

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **SEP 4 1986**

date entered **OCT 2 1986**

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

**1. Name**

historic "Villa Francesca" (Harry E. Benedict Estate)

and/or common "Villa Francesca"

**2. Location**

street & number 1 Peppertree Drive

N/A not for publication

city, town Rancho Palos Verdes vicinity of

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> 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"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Richard T. and Kay Ann Bara

street & number 1 Peppertree Drive

city, town Rancho Palos Verdes vicinity of state California 90274

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles County Hall of Records

street & number 227 North Broadway

city, town Los Angeles state California

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title (NONE) 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 type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

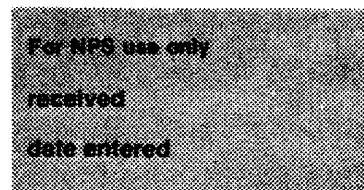
SUMMARY: The "Villa Francesca" (Harry E. Benedict Estate) is a parcel of land on which are situated two principal buildings: The Gate Lodge and the Farmstead (which incorporates servants' quarters, garages, and stables). Both buildings are of frame-and-stucco construction, and are substantially unaltered, although both (and particularly the Farmstead) have suffered some damage from land subsidence. Their design is in the Mediterranean (originally described as "Italian") style. Both buildings incorporate a wall on the Peppertree Drive boundary of the property as their east wall. This wall has a gate, with the Gate Lodge on the south (left) and the Farmstead on the north (right). The L-shaped Gate Lodge has its long sides on the east (in the outer wall) and the north (facing the driveway). The Farmstead is U-shaped, with a courtyard in the center. The remainder of the ten-acre parcel contains a standard 20 - by 60-meter dressage horse ring and a barbecue pit area. While there is some landscaping in the vicinity of the buildings, the Estate is mostly ungraded, with natural vegetation.

The Gate Lodge's L-shape is two stories in height on the Peppertree Drive side; another one-story wing extends along the driveway. The north elevation (Photographs 3, 4, and 5), along the driveway, includes a door, ornamented by a plaster architrave and suspended iron lantern, with a single step as platform in front. To the left is a window with two three-paned casements surrounded by an ornamental plaster band. On the second floor, a smaller window is ornamented by louvered shutters, and an eight-paned window at the left corner has pilasters for mullions. The east elevation (Ph. 2) has three windows on the first floor like that in the north elevation of the same floor, except that these each have iron grilles on the outside. On the second floor, there are three windows on the right corner which, like the adjoining window in the north elevation, have pilasters for mullions. The south elevation of the two-story wing (Ph. 9) has two pairs of four-paned French doors on each floor, each ornamented by a plaster band and louvered shutters; the second-floor French doors also have an ornamental iron balustrade each, to suggest a balcony. An ornamental line of eucalyptus sticks projects eighteen inches from this facade between the first and second floors. The west elevation of the two-story wing (Ph. 6, 7) includes the building's most striking feature: the stair hall of the house is enclosed by a great window of twenty-four panes, occupying the space from the stair rail up to the top of the arched opening (which is ornamented by a plaster keystone). Beneath the stairs is a recessed side door leading out to the garden/patio; the stairs are carried over this space on a one-half arch. Also in this elevation is a stucco chimney (Ph. 8) to the right of the stair hall. The one-story wing (Ph. 6) has a window with two three-paned casements surrounded by a plaster band and having louvered shutters on its south elevation, and a similar window in its west elevation. The building's tiled roofs are hipped on the two-story volume and shed on the one-story wing. There are no significant interior features other than, possibly, the "Palaccio" tile floors in the entry and stair hall and on the stairway.

(CONTINUED)

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The Farmstead is U-shaped, closed in by the south wall (Ph. 11), which fronts on the driveway; it is penetrated by an arched opening containing a wooden door, which gives pedestrian access from the driveway to the courtyard within. The west wing contains apartments (originally servants' quarters), the north wing the stables, and the east wing the garage. The principal access to the courtyard is by a driveway (Ph. 12, 15) through the west wing, whose roof is carried over this opening by the walls, in which the apertures are surmounted by semicircular arches topped by ornamental plaster keystones. A loggia (Ph. 19) is set into the courtyard facade of the west wing; from this loggia one descends to the courtyard by four semicircular steps; two of the servants' apartments are entered from this loggia, on the courtyard side of which is an ornamental iron balustrade. Windows on the west wing are pairs of three-paned casement windows; those on the exterior (Ph. 13) are surrounded by a plaster band have an iron grille. Access from the courtyard to the north wing is by a ramp (Ph. 16) up to the level of the stables, where there is a 14-foot-wide passage (Ph. 17) in front of the stalls. The wall is located in the middle of this passage, but is opened up in this part of the wing as an arcade of four arches, giving an indoor/outdoor quality to the stable area. On the outer facade of this wing, four wooden Dutch doors (Ph. 20, 21) surrounded with (apparently original) brick infill are set in arched openings in the wall, opening directly from the four stalls of the stables. The shapes of the tiled roofs of the Farmstead are shed over the garage (Ph. 18), and peaked over the west and north wings. The Farmstead has no significant interior features, except to the extent that the courtyard can be considered "interior."

The wall on Peppertree Drive is concrete, with a peaked shape at the top. At the driveway gate (Ph. 1), each side terminates in a square plaster topped with a flat plaster cap and having a pendent ornamental iron lantern on the outside. A barbecue area (Ph. 10) was constructed to the west of the Gate Lodge at a later date (possibly the 1940s), but has since been abandoned due to earth subsidence. A dressage horse ring (Ph. 22), 20 by 60 meters (approximately 65.6 by 196.8 feet), north of the Farmstead, was constructed in about 1978. A chain-link fence (Ph. 20) extends north from the north facade of the Farmstead.

## 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) real estate development
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1929–30 **Builder/Architect** Gordon B. Kaufmann, FAIA

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

**SUMMARY:** The "Villa Francesca" was the partially-realized estate of Harry E. Benedict (1890–1977), who managed and administered the 16,000 acres of property on the Palos Verdes Peninsula controlled by banker and financier Frank A. Vanderlip (1864–1937). This estate is thus closely associated with a significant historical event, the development of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and with a significant person in that history, Harry E. Benedict, who managed this development for its absentee owner. The two buildings on the Benedict Estate, the Gate Lodge and Farmstead, were designed by Gordon B. Kaufmann, FAIA (1888–1949), one of Southern California's most distinguished architects, and are fine examples of his work in the Mediterranean style; they therefore "represent the work of a master," in terms of the National Register criteria.

Mr. Vanderlip was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury of the United States from 1897 to 1901, and vice president from 1901 to 1909 and president from 1909 to 1919 of the National City Bank of New York, the nation's largest. When Mr. Benedict graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1916, Mr. Vanderlip hired him as one of the bank's annual group of management trainees. Over the next few years, Mr. Benedict served as Mr. Vanderlip's personal assistant on several projects. A syndicate led by Mr. Vanderlip had acquired the Peninsula portion of the old Rancho Los Palos Verdes as an investment in 1913, but the First World War prevented immediate realization of his plans to develop the property. Following the War, Southern California's luxury real estate developments focused in Beverly Hills, San Marino and elsewhere, but under Mr. Benedict's supervision, the first 3,000 acres were selected in 1923 for subdivision as "Palos Verdes Estates" with overall planning by the Olmsted Brothers firm. Although the remaining 13,000 acres were not to see substantial development until after the Second World War, Mr. Vanderlip, his sister Ruth (Mrs. Edward Walker Harden) and Mr. Benedict selected homesites for themselves in the Portuguese Bend/Portuguese Point section of this area, on each of which some construction was completed before the Depression intervened.

It was announced in March of 1929 that Messrs. Vanderlip, Harden, Benedict and Charles Schweatman all of New York, would be building homes of "Italian" architectural style in Palos Verdes. Mr. Vanderlip's would cost \$600,000 and Mr. Harden's \$300,000. Mr. Kaufmann was announced as architect for the Vanderlip, Harden, and Benedict residences. Actual construction of Mr. Benedict's Gate Lodge (and presumably the Farmstead as well) was carried out pursuant to Los Angeles County Building Permit No. 9760, issued during the last week of October, 1929. Lowell Construction Co. of Palos Verdes Estates was listed as the contractor and the work was valued at \$35,000. In December the Palos Verdes Bulletin reported that the buildings for Mr. Benedict were "about half completed"; this is the basis for the estimate that completion occurred early in 1930.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

BOOKS: Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Two (New York, Scribner's 1958), pp. 677-679  
The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Volume XV (New York, James T. White & Co., 1916), p. 29  
 (CONTINUED)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10.375  
 Quadrangle name San Pedro, California Quadrangle scale 1:24,000  
 UTM References

A	<u>1 1</u> Zone	<u>3 7 1 3 2 1 8 0</u> Easting	<u>3 7 3 4 1 8 0</u> Northing	B	<u>1 1</u> Zone	<u>3 7 3 2 4 0</u> Easting	<u>3 7 3 3 9 4 0</u> Northing
C	<u>1 1</u>	<u>3 7 1 3 0 1 0</u>	<u>3 7 3 4 0 0 0</u>	D	<u>1 1</u>	<u>3 7 3 1 0 0</u>	<u>3 7 3 4 1 2 0</u>
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification**  
 An irregularly-shaped 10.375-acre parcel of land, bounded on the east by Peppertree Drive and on the south by Palos Verdes Drive South  
 (CONTINUED)

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David G. Cameron  
 (consultant to the owners,  
 organization Mr. and Mrs. Bara date April 19, 1985  
 (revised April 22, 1986)  
 street & number P.O. Box 611 telephone (213) 452-0914  
 city or town Santa Monica state California 90406-0611

# 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 [Signature]  
 title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/21/86

For NPS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
[Signature] National Register date 10-2-86  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

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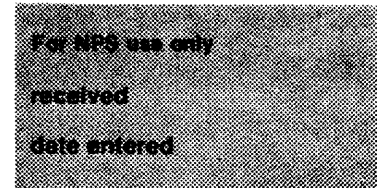
Mr. Benedict's projected principal residence on a hilltop elsewhere on his ten-acre estate never got beyond Mr. Kaufmann's conceptual drawings, and Mr. Benedict continued to live in the Gate Lodge until selling the property shortly before his death. The name "Villa Francesca" honored Mr. Benedict's first wife, Frances, née Homburg, who died in 1956. Mr. Benedict was president of Mr. Vanderlip's Palos Verdes Corporation for many years and served on the Boards of such companies as American Airlines and Barker Bros. (a major Southern California home furnishings concern).

Gordon Bernie Kaufmann was born and educated in England and came to Los Angeles in 1914. He designed numerous residences as well as such important structures as the Athenaeum at California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, the Arrowhead Springs Hotel in the mountains behind San Bernardino, the Palladium Ballroom in Hollywood, and much of the campus at Scripps College in Claremont. At the Paris International Exposition of 1937 he was awarded a gold medal for his design of the Los Angeles Times Headquarters Building and a bronze medal for the Grandstand and Clubhouse of the Santa Anita Park racecourse in Arcadia. In 1938 he was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

The Harry E. Benedict Estate is one of several in this section of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The others are generally inaccessible to the public, except for one, which happens to be the only other one with evidence attributing it to Mr. Kaufmann. This is the Portuguese Point Gatehouse, built for Edward Walker Harden and Mrs. Harden (née Ruth Vanderlip). Its design is less original than that of Villa Francesca, being a fairly literal transcription of the "Dove Cote at Ospitaletto," published by Guy Lowell in his More Small Italian Villas and Farmhouses (New York, Architectural Book Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 76. The Villa Francesca, an excellent example of Gordon Kaufmann's sensitive handling of Mediterranean themes, or as architectural historian Alson Clark describes it in his important article on Mr. Kaufmann's work, the "Californian" style, is the best example of his work at Palos Verdes, and thus is worthy of listing on the National Register as "representing the work of a master" at the local level of significance.

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Fink, Augusta, Time and the Terraced Land, (Berkeley, Calif., Howell-North Books, 1966), pp. 122, 124, 125

Lowell, Guy, More Small Italian Villas and Farmhouses (New York, Architectural Book Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 76

Morgan, Delane, The Palos Verdes Story (Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., Review Publications, Inc., 1982), pp. 9, 11, 109, 124

ARTICLES: Anon., "The Vanderlips to Build," Palos Verdes Bulletin, December, 1925, p. 5

Anon., "Fine Homes Planned by Financiers; Eastern Capitalists Follow Vanderlip in Construction at Palos Verdes," Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1929, Part V, p. 1

Anon., "New Estates at Portuguese Bend," Palos Verdes Bulletin, April, 1929, p. 6

Anon., "[Weekly List of] L. A. County Building Permits," Southwest Builder and Contractor, November 1, 1929, p. 66

Anon., "Notes of the Miraleste School," Palos Verdes Bulletin, December, 1929, p. 5

Anon., "Marauders Enter Palos Verdes Home," Los Angeles Times, January 12, 1932, Part II, p. 20

Anon., Southwest Builder and Contractor, May 13, 1938, p. 20; June 10, 1938, p. 20

Anon., "Gordon B. Kaufmann, 61, Famous Architect, Dies," Los Angeles Times, March 2, 1949, Part II, p. 1

Anon., "Notes and Comment," p. 3, and "Gordon B. Kaufmann, Architect for Many Noted Buildings of the Southland, Dies," p. 7, Southwest Builder and Contractor, March 4, 1949

Anon., "Benedict Recalls 'Ranch' and Days of Horse Travel," Palos Verdes News, January 30, 1966, p. 1

Anon., "H. Benedict, Local Pioneer, Dies at 87," Palos Verdes Peninsula News, September 4, 1977, p. 1

Anon., "Rites for Developer of Palos Verdes Conducted," Los Angeles Times, September 6, 1977, Part II, p. 5

Clark, Alson, "The 'Californian' Architecture of Gordon B. Kaufmann," Society of Architectural Historians Southern California Chapter Review, Volume 1, Number 3, Summer, 1982, p. 1 ff.

Covey, Carol, "Pioneer Harry Benedict Recalls Earliest Days on PV Peninsula," Palos Verdes Peninsula News, September 19, 1974, p. 17

Grenier, Meredith, "Silhouette: Harry E. Benedict," Palos Verdes Review, September, 1977, p. 34

Lee, Mary Ann, "Wise Decision Led to Life Full of Excitement," Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1974, Part XI, p. 1

Spencer, Olive, "The Stately Homes: Villa Francesca," Palos Verdes Review, September, 1968, p. 22

Wolinsky, Leo, "He Remembers Peninsula with No Homes or Roads," (Torrance, California) Daily Breeze, May 27, 1976, p. E58

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS: Deed, Palos Verdes Corporation to Harry E. Benedict, recorded April 23, 1930, Book 9840 of Official Records, County of Los Angeles, p. 382 f.

Deed, Palos Verdes Corporation to Harry E. Benedict and Frances H. Benedict, recorded November 26, 1940, Book 18027 of Official Records, County of Los Angeles, p. 57 f.

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Los Angeles County Assessor's Map Book No. 466 (1924-1939), p. 202  
Los Angeles County Assessor's Parcel Map No. 51

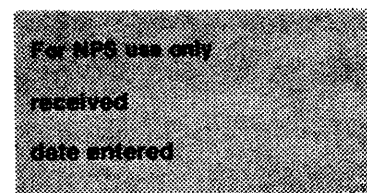
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS:

Kaufmann, Gordon B., "Job No. 208: Gate Lodge for Mr. H. E. Benedict.  
Sheet No. 1, Foundation Plan; Sheet No. 2, First Floor Plan;  
Sheet No. 3, Second Floor Plan; Sheet No. 5, (North and East)  
Elevations; Sheet No. 6, (South and West) Elevations," (Sheets  
1-3) September 19, 1929, (Sheets 5 and 6) September 23, 1929.  
Kaufmann, Gordon B., "Farmstead for Mr. H. E. Benedict at Palos Verdes  
Estates [sic] Calif. Floor Plan, Scale 1/8"=1' 0"; Revised Oct.  
2nd '29 from Drawings of Sept. 28 '29."



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**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

Lot No. 122, as shown on Los Angeles County Assessor's Parcel Map.No. 51.

**ALTERNATE LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

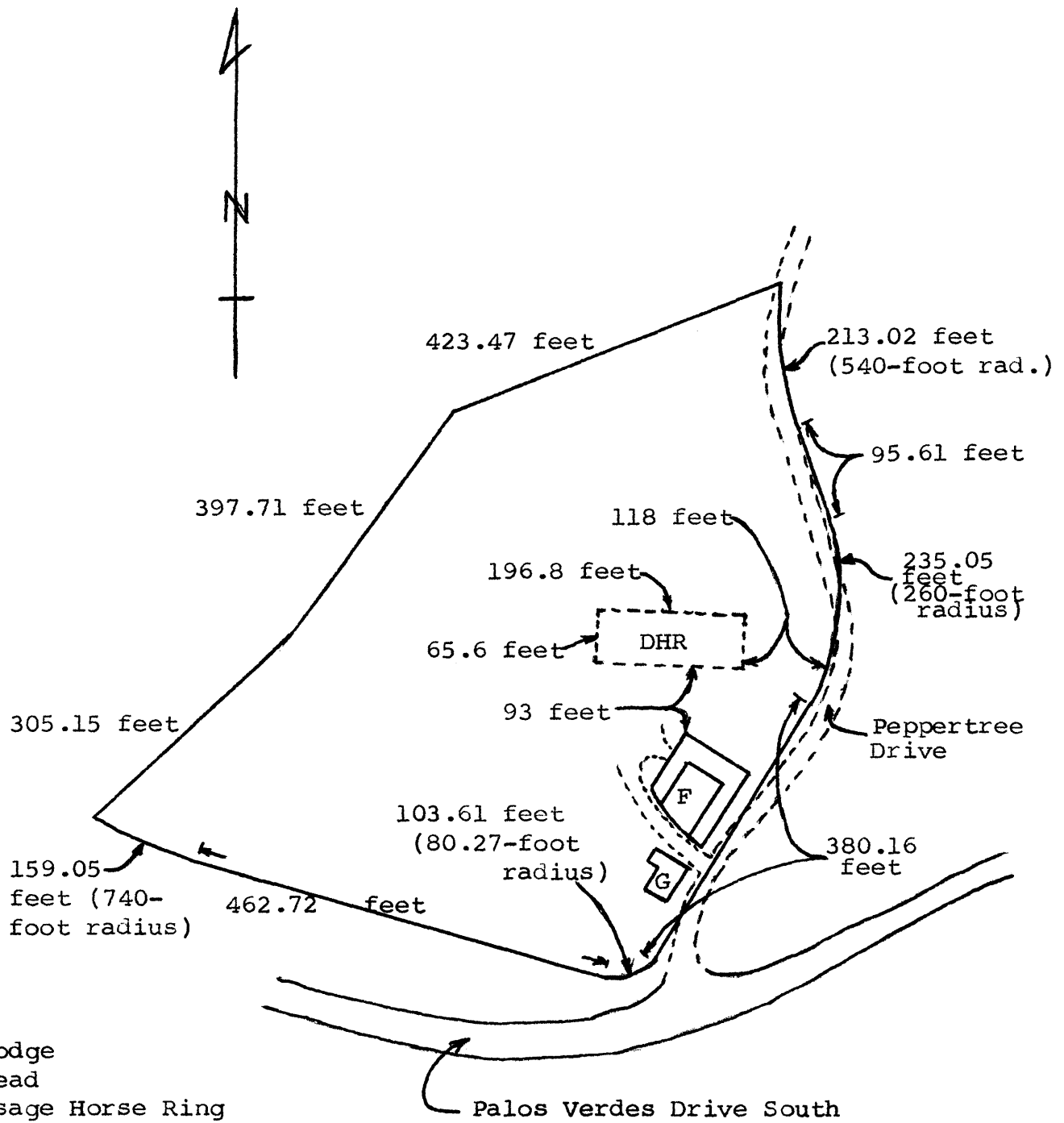
That portion of Lot "H" of the Rancho Los Palos Verdes, allotted to Jotham Bixby by Decree of Partition in the action "Bixby, at al., vs. Bent, et al.," Case No. 2373 in the District Court of the 17th Judicial District of the State of California, in and for the County of Los Angeles, and entered in Book 4, page 57 of Judgements, in the Superior Court of said County, described as follows: Commencing at the Westerly extremity of a certain curve in the center line of the 50-foot right of way for Palos Verdes Coast Road, deeded to said County of Los Angeles by Palos Verdes Corporation, as per deed recorded in Book 6059, page 178 of Official Records of said County, said curve being concave to the North, having a radius of 300 feet and a length of 211.13 feet; thence North 72°59'50" West, 281.66 feet to a point in the center line of said Palos Verdes Coast Road; thence North 17°00'10" East, 140 feet to a point, said point being the true point of beginning of this description and the Southerly corner of the parcel of land herein described; thence North 72°59'50" West, 462.72 feet to the beginning of a curve concave to the Northeast and having a radius of 740 feet; thence Northwesterly along said last mentioned curve, 159.05 feet to the end thereof, which is the most Westerly corner of the parcel herein described, a radial line to said curve at said point bears North 29°12'02" East; thence North 47°44'20" East, 305.15 feet to an angle point; thence North 36°30'25" East, 397.71 feet to an angle point; thence North 68°33'15" East, 423.47 feet, more or less, to a point in a curve concave to the East and having a radius of 540 feet, said point being the most Northerly corner of the parcel of land herein described, a radial line to said curve at said point bears North 86°08'54" West; thence Southerly along said last mentioned curve a distance of 213.02 feet to the end thereof; thence South 18°45'00" East, 95.61 feet to the beginning of a curve concave to the West and having a radius of 260 feet; thence Southerly along said last mentioned curve, 235.05 feet to the end thereof; thence South 33°02'50" West, 380.16 feet to the beginning of a curve concave to the Northwest and having a radius of 80.27 feet; thence Westerly along said last mentioned curve, 103.61 feet to the true point of beginning of this description.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

This is the identical parcel originally acquired by Mr. Benedict at the time the Gate Lodge and Farmstead were constructed.

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER:**

Map Book 7572, Page 17, Parcel 21



SKETCH MAP: "VILLA FRANCESCA" (HARRY E. BENEDICT ESTATE)  
RANCHO PALOS VERDES  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

# VILLA FRANCESCA PICTURES

