

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) *Frank Morgan Residence*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Riverside*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

Date:

*c. Address *71-845 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.)

The Frank Morgan residence was built in 1939 facing northeast on a 1.1 acre lot. The rectangular, one-story building is constructed of concrete block and finished with medium-smooth stucco that appears to have been recently applied. Red tiles cover the low-pitched side-gabled roof. The house is 3,510 square feet with three bedrooms and 3.75 bathrooms. Windows appear to be steel-framed casement. An interior chimney emerges along the ridgeline near the west end of the house. An unpaved circular gravel driveway extends the length of the long, low residence, which is almost entirely obscured from the street by thick vegetation. Originality and condition were difficult to ascertain due to limited visibility.

*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
1939/ Source: Metroscan

*P7. Owner and Address:
*George Morgan Jr.
923 Ninth Street #4
Santa Monica, CA 90403*

*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 5S1

*Resource Name or #: *Frank Morgan Residence*

- B1. Historic Name: *Frank Morgan Residence*
B2. Common Name: *Same*
B3. Original Use: *Single-family Residence* B4. Present Use: *Single-family Residence*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Spanish Rustic*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed in 1939.*

*Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973.
March 12, 1987. Reroof.
March 3, 1995. Removal of walls at patio.
April 4, 1996. Install new garage.
April 6, 2001. Reroof.*

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

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a. Architect: *Unknown*

b. Builder: *Unknown*

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

Area *Rancho Mirage*

Period of Significance: *1924-1950*

Property Type: *Single-family Residence*

Applicable Criteria: *A, C*

(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 for its association with actor Frank Morgan and as a remnant of one of the earliest developments in Rancho Mirage. It is also architecturally noteworthy for its characteristic Spanish Rustic styling. The 1953 Palm Springs directory indicates that the widow of actor Frank Morgan, Alma, still resided at the house. Frank Morgan, born in 1890 as Frank Wuppermann, died in 1949. Morgan was best known for portraying the Wizard of Oz and several other roles in the 1939 movie.

The Magnesia Falls area was developed after Clancy Lane and its associated ranches and farms were established. While this property was custom built for Frank Morgan, Magnesia Falls was the location of the first small tract development in Rancho Mirage with a number of Van Pelt and Lind designs for developer Louis Blankenhorn spread along Sahara Road. Of the

(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.
1953 Palm Springs Directory.
City of Rancho Mirage Building Permits.
City of Rancho Mirage Cultural Commission booklet, A Look
Back in Time, 1993 and 1997. p.6.*

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Sketch Map

*Date of Evaluation: *September 23, 2002*

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

essentially three styles of houses built in the Magnesia Falls area prior to World War II, the Spanish Rustic style was less common than Ranch or Vernacular Modern. Spanish Rustic homes combined signature elements of the Spanish adobe style, such as tiled roofs, with simplicity and informality of the ranch style.

Purchased by Frank Morgan in 1939, this house was prominently featured in the city's historical booklet, A Look Back in Time, which labeled it "one of the original Rancho Mirage homes still standing." Although there are a number of houses from before 1939 still extant in the city, the Frank Morgan House represents the first residence in the Rancho Mirage area to be owned by a major Hollywood celebrity. Many more would follow. The property appears eligible for listing under an existing or proposed local ordinance depending upon the ordinance's integrity requirements. The resource does not appear eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (a "5S1" National Register Status Code).