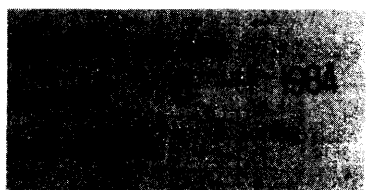


RECEIVED
AUG 18 1985
OHP



**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic Mariona (Villa Rockledge)

and/or common Villa Rockledge

2. Location

street & number 2529 S. Coast Highway N/A not for publication

city, town Laguna Beach N/A vicinity of congressional district 40th

state California code 06 county Orange code 059

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

4. Owner of Property

name Roger Jones

street & number 2529 S. Coast Highway

city, town Laguna Beach N/A vicinity of state California 92651

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Orange County Recorders Office

street & number 630 N. Broadway

city, town Santa Ana state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Laguna Beach Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-81 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, P.O.Box 2390,

(Duplicate copies on file with City of Laguna Beach)
city, town Sacramento state California 95811

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The property known as Villa Rockledge consists of a sprawling Mediterranean Revival Villa complex incorporating Spanish and eclectic elements on 1.3 acres of a precipitous blufftop overlooking the ocean in Laguna Beach. Built principally between the years 1918-29, the 7,000 square foot, eight-unit residential complex is the collaborative effort of architect Arthur Benton and Frank Miller, creator of the Mission Inn in Riverside.

The dramatic oceanfront complex which was begun in 1918 and primarily finished in 1921, was designed by Los Angeles architect Arthur Benton; this includes the southerly building which follows the winding contour of the rocky bluff and the three lower units of the northerly building which is sited perpendicular to the coastline. The top unit of the northerly wing was added in 1929 and designed by Laguna architect Thomas Harper. The earlier building was originally planned as a two-family summer estate, but it and the second phase addition evolved into eight residential summer units which are used as apartments today.

The two-story complex is fashioned in an L-plan conforming to the coastline and elevation of the terrain. The Mediterranean influenced building incorporates walls of formed brick and an adobe tiled gable roof. Two rustic stone towers anchor the building on the easterly edge; the smaller of the two towers is pentagonal, with a conical roof, while the larger is an octagonal tower topped with what was originally an open deck but has more recently been enclosed and roofed.

The earlier wing features two small entry gables, one of which has the original name "Mariona" embedded above a brick arch. *Two large open porches on the ocean side of the wing have since been enclosed with glass. The second wing, by contrast, features a projecting circular bay window with a discrete balcony above. The two wings are unified in their use of tiled roofs, ornamental chimneys, plaster siding and large casement windows.

The two buildings were designed with simple lines but are adorned with a variety of ornamental features. Like Frank Miller's other architectural extravaganza, the Mission Inn in Riverside, Villa Rockledge incorporates a variety of imaginative and artistic elements derived from the Spanish culture and architecture. Unlike the Mission Inn, however, Villa Rockledge takes a departure from the more strict interpretation of the Spanish styles into an eclecticism incorporating elements of English vernacular architecture.

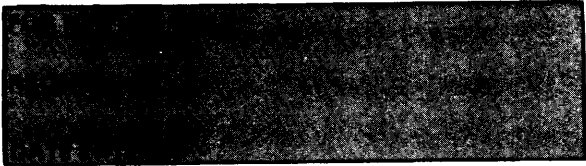
The Mediterranean and Spanish influences are seen in the use of adobe tiles, arched windows, wrought iron and cloistered entries, while the English derivative eclecticism is personified in the whimsical chimneys, and multi-paned casement windows.

The Mission bell and Indian raincross, fashioned in iron, which embellish the exterior in several locations, are reminiscent of the Mission Inn, as are the simulated tree branch balustrades.

Heavy ornamental doors are present throughout and most strikingly, the circular bay window features modified Gothic arches with unusual wavy leaded divisions separating panes in the transoms. This circular bay window is identical to some which are in the Riverside Mission Inn.

* This cloistered entry portico with its arched opening served as the original entrance to the main unit which was occupied by Frank Miller.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The interior of the Villa Rockledge nearly defies a verbal description. To begin with, no two of the eight units are alike and none of the rooms in any of the units is a perfect square or rectangle. Miller's imagination and artistic sensibilities went to work on the interiors and produced an array of tasteful splendor. Every unit incorporates rooms which capitalize on the ocean view. Textured plaster walls, open beam ceilings and stone fireplaces are common elements on the interiors. Interior doors are of rustic wood with wavy patterned wood cuts and are embedded with brass stars; the Indian raincross symbol has been incorporated into the door latches. Assorted other touches are bestowed intermittently such as bas relief work inlaid in the walls, an overhead light fixture which was originally a ship's wheel and log beamed ceilings located in the main unit.

The grounds of Villa Rockledge are as important as the building itself.* Separated from the open expanse of the blufftop by the buildings, the grounds are secluded and intimate. Walkways amble around the sloping terrain and are flanked by low arroyo stone walls. Steps, terraces and private sitting areas with benches and statues are interspersed among the gardens of largely native plants. The vegetation is mature and meandering, in the way in which Frank Miller would have intended. On the beach below is a sea poolformed out of concrete**It is one of two such pools which were installed on the Laguna coast.

The integrity of the building and grounds remains intact, though some alterations have been made. The two large ocean-facing porches have been enclosed with glass as has the upper deck of the large stone tower. Some windows were modified in the 1960's, but the present owner has restored them back to the original. One newer building used as a garage was added in 1973; it is located on the rear of the property and is fashioned in a Mediterranean Revival style which complements the earlier buildings and does not detract from the architectural integrity of the earlier buildings and the grounds.

* The building is supported atop a concrete retaining wall below which is located the rocky bluff and shoreline incorporated by design as part of the grounds.

**Sea pools such as this were built at the water's edge for the purpose of catching sea water so that the children could play without harm from the crashing waves.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1918-21, 1929 **Builder/Architect** Frank Miller, Arthur Benton, Thomas Harper

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Villa Rockledge, originally known as Mariona, was built by Frank Miller, developer of the Mission Inn in Riverside and a leading figure in promoting Mission and Mediterranean influenced architecture in Southern California. Begun in 1918, the major portion of Villa Rockledge was designed by Architect Arthur Benton who worked closely with Miller on this building in much the same way as he had on the Mission Inn; a one unit addition on the northerly wing was designed by Laguna Beach architect Thomas Harper in 1929. Like the Mission Inn, Villa Rockledge incorporated Miller's keen interest in the art and architecture of the Mediterranean countries and personified Miller's fondness for melding various Spanish influenced elements in an eclectic and dynamic manner.

Frank Miller, as the developer of the Mission Inn, became a leading regional influence in establishing a new architectural identity for Southern California rooted in the architecture of the early missions and Spanish settlers. Miller brought the same architect, crews and artistic ideas that he had used on the Mission Inn in Riverside to Laguna Beach where he built his summer home in the then growing coastal resort and art colony. He spent the years from 1918 until his death in 1935 developing and evolving Villa Rockledge in much the same way that he had done with the Mission Inn.

Just after the turn of the century, Miller met Arthur Benton, who in his association with the California Landmarks Club was a restoration architect of California missions in addition to designing new buildings in the Mission Style. The architectural pursuits of Benton coincided perfectly with the cultural interests of Miller. In 1902, Miller hired Benton to remodel the Glenwood Hotel into a Mission style building. What became known as the Mission Inn grew over the next 25 years into a major Mission style hotel which attracted visitors from around the country, including John D. Rockefeller and Teddy Roosevelt.

Through his association with Arthur Benton and the California Landmarks Club, Miller became a leading figure in the network of influential Californians seeking to beautify the state and establish a Spanish and Mission influenced image. Founded by Charles Lummis, the California Landmarks Club included prominent architects, such as Arthur Benton and Myron Hunt, and financiers such as Henry E. Huntington who had a special interest in California's early architectural heritage and sought to have the Mission and Spanish style architecture set the theme for Southern California, in particular.

Miller came to Laguna Beach when the coastal resort town was in its heyday as an art colony. Artists such as William Wendt and Frank Cuprien who made their homes in Laguna gave rise to an attitude which revered "artistic" and "individualized" architecture. This architectural climate was ideal for Miller who sought to lend a new direction to his interest in Spanish style buildings. Villa Rockledge utilized strong Mediterranean imagery, although some English vernacular touches add to the picturesque eclecticism.

* Frank Miller gave the name, Mariona, to the property in honor of his wife, Marion.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Santa Ana Register Newspaper - 3/10/19, 9/5/17, 5/16/23, 5/5/19, 5/24/29
 California Southland - October/November 1919
 A Colony for California, Tom Patterson 1971
 Constructive Californians, 1926
 Architectural Plans signed by Arthur Benton, 1921
 Historic Photos dated 1923

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.3 acres
 Quadrangle name Laguna Beach Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 5 and 6 of the Tract known as Rockledge-by-the-Sea, County of Orange, California.
 Boundaries are drawn on historic lot lines as shown on attached assessor's map.
 Assessor's parcel 656-114-13.

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen Les
 organization Heritage Orange County date 7/27/83
 street & number 106 W. 4th Street, Suite 503 telephone (714) 835-7287
 city or town Santa Ana state California 92701

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

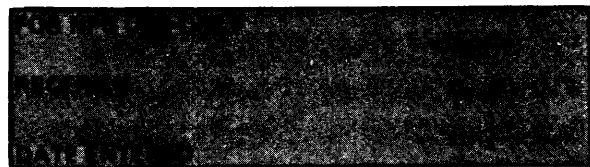
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marion Mitchell Wilson
 title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date Feb. 9, 1984

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 3/29/84
 Attest: [Signature]
 Chief of Registrar

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

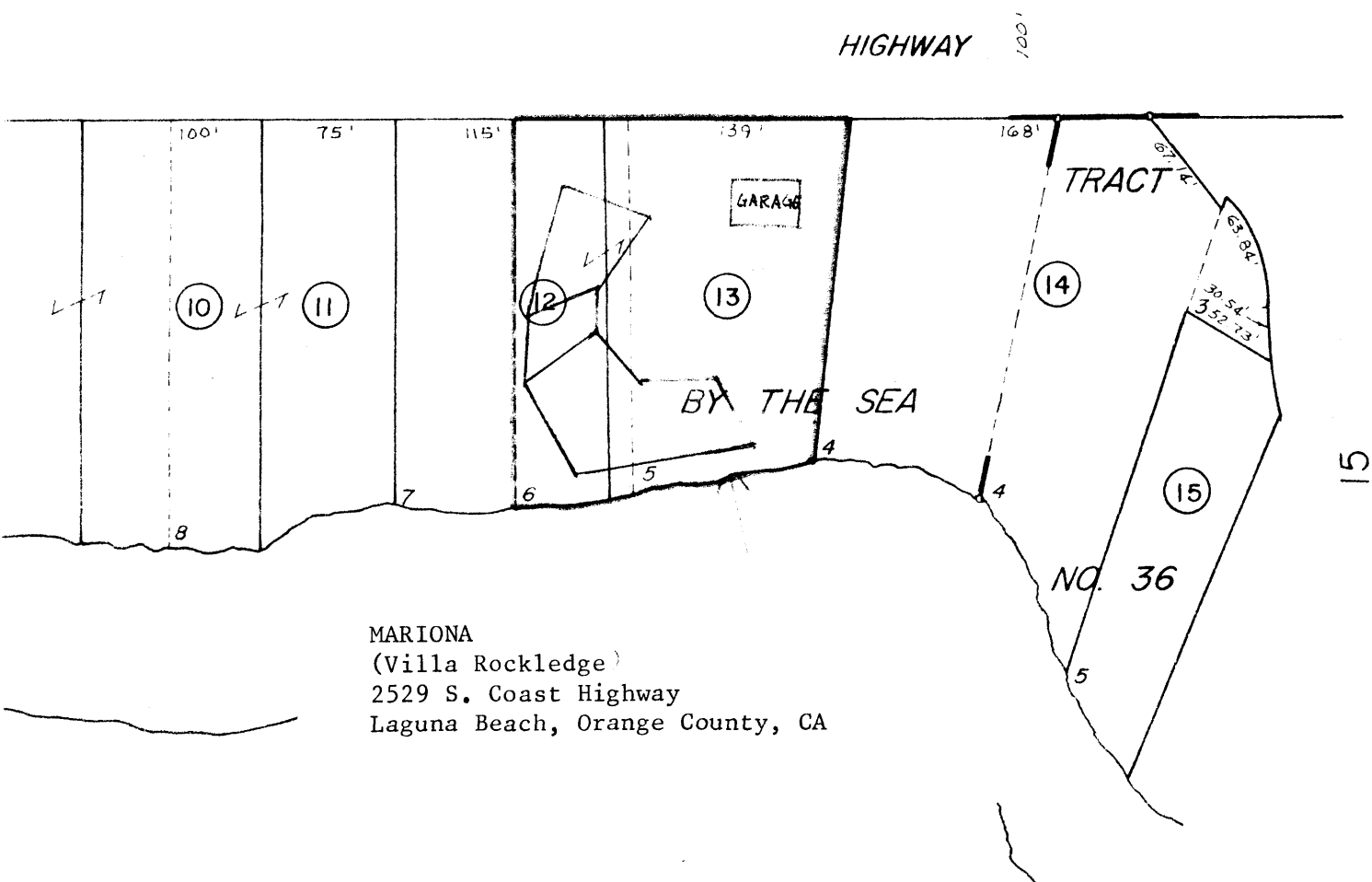
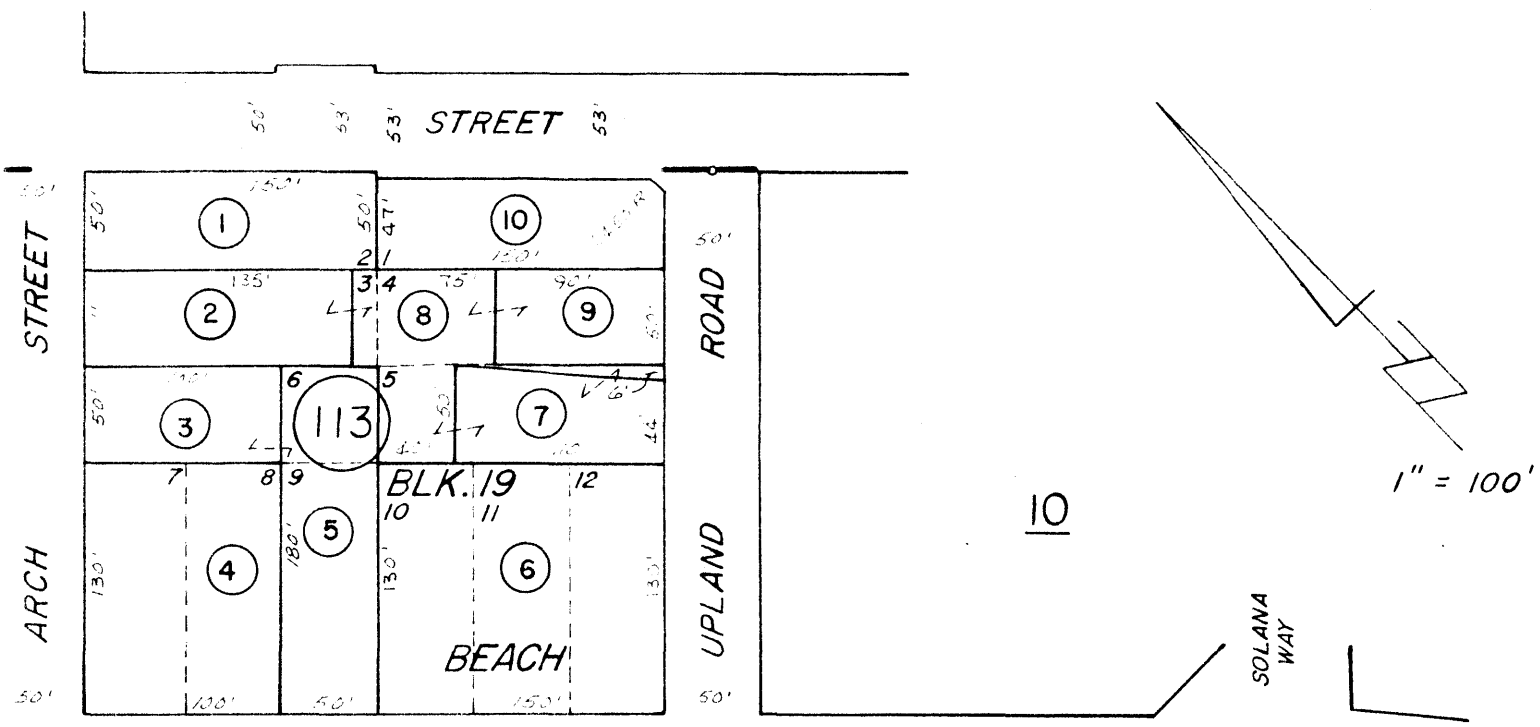
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance . ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The second home of Frank Miller is second best only to its progenitor, the Mission Inn in Riverside. Like the Mission Inn, Villa Rockledge is a rustic and ambling building full of architectural surprises and witicisms. Interior features such as open ceilings with log beams, use of the Indian raincross on the escutcheons of door latches and bas relief work inset in tiles personify Miller's continued use of imagination and an artistic incorporation of architectural elements borrowed in concept or physically imported from other countries. Several exterior elements are reminiscent of the Mission Inn including the balustrades of simulated logs, its many cloistered entries, its ambling walkways and lush landscaping.

The building today still retains its original integrity of location, design, workmanship and feeling as designed and executed by builder Frank Miller and architect Arthur Benton despite minor alterations such as the porch enclosures. The building remains as an important legacy of Frank Miller, a guiding spirit behind the Mission and Spanish Revival architectural movement in Southern California and of the work of regionally important architect Arthur Benton.



MARIONA
 (Villa Rockledge)
 2529 S. Coast Highway
 Laguna Beach, Orange County, CA

2 - 71
 M. 2 - 1
 M. 10 - 26

NOTE ASSESSOR'S BLOCK &
 PARCEL NUMBERS
 SHOWN IN CIRCLES

ASSESSOR'S MAP
 BOOK 656 PAGE 11
 COUNTY OF ORANGE

