  
 LOS ANGELES (BHPO), CA 90210

