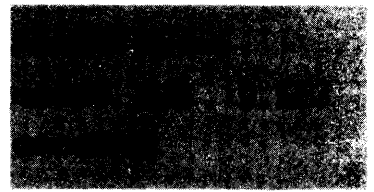


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

Final

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1. Name

AUG 18 1982

historic Yung See San Fong House *list 10/1/82* / OHP

and/or common Ruth Comfort Mitchell/Sanborn Young House

2. Location

street & number 16660 Cypress Way N/A not for publication

city, town Los Gatos N/A vicinity of congressional district 13

state California code 06 county Santa Clara code 085

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 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 checked="" 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 Mrs. Scotty A. McEwen

street & number 16660 Cypress Way

city, town Los Gatos N/A vicinity of state California 95030

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Assessment Services
Santa Clara County Assessor's Office, 5th floor

street & number County Administration Building
70 West Hedding Street

city, town San Jose state California 95110

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date July-August 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records National Park Service, Department of Interior

city, town Washington state D.C. 20240

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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"/> 1900-1954	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1917-1954

Bullder/Architect Nichols (Hearsay evidence)

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph) (Paragraph divided for ease of reading)

Yung See San Fong is the architectural reflection of a period in history following World War I, and of an exceptional couple who made an impact on the life and times of their peers. Its oriental style architecture and furnishings were the outgrowth of the literary success and early family influences of a remarkable woman, Ruth Comfort Mitchell.

At a time when career women were a rarity, Ms. Mitchell was a successful author/playwright, active in community affairs on the local level, and political affairs on the state and federal levels. As a member of the literati, she entertained many famous artists, authors and politicians during her 37 year residence at Yung See San Fong; among them President Herbert Hoover, California Governor William Stephens, Senator James Phelan, and authors Robert Service and Kathleen Norris.

Her husband, Senator Sanborn Young, a former member of the Chicago Board of Trade in his youth, retired to California and served in the State Senate from 1925 to 1938. He was responsible for pioneer legislative controls of alcohol and narcotics, and for early animal protection laws.

The replication of an oriental style residence in its Santa Clara valley hillside setting is unique. It was the earliest one known to have been built in the Los Gatos area; it is also the only known residence in northern California whose architectural style was the direct result of its owner's successful play (The Sweetmeat Game, 1916).

Portions of the supplemental narrative documentation were prepared in 1979 by the Project Supervisor of the HABS team, with update, additions, and compilation for this application form by Consultant Mardi Gualtieri Bennett.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet for list of
 1) primary and unpublished sources;
 2) secondary and published sources.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 40,000 square feet (0.9 acre)

Quadrangle name Los Gatos

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	9	2	2	8	0	4	1	1	9	1	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing			

C

Zone		Easting				Northing			

D

Zone		Easting				Northing			

E

Zone		Easting				Northing			

F

Zone		Easting				Northing			

G

Zone		Easting				Northing			

H

Zone		Easting				Northing			

Verbal boundary description and justification Boundaries for the Yung See San Fong nomination are shown on the E.J.Honholt civil engineer's topographic rendering. They are delineated by the red line on portions of Parcel B beginning at the southwest apex proceeding along the west border northeasterly for 215', north border proceeding easterly 200', east border proceeding southerly 190', south border proceeding 185' to point of origin.

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

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mardi Gualtieri Bennett, Preservation Consultant

organization Marben Associates

date August 15, 1982

street & number 38 Alpine Avenue

telephone (408) 354-1973

city or town Los Gatos

state California 95030

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

K M Ellen

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/20/83

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I hereby certify that

[Signature]
 Keeper of the National Register

[Signature]
 9/16/83

Attest:

Chief of

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CONTINUATION SHEET Existing Survey ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

Title: Los Gatos Historical Landmark Inventory

Date: (pending) Fall 1982 Local

Depository for records: Town of Los Gatos Planning Department
110 E. Main Street - Los Gatos, California 95030

- - - - -

Title: Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory

Date: 1975, page 14; revision, 1978, page 27 County

Depository for records: (published inventory)
original: Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission
County Planning Department
70 West Hedding Street - San Jose, California 95110

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Merit and Interest.

The house, on 8 acres, was inspired by Chinese architecture; Yung See San Fong is an eclectic mixture of eastern decorative motifs and roofscape and western massing and plan lay-out. The house was a notable gathering place for local and international celebrities in the early twentieth century.

2. Condition of Fabric.

Excellent.

B. Detailed Description of Exterior.

1. Over-all dimensions: The first floor plan has variegated walls within and without a basic rectangle of 27' x 74'. There is a rectangular addition at the first floor (added at a skew angle to the rectangle described) that measures 16'-4" x 30'. The house has no bay system. At its highest point, the house has four floors, and at its lowest, two floors. The narrow, rectangular shape of the house parallels the contours of the steep grade.
2. Foundations: The foundations are concrete and brick, with wood posts anchored in concrete footings.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The walls exhibit a range of textures and colors including frame walls finished with stucco, board and batten siding, wood shake shingles on frame, and some raw wood columns.
4. Structural framing system, framing: The house is an example of light wood framing including wood studs, joists and rafters.
5. Porches, stoops and bulkheads: There is a rock bulkhead approximately four feet high adjacent to the front of the house (south elevation), dividing the entrance road level from the concrete and wood plank terrace at the first floor level of the

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5. Porches, stoops and bulkheads: (Continued)
house. There is a terrace at the north elevation, immediately adjacent to the living room that is made of wood tongue-and-groove planking 3-1/2" wide. Wood steps at the east end of this terrace lead down to the basement level and other wood decks below. The wood deck at the northeast elevation of the guest house addition is made of tongue-and-groove planking. The north terrace includes a wooden guard rail of Chinese design and five posts. There are glazed ceramic medallions of Chinese design at the center of each of the divisions of the balustrade. A simpler wooden balustrade is included on the wood terrace at the northeast elevation. Wooden platforms sit above the concrete at the main entrance door with a 3 foot Buddha statue, and "a god of rice and plenty" at the south elevation (referenced: Part I.D. - Historical Information). There are similar plank walls and stairs adjacent to the easternmost entrance on the south elevation.

6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys in the original house. One picturesque chimney vents the flue from the kitchen and is exaggerated in height. The chimney is stuccoed and is capped with a great shaked overhanging roof of Chinese design which has a ridge beam that continues out past the roof at both ends. The ridge beam is flared and assumes a decorative Chinese profile at its ends. The chimney that vents the living room fireplace is similarly exaggerated and picturesque and has details that are similar to the chimney just described. Both of these chimneys have been pierced with modern metal louvers. The fireplace chimney in the bedroom of the added guest wing is stuccoed and has a simple stuccoed cap.

7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doors at the south elevation include the utility room door, which is wooden and has one light over one panel, and the main entrance door which is four feet wide and is of solid wood. The front door is painted black. The easternmost door at that elevation is a wooden door with ten glass lights arranged in two rows. Both the utility room door and the easternmost entrance door have modern screen doors before them. All these doors have wood jambs, sills and thresholds and are surrounded by plain trim. On the north

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- a. Doorways and doors: (Continued)
elevation the door from the dining room to the terrace is a wood door with one light above one panel. A similar door leads from the living room to the terrace. At the basement level, there are three doors of this design exhibiting the same trim, sill and jamb details.
- b. Windows and shutters: The typical window at Yung See San Fong is a hinged casement window opening out. There is a Chinese design to the muntins, the window is divided into three equal parts vertically with a square pane of glass interrupting that pattern at opposite ends of the easement. This typical window may occur singly or in pairs or in assemblages of four panels. The windows have brass hinges and brass latches halfway up their height. Windows at the living room, library and at one kitchen location (replacing an original Chinese design window) are fixed glass panes in wood frames. The four fixed glass panels of the living room are approximately 4'-3" wide and 6'-3" high, and replace smaller windows of Chinese design that were once in that wall. The dining room windows are glass in wood frames, some are hinged and some fixed. The windows of the sleeping porch are glass in wood frames that operate either on tracks (the frames slide in the tracks) or as awning windows.
8. Roof Shape and Covering: The roofs at Yung See San Fong are designed to resemble those of a Chinese temple. The 1-story portion of the house has a hip roof with gable ends perpendicular to the ridge line. The ridge beam extends past the end of the gable and becomes flared and assumes a Chinese decorative profile at its ends. In the eaves, the rafter ends are exposed and have an extension with a curved bottom that flips the eave upward from the house, producing the familiar Chinese roof profile. The sheathing above the rafters is visible from below. These roofs are covered with wood shakes. The 3-story portion of the house has roofs that affect pagoda roof massing. The roof of the stair landing has an enormous flared eave made of flush siding. the board that masks the joists at the top of the eave is curved; the high points of the eave are at its ends. A delicate Chinese frieze occurs at the base of the eave. The roof that caps the second story was at one time a hip roof with gable ends perpendicular to the ridge line and has the

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8. Roof Shape and Covering: (Continued)
decorative ridge beam. All these roofs, with the exception of the roof of the stair landing, are covered with wood shakes. The roofs of the small porches and of the utility room addition are built-up roofs.

C. Detailed Description of the Interior:

1. Floor Plan.

a. Main floor: Upon entering the house through the front door, one is in the living room. Straight ahead, through a large plate glass window in the far wall of the living room, is a magnificent view of the Santa Clara Valley. This large picture window is framed architecturally with two columns.

In the near wall at the entrance, there is an appropriately scaled fireplace (7' x 7'), faced with large gray-green tiles; the fireplace situated on two plinthes.

The oriental mantel and fireplace wall are described in detail later under Item 6: Special Decorative Features.

On the west wall of the living room, there is a built-in rose wood cabinet (6' x 7') to the left of the opening at the center of the wall which is flanked by two columns. Once through this opening, embellished by overhead hand carved panel, a double set of glass doors to the right lead to the dining room. This room, once a screened porch, was later enclosed with oriental style windows on the north and west.

A door to the south leads to the kitchen. Through the years, modernization has added a skylight and oak cabinets. In the west wall of the kitchen is the door to the utility room. this small room, a later addition, has an outside entrance as well as stairs to the basement level.

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To the right of the entry door is a set of steps that lead to the second floor, and also, a doorway flanked by two columns which is an entrance leading to a library. At the termination of this corridor, the corridor widens. Off of it to the right, is a door to the outside. To the left is a door to the sewing room. Opening the transomed bathroom door in the near wall reveals a large bathroom with its original tiled walls and floor, deep tiled-tub with primitive shower head extended from the 10 foot ceiling.

At the far end of this widened corridor a large opening is flanked by two decorative niches. Through this opening the corridor continues to the master bedroom suite at an angle askew to the main block of the house. When entering this room, there is a large fireplace, faced with green tile, on the right-hand wall; a door to an outside deck in the left-hand wall (the deck wraps around the periphery and connects with the ground on the front side of the house); a door to the bathroom reveals original floor tile and sink; and there is a large closet near the bedroom entrance. The original overhead chandelier has been retained.

- b. Upper floors: From the stairs near the main entrance door, one ascends to the second floor. Arriving on the last tread, and straight ahead are two doors, both of which lead to bedrooms that are the same size. To the right is a door to a bathroom and to the left a door which leads to the dog-leg stairs which end at the top floor^{room} with its fine views of the Santa Clara Valley.
- c. Basement: There is a basement apartment (9' wide, 6-1/2' high) beneath the original part of the house and another guest room under the master bedroom. The full basement also houses two furnaces, a non-functioning water tank, and storage space.

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2. Stairways: There is a dog-leg stairway from the first floor to the second. The first length of the dog-leg is ten risers, and the second length is nine risers. The treads are nearly a foot wide. The decorative column at the base of the stair takes the place of a newel post, and the post has natural termite paths incised in it as decoration. A decorative Chinese screen flanks one side of the stair featuring raised Chinese characters and carving of geometric design and flora. The landing of the stair includes a bench that extends the full length of the landing. Above the bench there are three windows with muntins arranged in a Chinese design. The posts of the stair are chamfered and the balustrade has a pattern of wood, horizontal and vertical members arranged in a Chinese pattern. The stair from the utility room to the basement level has 12 risers and has simple wood nosing for treads as well as wooden risers. The stair from the second to the third floor was added when the third floor was added, and is not decorated as luxuriously as the stair below it. There is a dog-leg arrangement for this stair, the first length of the dog-leg has three risers, the second has twelve risers. The balustrade at the third floor level has a chamfered newel post and a decorative Chinese screen of a pattern of wood horizontals and vertical members. There are two external wooden stairs.
3. Flooring: The living room floors are wooden, all floors are carpeted wall-to-wall, so the size of the planking is indeterminate. The kitchen floor is linoleum. Both main floor baths have original tile floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The kitchen walls are papered, the dining room walls have a decorative wainscot rising two-thirds up the sides of the wall. The living room has wall paper rising two-thirds the way up the wall terminating at a decorative band. Above the band, which continues all the way around the room, is a plaster wall. The ceiling is plastered. Main floor bath walls have tile up to 4' level.

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5. Doorways and doors: Decorative columns, that have the natural design of former termite destruction, frame the major openings in the living room. The columns of the east and west portals do not support an entablature, unlike the columns on the north and south walls of the living room. The frames around both doors and windows are delicately carved with an interlocking Chinese geometric pattern. The interior doors are wood and have two panels -- a small panel over a large one.
6. Special Decorative Features: Throughout the house Chinese motifs were used in both design and furnishings.
 - a. Trim and cabinet work: The hearth area is a very complex and asymmetrical arrangement. The fireplace itself is tiled with 6" x 6" gray-green tiles. The mantel includes a shelf with decorative Chinese molding which is held up by brackets. Beneath the cornice of the mantel are three inset panels, the center one rectangular and the end insets are square. These insets contain delicate carvings of birds in branches, baskets, vases and geometric Chinese design. The smallest panels depict flowers. Above the mantel is a large multi-colored carved screen of abstracted clouds, branches and geometry inset with Chinese characters. The log and wood cabinet next to the fireplace sits on two plinths, as does the fireplace itself, the first of which is wooden and is inlaid with wood in geometric basket-weave patterns, the second plinth is tiled with the same green tile that is on the face of the fireplace. The tiled plinth has a wooden frame around its rise. The fireplace sits asymetrically on the plinths. A Chinese palace lantern is hanging in the space between the left edge of the fireplace and a decorative column.

At the east and west portals of the living room, there are screens above the entrance, forming an arch. These screens include flora and birds nesting and singing in branches. There are decorative plaques on the trim of the entrance door with Chinese characters on them. The plaques are made of split bamboo and the Chinese writing on the bamboo "(entreats)...the guest who is about to enter to bring with him the purity of the moonlight and the warmth of the sun and the chorus of nature's

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beauty." Likewise, between each of the windows of the stair landing there are plaques with the Chinese characters which bid a welcome to guests. The stair screen near the entrance door has decorative Chinese molding and two long rectangular plaques with fourteen circular insets that include Chinese characters which name the celestial gods and goddesses who preside over the household. Most attention is given the living room in terms of decorative motifs.

The previously mentioned living-room fireplace encased in wood and carving from the Orient was said to "have been specially carved by hand in China to the order of the Youngs from merchants in Chinatown." (McDaniel, op. cit, unnumbered). Hand-carved wooden panels with Chinese characters are above the doors.

- b. Lighting: The lighting in the living room was "from concealed overhead lights in inverted coolie hats, on which are sketched the characters in Chinese of "Yung See San Fong". (Smith, Sunset, op. cit., p. 50). The coolie hats have been removed and recessed lighting is used now.
7. Notable Original Furnishings: The rooms were furnished with Chinoiserie style hand carved teakwood tables and chairs, vintage prints, embroideries and objects d'art. The dining room, which was screened in in the summer, and had glass windows in the winter, had woven sea grass seat furniture, which was very stylish at the time. Rose-medallion china and pottery were imported from China. The sterling silver flatware was monogrammed with the Chinese figures for Young. The main color accent was green, a special color in Chinese folklore.

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D. Site:

1. Outbuildings.

Adjacent to the house on the west is the garage (20' x 30') with an apartment above. It displays the same Chinese inspiration as the main house with pagoda roof profile and flared, skirted corners.

Directly across from the main entrance to the house, excavated into the hillside, was a cave which had two rooms and was used for keeping perishables. The brightly painted legend in Chinese characters over the cave entrance states, "Here we keep the milk".

In the mid-1960's, the Youngs converted the cave to a bomb shelter with air piping, bunk beds and provisions for survival. As it was never used for this purpose it became non-functional as a bomb shelter.

During subdivision of the property, a new road above the cave resulted in its collapse. In 1979 Mrs. McEwen re-exacavated a small portion of the cave for storage purposes. The colorful entrance remains intact.

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2. Landscaping.

Rock terraces and bulkheads are employed around the house to create usable flat surfaces of the mountainside. There are three groupings of very old trees around the house. Trees indigenous to the property include Oak, Redwood, Pine, Buckeye and Bay; indigenous shrubs, madrone, toyon and scotch broom; wildflowers, the scarlet pimpernell, ithuriel's spear, sticky monkey flower, baby blue eyes, Chinese pagoda, sweet pea and buttercup.

Chinese traditions were faithfully adhered to as exemplified by the winding road which was supposed to deter the devil from finding the house. A statue of the Chinese God of Rice and Plenty still greets visitors at the main entrance.

The three foot sitting Buddha was sculpted by Robert Treat Paine (died January 1946), the sculptor of the Cats, the two 8 foot concrete mountain lions done in 1920 for Col. and Mrs. Erskine Scott Woods on Highway 17 at the south entrance to Los Gatos.

The Buddha was created for a Chinese Pageant written by Mrs. Young. "Chinese officials from San Francisco's famed Chinatown were pageant day guests of the Youngs at their home of Chinese design and decor...Later the pageant committee gifted the statue to the Youngs and it still stands at his home." (Hash Brown column, undated, San Jose Mercury clipping believed to be from the San Jose Mercury circa 1954-1964.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Construction - 1916-1917.

In October, 1916, Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young was deeded the tract of land from her mother. (See Original and subsequent owner category below.) At about the same time the Youngs built a water tank and expanded their water supply by laying more pipe from their spring. This is substantiated in a deed, (Miscellaneous), Book 41, page 139, of October 1916 (but not recorded until September 15, 1920), of Mutual Water Agreement with their neighbors, Arthur Cox, et ux. Grantor: B.C.M. Young. Grantee: Arthur Cox, et ux. "of Mutual agreement to reserve and preserve and continue rights to water flowing from said spring." During this time the Youngs stayed at the Lyndon Hotel in Los Gatos as reported in the Los Gatos Mail News of December 7, 1916. The date of the house is also substantiated by an interview with Ruth Comfort Mitchell in a local newspaper (San Jose Mercury Herald, January 2, 1920), in which she states that the first Christmas spent in the Yung See San Fong was 1917. (Please note that there was a thorough search of Miscellaneous, deed and general indexes of this time, and no contracts, mortgages, etc., could be located.)

2. Architect, Contractor, Builder:

Unknown - Hearsay Evidence - Nichols, Builder-Contractor from Oakland.

In support of this theory, Mrs. Board, caretaker and companion for nearly thirty years to the Youngs, said that the builder was a man named Nichols, from Oakland. Mr. and Mrs. Young had seen several houses that he had built in the Oakland-Piedmont area and asked him to be their contractor. Mrs. Board could also substantiate that Mr. Nichols visited Yung See San Fong. Shortly after the Lindberg kidnapping in 1932, Mrs. Board was alone in the house, when the doorbell rang and she was fearful of letting anyone in. She partially opened the door and the caller said that he had come all the way from Oakland to see the house that he had built. He commented that a third story had been added to the main portion of the house. To allay her fears, he said that the columns in the

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living room with the termite tracks design were not ordered that way. When these columns had arrived from the supplier he was very upset, but then realized they fit in harmoniously with the Oriental theme of the house. This same information about Nichols was recorded in McDaniels' manuscript; the information was attributed to Sanborn Young. The Daily Pacific Builder from 1914-1916 listed several Nichols. However, the one that appears the most is Leo L. Nichols. The following listings are taken from the Daily Pacific Builder:

March 11, 1914

L.L. Nichols, owner and contractor. Price: \$3,500.
E. Walker Ave. 50 N. Davidson Way, Oakland
2-story, 7 room dwelling.
Architect: None.
L.L. Nichols is listed on MacDonough Street, Oakland, California.

June 15, 1914

North Lake Park Avenue, 350 East Lake Shore Avenue, Oakland, no price given. 2-Story, 8-Room Dwelling.
Owner: D.H. Crockerton, 2014 Filbert, Oakland, California.
Architect: None.
Contractor, Leo L. Nichols, First Trust Building, Oakland, California.

September 1, 1915

North 40th - 100 E. Broadway, Oakland - Total Cost: \$2,450.
2-Story Frame Dwelling.
Owner: Mrs. M.E. Streiff, 4000 Broadway.
Contractor: Leo L. Nichols, 1764 Broadway.

April 13, 1915

No. 1180 Eighth, Oakland. Alterations. Cost: \$1,415.
Owner: F.E. Brigham.
Contractor: Leo L. Nichols, 1764 Broadway.

January 11, 1916

200 North Hopkins. Total Cost: \$1,800.
Owner: Estelle Nichols. 1-Story, 5 Rooms.
Contractor: Leo L. Nichols.

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February 24, 1916

W. Magee Avenue. 235 No. Hopkins, Oakland. Total Cost: \$1,900.
1-Story, 5 Room Dwelling.
Owner: Estelle Nichols.
Architect: None.
Contractor: Leo L. Nichols.

(Note: This researcher (Sibyl Groff) started with 1914, as previous evidence indicated that the house in Los Gatos could have been built that early. However, subsequent new information definitely pinpoints the date as 1916-1917.)

In the Oakland Directory, the following listings were provided by the Oakland Public Library.

1915 Leo L. Nichols, Builder, Office, 1764 Broadway.
Residence, 2342 14th Avenue, Oakland, California.
1916 Leo L. Nichols, Builder, Office, 1764 Broadway.
Residence, 2342 14th Avenue, Oakland, California.
1917 Leo L. Nichols, Builder, Office, 1764 Broadway.
Residence, 2342 14th Avenue, Oakland, California.
1918 No Leo L. Nichols.
1921 Leo L. Nichols, Carpenter. (No business address.)
Residence 992 East 24th Street.
1928 Leo L. Nichols, (Estelle) Builder.
2044 High Street

Discussions with Sally Woodbridge and John Beach, architectural historians familiar with the Oakland area did not shed any light on Nichols, but it is hoped that additional research will.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners.

Book of Deeds 448, page 440, October 19, 1916.

Grantor: Florence S. Mitchell.

Grantee: Ruth C.M. Young.

"A parcel of land as shown on the map of Davis & Cowell, Book B, page 28, Plot 7, containing 4.966 acres."

(Note: Florence Mitchell, Ruth's mother, had inherited said property from Ruth's father, John Mitchell, who had purchased this parcel on April 15, 1887.) Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young also bought several other adjacent parcels.

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Book 452 (of deeds), page 314, March 8, 1917.

Grantor: Peter Danielson, et ux.

Grantee: Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young.

"a parcel of land containing 1.053 acres"

Book of Deeds 476, page 247. July 30, 1918.

Grantor: Peter Danielsen.

Grantee: Ruth C.M. Young.

(A parcel of land containing 1.6 acres.)

Upon her demise in February 1954, the will stipulated that her husband, Sanborn Young could reside in the house until his death. He died February 1964. The bulk of her estate was inherited by four relatives.

Book 7002, page 306, June 16, 1965.

Grantors: Chapin Mitchell, Merlyn Jane Mitchell Talbot, Barbara B. Mitchell and Mowatt Mitchell.

Grantee: Cloyde A. and Alice B. Taughinbaugh.

He purchased six parcels of land as above and additional parcels containing 7.644 acres in all. See attached for detailed description. Taughinbaugh subsequently subdivided the Young property.

Book 0091 Official Records, page 92. October 20, 1972.

Grantor: Cloyde A. Taughinbaugh.

Grantee: Neil S. and Joyce R. Livingston.

"All of parcel 2, as shown on that certain map, Parcel Map, Book 309, page 56 of October 4, 1972." Containing 4.641 acres.

Book 420, page 250. May 21, 1975.

Grantor: Neil S. and Joyce R. Livingston.

Grantee: Scotty McEwen.

4. Builder, Contractor.

McDaniel's notes stated that since unions were creating trouble at the time, non-union labor was used in building the house. He also noted that the carved wood decoration in the interior was supplied by craftsmen from China Town in San Francisco, or directly from China.

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5. Notes on original plan and construction: No existing plans.
6. Notes on known alterations and additions: The bedroom wing on the right of the main section of the house was added in 1922 when Sanborn Young's mother came to live with them. At the same time the main section of the house received another story (making four on the down side of the hill), to incorporate a sun room. A more accentuated pagoda roof capped this new room over the main section.

At some time during the Young's tenure (date unknown), the screened porch which had served as a dining area, was permanently enclosed with the addition of windows on the north and west walls. Another small porch west of the kitchen was enclosed to create a utility room.

In 1965 the Taughinbaughs added the large picture windows in the living room.

The rest of the changes in the house have been minor.

All alterations and additions have retained the integrity of fabric and design of the original structure.

Yung See San Fong was selected as a project for the HABS team, under the supervision of Sibyl McCormack Groff, in the summer of 1979. Through the sponsorship of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, six scale drawings were made (reduced copies accompany this nomination form). The project number assigned to Yung See San Fong is HABS 2070.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated With The Building:

Research of the lives and lifestyle of the Youngs, who built "Yung See San Fong", provides an interesting insight into the late 19th/early 20th century in Northern California.

Ruth Comfort Mitchell was born in San Francisco in 1882. As early as 1886, Ruth spent summers in Los Gatos where her parents and grand-parents had summer homes. At fourteen her first poem was published in the Los Gatos Mail newspaper, thus launching the literary career which continued throughout her lifetime. Also, about this time

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she became a convert to Christian Science. A subject of asthma attacks, she was prevented from attending public schools and had received her formal education through private tutors. She credited Christian Science healing with restoring her health.

In 1914 literary friends in San Francisco introduced Ruth Comfort Mitchell to Sanborn Young. A native of Chicago, and graduate of Northwestern University, Young had recently sold his grain business and was traveling. The couple were married in October 1914 in the Grand Canyon and moved to New York, where Ruth continued her literary pursuits and Sanborn studied photography.

In 1916 her play "The Sweetmeat Game" opened at the Place Theatre on Broadway starring Olive Wyndham. The successful play had a San Francisco Chinatown locale. It toured the Orpheum circuit and throughout the United States for two years. It is not surprising that Ruth Comfort Mitchell chose a Chinese theme for her play. She was raised in San Francisco, her family had a Chinese cook during her youth, and several rooms of their home were decorated in the oriental style. (These early influences may also have a bearing on her lifelong preference for the color green, a color of special merit in Chinese folklore. Ms. Mitchell's clothes, jewelry, stationery, ink and bookbindings all were green. In her novel "The White Stone" one of her characters always wears green and explains the reasons for doing so.)

Ruth Comfort Mitchell had spent happy childhood holidays visiting grandparents who lived fifty miles south of San Francisco in Los Gatos. She had always loved the small town and in 1916, she and her husband started construction of their home on Los Gatos hillside property deeded Ms. Mitchell by her mother. They christened it "Yung See San Fong" (translated "Heart of the Hills"). Her latest play, "The Sweetmeat Game" "...gave her the idea of mingling the best of oriental tastes and usages with her conception of beauty and comfort in the building and furnishing of her home." (Ona E. Smith Yung See San Fong Sunset Magazine, December 1918, p. 49.) With characteristic humor, Ms. Mitchell stated that, "...instead of a bungalow, she wanted a bungahigh" (David McDaniel Manuscript Collection on Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young, Part 2, Chapter 3, unnumbered).

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Through the years, Yung See San Fong became a self-sustaining household. Fruit, vegetables and poultry were raised. In an interview, Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young stated "we raise everything we eat but the staple groceries and the filet mignon." (McDaniel papers) San Francisco Evening World, February 24, 1922. A Chinese man, Gim, directed the household until the late 1920's. His activities included cooking the meals, planting the gardens, milking the cows, and assisting with the interior decoration.

Leading an idyllic life when she was not writing or lecturing, Mrs. Young rode the numerous trails in the area with her husband. The couple belonged to a group that vacationed at Big Sur, south of Carmel, and rode their horses from Los Gatos to get there. The Youngs were fond of dogs and through the years had Chesapeake Bays, Pointers and Beagles. The dogs had their own swimming pool. For a short time a pet deer was part of the menagerie.

Ruth Comfort Mitchell wrote novels, poems, short stories and plays. Her publishers included Appleton, McCall's, Century Company, Cromwell and Bobbs Merrill. As a frequent contributor to the Ladies Home Journal, Ms. Mitchell became a close friend of its editors who visited her at Yung See San Fong.

She was listed in "Who's Who in the West" (1954, page 475) and "Who Was Who in America" (Vol. III, 1951-60, page 606), and was honored by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets who sponsored an annual poetry contest in her memory.

In March, 1921, Senator and Mrs. Young donated the lot adjoining the Town Hall to the town (History of Los Gatos, G. Bruntz, page 57). Both Senator and Mrs. Young felt a strong bond with the town and its people and Mrs. Young was very involved with the early day Los Gatos Pageant. Other interests were evidenced by her memberships in the Los Gatos Christian Science Church, Colonial Dames, Daughters of the American Revolution, PEO Sisterhood, Soroptimists, Los Gatos History Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, Pen Women, California Federation of Republican Women.

Both the Youngs were involved in Republican politics. Mrs. Young served as Republican National Committeewoman from California for eight years and as National and State President of Pro-America, an organization of Republican women founded in 1933.

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Sanborn Young

Following his marriage to Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Sanborn Young devoted his energies to politics, photography, investments and raising racing dogs and beagles. In 1925 Young was elected a California State Senator and continued to serve until 1938. A quiet, retiring man, it is said that he won the seat because of his wife's campaigning. While in the Senate his primary interests were the conservation of wild animals and the control of narcotics. In 1929, his bill to abolish saw tooth traps, except for bears, was enacted.

In the State Senate he was Chairman of the Narcotics Committee and introduced legislation to control narcotics. Because of his expertise, President Herbert Hoover appointed Young as one of the United States delegates to the International Conference for the Limitation of the Manufacture of Drugs in 1931. It was held in Geneva, Switzerland and attended by delegates from fifty-five nations. The resulting treaty was partially drafted by Young.

These political ties resulted in the Youngs becoming friends of the Herbert Hoovers, who resided in nearby Palo Alto. Several letters from Hoover to the Youngs indicate that theirs was a close relationship.

In his retirement years, Mr. Young avidly watched his investments on the stock market. He also owned cattle and feed acreage in Riverdale, approximately forty miles southwest of Fresno, where oil was discovered about 1945.

Sanborn Young said, "My only claim to fame is that I married Ruth Comfort Mitchell, I became a California State Senator and wrote the narcotics bill, and I raised the champion beagle." (McDaniel papers, op.cit.)

Other interests were evidenced by his memberships in the Sons of the American Revolution, Boy Scouts Memorial Foundation, the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, and his founding membership of La Rinconada Golf Club in Los Gatos.

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Famous Visitors to Yung See San Fong:

A member of the 'literati' herself, Ms. Mitchell welcomed other famous authors, poets and playwrights to their home. Pages duplicated from the Guest Book record the following notables:

August 1920 --- Frank Spearman
April 1921 --- Bessie Beatty
April 1922 --- Robert Service
July 1926 --- Edgar Lee Masters
June 1924; August 1929 - Charles and Kathleen Norris
No dates given: Charles Cox; Gertrude Atherton.

Although the Youngs preferred entertaining on a small scale, their social life was duly reported in the local press, i.e., the Los Gatos Mail News, April 6, 1922:

"Robert W. Service, noted writer of Alaskan stories and poetry, visited Yung See San Fong."

The McDaniel papers note an invitation from the noted California writer, Gertrude Atherton, to a party in honor of Gertrude Stein. P. Butler, Valley of Santa Clara Manuscript Collection, Stanford University includes a xerox copy from an unidentified source which states: (At the annual Los Gatos Pageant in 1920): "Mrs. Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young and Mrs. Fremont Older (wife of famous San Francisco editor, living in Cupertino at Woodhills (HABS 1977 Santa Clara County)) were among the notables present."

Other guests whose names appeared on the pages of the Guest Book:

July 1919 -- Actress Joan Bennett
June 1920 -- Senator James D. Phelan and Governor William D. Stephens of California; Witter Byer of China; Rachel Barrett, London
June 1922 -- Mayor F. Atkinson of Watsonville (who had received the "Message from Garcia")

(McDaniel Papers, op.cit.).

In February 1954, Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young was found dead in the bathtub. Ten years later at the age of 90, Sanborn Young passed away. Relatives of Mrs. Young had a house sale and nothing remains of the original furnishings or possessions.

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Section 8: Significance: Literature, Politics, Theater)

Section 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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- 7.Arch. Santa Clara County Recorders Office: Deeds, General Records, Miscellaneous Record, Maps, Tax Assessments, County Administration Building, 70 West Hedding, San Jose, California.
- 7.Arch. Santa Clara County Office of County Clerk, Probates, 191 North First Street, San Jose, California.
- 7.Arch. McDaniel, David, Manuscript Collection on Ruth Comfort Mitchell Young, San Jose Public Library, 180 West San Carlos, San Jose, California.
- 7.Arch. Santa Clara County Residential Unit Property Record, 1973, Property Appraisal Data, Original: Mrs. Scotty McEwen, 16660 Cypress Way, Los Gatos, California.
- 8.Thtr. Telegram acceptance, Play Program, "The Sweetmeat Game", Ruth Comfort Mitchell, New York, 1916. Playbill Photo, "The Way To The Heart", Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Oakland Orpheum.
- 8.Lit. Letter acceptance, "Six Wishes", Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Brandt and Brandt, New York, 1944.
- 8.Pol. Personal Letter, Herbert Hoover, (former President) at Stanford University, July 11, 1944.
- 8.Lit. Press Release (?), Robert Frost Chapter, California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Poetry Contest in Memory of Ruth Comfort Mitchell.
- 7. & 8. Personal Knowledge Interviews (unsubstantiated)

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Section 2. Secondary and published sources:

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- 8.Lit. Burton, Egbert Stevenson - Home Book of Verse, Henry Holt &
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- 8.Lit. Hinkel, Edgar, McCann, Wm. - Criticism of California
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- 8.Lit. American Women, Vol. 3
Richard Blank Publishing Co., Los Angeles,
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- 8.Lit. Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Poets, Avon House,
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- 8.Lit. Biographics of California Authors and Indexes of California
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- 8.Lit. Bibliography of California Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Vol. 1,
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- 8.Lit. Nurney, G.L., foreward - Authors of Santa Clara County,
compiled by San Jose Public Library staff, San Jose, mid-50s.
- 8.Lit. Who's Who in the West, p. 475, Marquis, Chicago, 1954.
- 8.Lit. Who Was Who in America, Vol. 3, p. 606, 1951-60.
- 8.Lit. Who's Who in America, Vol. 21, 1940-41.

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7.Arch. Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory,
Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission, 1975,
p. 14, 1978, (revision) p.27, San Jose, California.

7.Arch. Daily Pacific Builder, Oakland and San Francisco,
(San Francisco Public Library) 1914-16.

MAGAZINE

8.Lit. Mitchell, Ruth Comfort - "Reliving California's Past,"
p.10-12, Independent Woman, Vol. 20, January, 1941.
Published by National Federation of Business and Professional
Women's Clubs, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland.

8.Pol. "California's Who's Who," p. 179
Independent Woman, Vol. 20, June, 1941
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8.Lit. Haverland, Stella - "Ruth Comfort Mitchell," p. 122-126.
Pacific Bindery Talk, Vol. 12, March, 1940.

7.Arch. Smith, Ona Ellis - "Yung See San Fong," p. 49-50.
Sunset Magazine, Central Edition, December, 1918

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8.Lit. Los Gatos Weekly Mail, June 10, July 22 & September 9, 1897.

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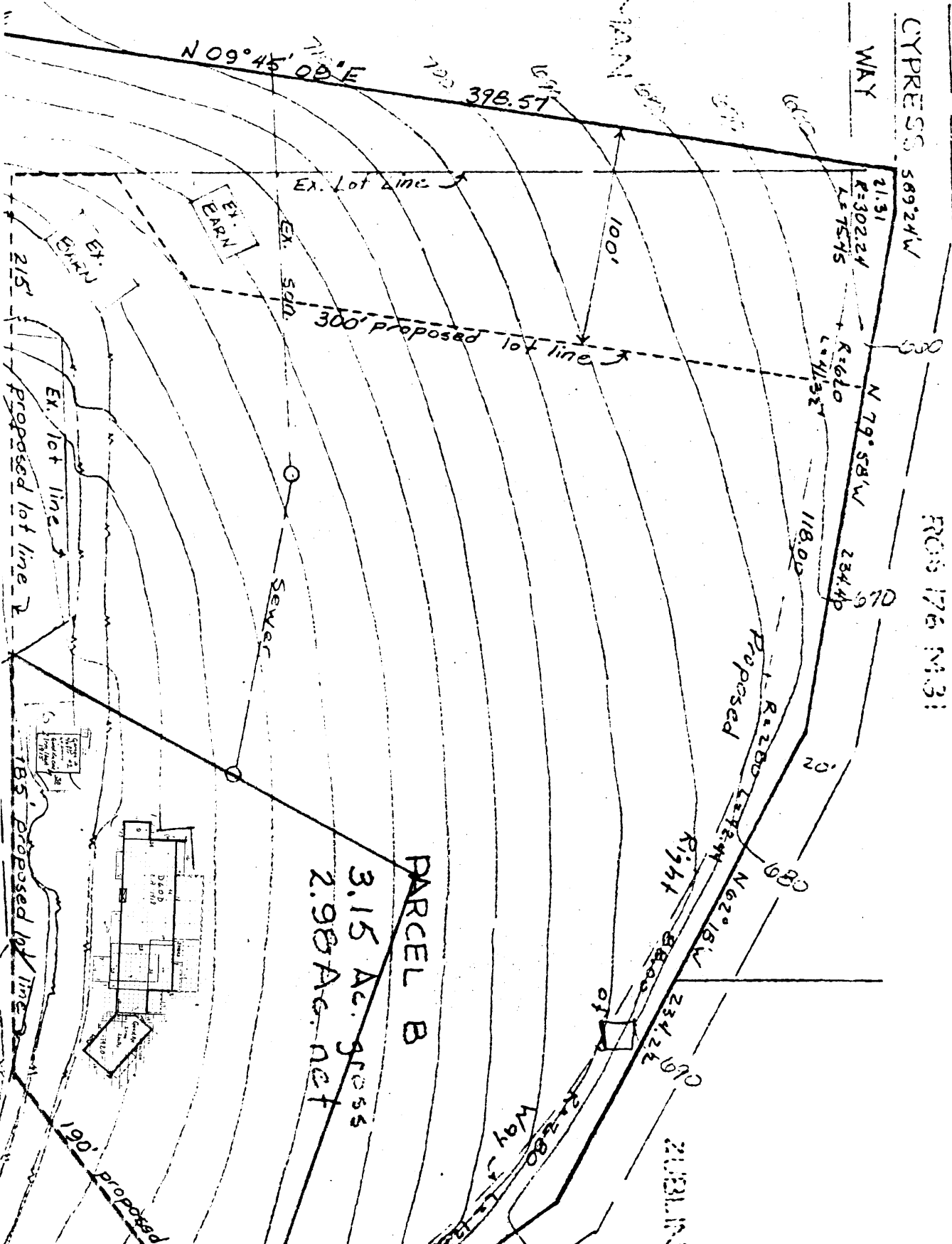
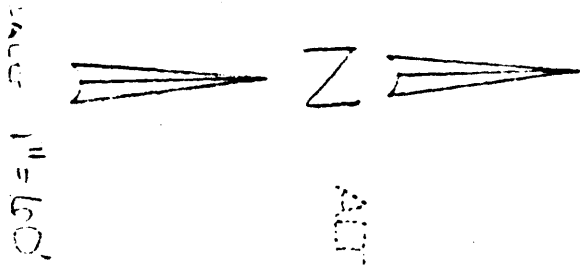
7.Arch. Hirsheimer, Jim - California Today - "The Orient Expression,"
p. 30-31, San Jose Mercury News, October 8, 1978.

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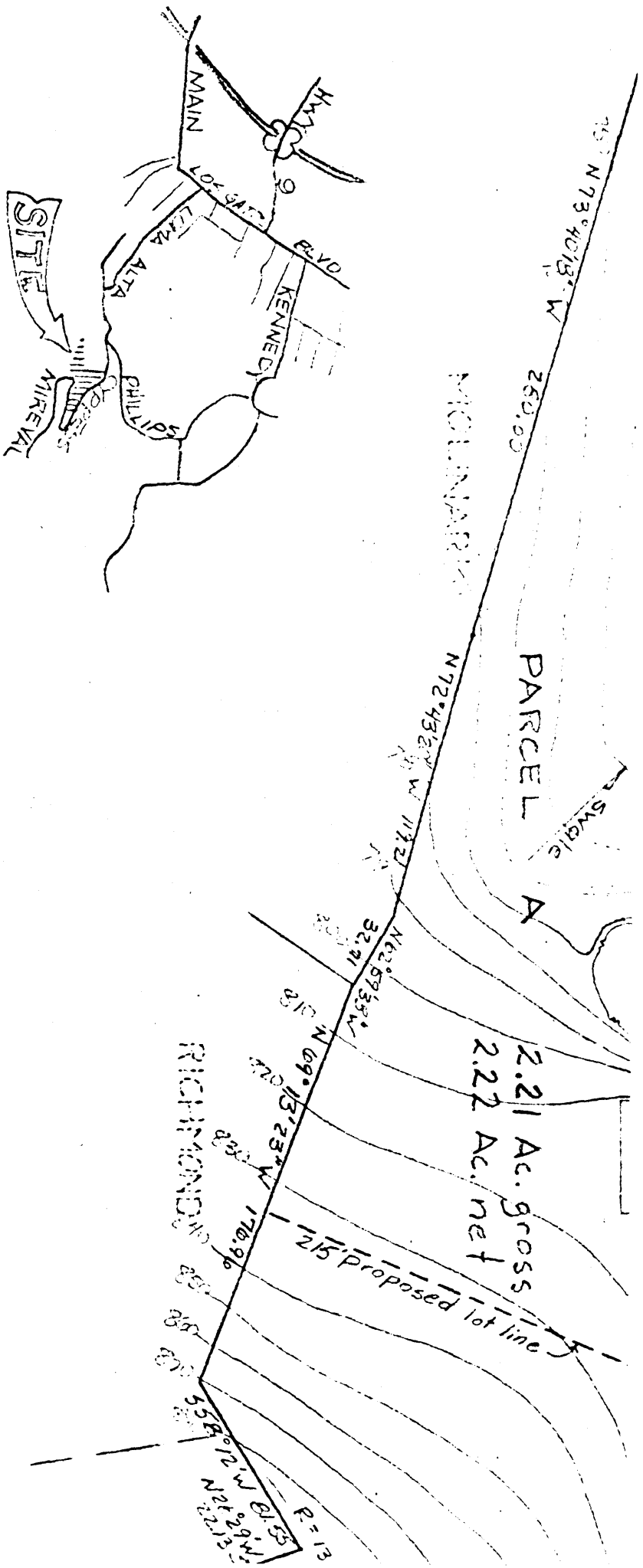
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PARCEL B
3.15 Ac. gross
2.98 Ac. net

YUNG SEE SAN FONG HOUSE
16660 Cypress Way
Los Gatos, Santa Clara County,



TAUGHINBAUGH ~ MCEWEN
 PRELIMINARY
 3 LOT DIVISION

Drawn A. Huntzinger
Checked
Date October 12, 1979
Scale, 1" = 60'

BRADLEY J.
 CIVIL ENGI
 131 W. MAIN
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