

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 3 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) *71-785 Sahara Road*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Riverside*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

Date:

*c. Address *71-785 Sahara Road*

City *Rancho Mirage*

Zip *92270*

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number Block: Lot:

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

Attributed to Van Pelt and Lind, architects, this rectangular, one-story Ranch Modern house was built in 1937. The north-facing, 1,986 square foot residence has three bedrooms and 1.75 bathrooms and sits on .55 acres. The unusual roof configuration consists of a central side gable flanked perpendicular shed roofs. The house is of concrete block construction with board-and-batten and stucco sheathing. Windows are steel-framed, multi-pane fixed and casement with some non-original sliders. Square wood posts support the projecting roof that shelters a wide front porch and the main entrance. The front door is paneled wood. A squared bay with hipped metal hood is east of the center porch. A thick, tapered exterior chimney clad in stucco is located on the east elevation. The concrete driveway is bordered by long hedge. Lush vegetation of oleander, olive trees, mature palms, and a broad center lawn dominates the expansive front yard, obscuring the house from the street. With the exception of several window replacements and thicker roof shingles than in the historic photographs, the house appears original and in excellent condition.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) *HP2. Single-family Property*

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo: (view and date)
*Northeast elevation
August 2002*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: historic
1937/ Source: Pasadena Star News

*P7. Owner and Address:
*Robert L. Davis
71785 Sahara Road
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270*

*P8. Recorded by:
*P. Moruzzi, T. Grimes, L. Heumann
Leslie Heumann and Associates
600 N. Sierra Bonita Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036*

*P9. Date Recorded:
September 23, 2002

*P10. Survey Type:
Intensive Survey.

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")

None.

*Attachments: None Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (list)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 3

*NRHP Status Code 3S

*Resource Name or #: 71-785 Sahara Road

- B1. Historic Name: *Unknown*
B2. Common Name: *71-785 Sahara Road*
B3. Original Use: *Single-family Residence*
B4. Present Use: *Single-family Residence*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Ranch*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed in 1937.*

Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973. Januar 25, 1982. Remodel. Value: \$5,800.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a. Architect: *Van Pelt and Lind (attributed)*

b. Builder: *Louis M. Blankenhorn*

*B10. Significance: Theme *Agricultural and Early Residential Era*

Area *Rancho Mirage*

Period of Significance: *1924-1950*

Property Type: *Single-family Residence*

Applicable Criteria: *A*

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

This property is historically significant as one of the early model homes offered by developer-builder Louis Blankenhorn and company managing director, Laurence Macomber, in the newly subdivided Magnesia Falls area. Constructed in 1937, the house was prominently featured in an advertisement in the Pasadena Star-News on February 27th of that year. Boasting that the area offered "one hour more sunshine" than Palm Springs, the house was one of three built in what an accompanying article described as "Early American" in style. The article credited architects Van Pelt and Lind as the designers. Between 1935 and 1937, the Palm Springs office of the Pasadena-based architectural firm Van Pelt and Lind was staffed by local designers John Porter Clark and Albert Frey. Given that Frey returned to New York for almost two years starting in 1937, the Rancho Mirage residences can be most likely attributed to Clark.

(See Continuation Sheet 3 of 3.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

- Alan Hess and Andrew Danish, Palm Springs Weekend, Chronicle Books, 2001.*
Joseph Rosa, Albert Frey, Architect. New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1989. p. 36.
Pasadena Star News, February 27, 1937. p.10. Advertisement.
California Arts and Architecture, February 1937, advertisement.
1957 Palm Springs Directory.
Pasadena City Hall, Planning Department, Historical Resources Room. Van Pelt and Lind file.
City of Rancho Mirage Building Permits.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: *Peter Moruzzi, Teresa Grimes, Leslie Heumann*

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Sketch Map

*Date of Evaluation: *September 23, 2002*

***B10. Significance (continued):**

The Pasadena Star-News noted that this model was being offered "tastefully furnished." Hoping to entice people to consider Rancho Mirage as a second home community in the desert, the advertisements proclaimed that the development possessed the "finest water system in the valley". The houses ranged from four to six rooms and the minimum lot size was one-half acre. Magnesia Falls can be considered to be the earliest tract development in Rancho Mirage as these properties by developer-builder Louis Blankenhorn were built on speculation and not as custom homes. The Palm Springs Directory first lists this address in 1957, when F. H. and Diana Armstrong were the owners.

Garrett Van Pelt, Jr. FAIA and George Lind were partners in their Pasadena-based architectural firm from 1928 until 1941. During this period they designed numerous buildings in Los Angeles County, but also had a satellite office in Palm Springs managed by John Porter Clark. Clark had worked in Van Pelt and Lind's Pasadena office prior to settling in Palm Springs. Swiss architect and Le Corbusier disciple Albert Frey had met Clark while completing his first building in Palm Springs in 1934 and joined him in the Van Pelt and Lind office. According to author Joseph Rosa, "All the work that Clark and Frey did together, from 1935 to 1937, was under the firm name of Van Pelt and Lind Architects, since neither Clark nor Frey was licensed at the time."

The 71-785 Sahara Road house is mostly original and in good condition. It is the best remaining example of the Blankenhorn tract in Magnesia Falls and highly reflective of the type of ranch house purchased as a second home in Rancho Mirage prior to World War II. The property appears eligible for separate listing in the National Register of Historic Places (a "3S" National Register Status Code). In addition, the property would be eligible for separate listing or designation under an existing or proposed local ordinance.