

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 _____

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DRAFT

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Cottrell House

P1. Other Identifier: Yianilos Estate

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*a. County San Diego

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T _____; R _____; _____ 1/4 of Sec _____; _____ B.M.

c. Address 7727-7729 Lookout Drive City San Diego, CA Zip 92037

d. UTM: (give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone _____; _____ mE/ _____ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Resources located on Lot 34 and a portion of Lot #35, La Jolla Hills Subdivision #1479 of 1911, currently identified as Parcel 1, APN #352-012-16. Also variously addressed at 8719, 7707, and 7719 Lookout Drive.

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

Overview: Built in 1936, 7727-7729 Lookout Drive is a one-story Spanish/Mexican Hacienda designed by architect Cliff May. Although advertised as a "Rancheria" design, its stucco walls and terracotta tile roof is closer to May's early Haciendas than his slightly later board-and-batten wood shingled Rancherias. Its unique hollow square plan is organized around a central courtyard that is open to the sky. Recent "as built" drawings by architect Mauricio de la Pena note that it features five bedrooms and three and one-half bathrooms in its 2,260 square feet of covered living space. (See Continuation Sheet, Sec. P3a.)

*P3b. **Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP2, Single Family Property; HP30, Trees, vegetation

*P4. **Resources Present:** Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

*P6. **Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic Prehistoric Both

*P7. **Owner and Address:**

LOOKOUT LLC
(David & Felicia Mandelbaum)
7510 Pepita Way
San Diego, CA 92037

*P8. **Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, address)
(Original nomination form recorded by ☺)

Diane Kane, Ph.D.
7711 Lookout Drive
La Jolla, CA 92037

(Edited by:)

William Burg, Historian II
California Office of Historic Preservation, Registration Unit\
1725 23rd Street, Sacramento CA 95816

*P9. **Date Recorded:** February 2015

*P10. **Survey Type:** (Describe) California Register Nomination

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

*Attachments: NONE Sketch Map Location 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) _____

B1. Historic Name: Cottrell House

B2. Common Name: Yanilos Estate

B3. Original Use: Residence: Horticulture

B4. Present Use: Residence

*B5. Architectural Style: Hacienda/Rancheria

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) 1936;

Modifications to North façade windows: living room picture window replaced with larger window & flanking hinged doors; dining room windows replaced with paired single paned French doors; 6-light bedroom windows replaced with single pane window, as noted in description, 1960s. Recent addition and restorations, 2014/2015. See integrity analysis, B10 for complete description & discussion.

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

*B8. Related Features: Cliff May landscape, 1936; additional landscape elements (eg. terrace, pool, adjoining exterior covered patios, 1960s; palm treescape, 1963-1996; pool in-filled, 1990s; tree removal, 2013, restoration and addition, 2014-2015. See Continuation sheet for description and integrity analysis under “Setting”.

B9. Architect: Cliff May b. Builder: Cliff May

*B10. Significance: Theme Architecture Area San Diego Period of Significance 1936 Property Type HP2 Single Family Residence Applicable Criteria California Register Criterion 3 (Architecture & Master Architect)

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

Summary: The Cottrell House is eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style (Hacienda/Rancheria), type (courtyard single family residence), period (early Cliff May-1936), and method of custom construction (rustic California rancho). Designed and built by master architect Cliff May, it is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials and craftsmanship. The property has been recently restored but retains its historic integrity. (See Continuation Sheet, Sec. B10)

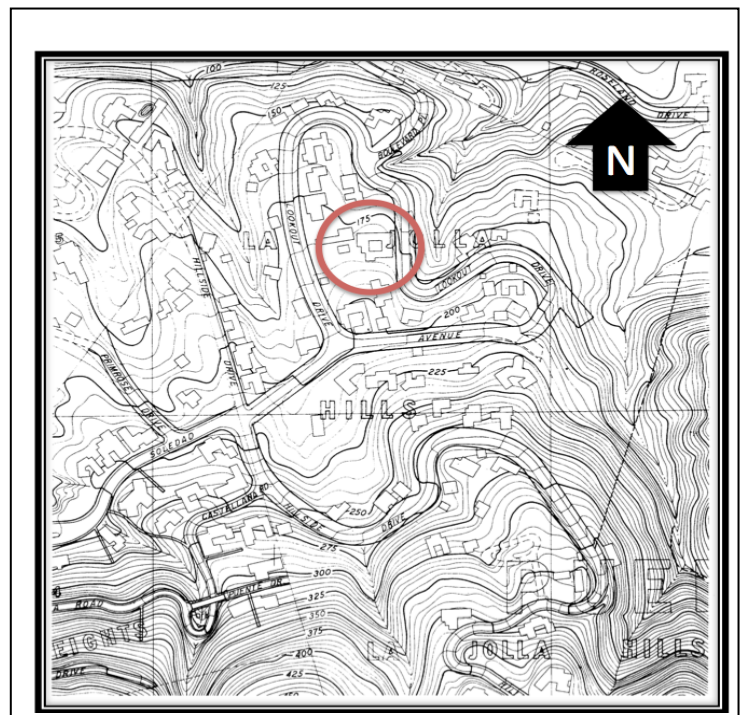
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. References: See Bibliography on Continuation Sheet

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Diane Kane, Ph.D.
(edited and revised by William Burg, Historian II, California Office of Historic Preservation)

*Date of Evaluation: February 2015



P3a. Description: (Continued from p. 1) The building is of wooden frame construction atop a concrete slab foundation. The building has a low pitch, heavily mudded red tile roof with open eaves and exposed rafter tails that overhang its hand textured white stucco walls.

The Cottrell House is an intact transitional work of Architect/Designer Cliff May. There are three aspects of this home that sum up Mr. May's mastery of the early California ranch type to this point in his career, and that point to innovations that will be further explored in his Los Angeles work. The first is its completely enclosed interior courtyard, designed on a classic "hollow square" plan. The second is the use of a classic Mexican rancho enfilade circulation pattern to access individual rooms that is characteristic of his early homes in San Diego. The third is the dramatic automobile approach and motor court. This includes three elements:

1. a lengthy estate-type driveway, entered through a wrought iron gate (Photo 2 of 10);
2. a two-car garage, accessed through a massive custom wooden door (Photo 1 of 10); and,
3. a discrete pedestrian entry into the internal courtyard and home (Photo 2 of 10).

A rancho is a courtyard home, where the central patio functions as an open air outdoor room. The architect's two dimensional design intent, therefore, is best understood in plan (the third dimension), where individual elevations reflect the function of each space (Figure 1). This is both an anachronistic throwback to an earlier period, when rooms were added based upon need, and a modernist approach displaying the dictum of "form follows function."

Plan: In plan, the north wing contains public functions, including the original walk-in foyer with guest closets and guest bath (also shared with the adjacent bedroom #1), the living room and dining room. The west wing is a service area with the kitchen, breakfast room, pantry, maid's suite (bedroom and bath). The south wing includes utilitarian functions like the garage, an office/bedroom and a corner bedroom. The eastern wing is the most private in function with the remaining two bedrooms and related baths. All interior spaces are accessed via an enfilade type internal circulation, as well as through the adjacent covered courtyard patio. The indoor-outdoor nature of the plan is both visual and actual. Because all wings are single loaded, light and air enters each room from at least two directions. Likewise, each living space has at least two or more entrances/exits that facilitate airflow as well as pedestrian movement patterns.

Elevations: The courtyard facades open onto an interior garden that is flanked by covered *corredors* on the eastern and western sides. The exterior facades sequentially enjoy: 1. an ocean view (north); 2. overlook Soledad Road (east); 3. face an embankment (south); or, 4. provide auto access from Lookout Drive via an elongated driveway (west).

The window and door configuration is contingent on the facade orientation and wing function, with each expressing a unique variation within an overall theme. Unifying window vocabulary includes: horizontally paned casement windows in 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 light configurations; wide, flat wooden rails and stiles; 2 1/2" mitered trim; solid shutters with raised, reverse ogee molding frames; squared and chamfered wooden window grilles; contemporary hinges; and lever-and-pin window operators (Photo 7 of 10).

Doors have one of four designs, depending upon function. The two entrance doors are deeply set, vertical wood planks, with heavy, exposed wooden lintels. All other exterior doors are glazed with 4 horizontal lights. Used singly and in pairs, their wood stile and rail profiles are similar to the windows. Interior doors between rooms

have recessed panels that are trimmed with molding similar to the shutters. Doors for closets and utilitarian spaces are pegged vertical planks with chamfered grooves.

Exterior Facades

Just as the floor plan exhibited public and private spaces, the exterior facades also had public and private elements. The west and north facades were more publically oriented while the east and south facades were more private, as discussed below.

South Façade: By placing the home in the southeastern corner of its site, snuggled against a terraced embankment, May created an opportunity for protected outdoor terraces that adjoin bedrooms #3 and #4. Each terrace is accessed through a single 4-light door that faces south to capture the sun. The remainder of the southern elevation facing the embankment is blank stucco walls.

East Façade: This side of the house overlooks Soledad Road and sits approximately 5-10 ft. above the roadbed. Three bedrooms internally connected by two baths are located in this wing, whose eastward orientation captures the morning sun. Because the wing is private in function, its exterior has become heavily screened with patio walls and vegetation over the years, making it difficult to see from the public right of way. To secure privacy yet admit natural light, the architect located pairs of casement windows over the toilets in each bathroom. An additional pair of casements is found in the exterior wall of Bedroom #3. Bedroom #2 maximizes privacy, functionality and cross-ventilation by placing two pairs of banked 2-light casements high on the wall. Conversely, Bedroom #1 opens to the side yard with a pair of French doors that capture the view. All windows and doors on the east façade are single paned.

North Façade: The most distinctive façade is the northern one that overlooks La Jolla Shores, with partial views northward towards Torrey Pines State Park. All rooms located along this wing take advantage of the view with large single paned windows. None of these are original, but they have been installed in the original openings and have been in place for decades. For example, Bedroom #1 takes advantage of this view with a large picture window, while the dining room uses a pair of undivided-light French doors. The home's front entrance door, a replacement from the original, is also glazed. It is deeply recessed and capped with a massive, exposed wooden lintel. To the right of the front door, a stubby, battered chimney rises above the tiled roofline. Capped with a flat metal spark arrester, its rounded stucco edges mimic hand-applied adobe.

West Façade: The most visible element of the west façade from Lookout Drive is its enormous custom garage door. Located at the extreme right side of the composition, it is large enough to accommodate two cars. The garage door terminates a vista down the long driveway that ends in an auto court with parking for several cars.

As in the other facades, the west façade sports a variety of window types functionally associated with its interior spaces. Paired single paned casements light the dining room to the extreme left side of the façade. A large picture window flanked by single-paned casements, illuminates the kitchen sink. Finally, a pair of 3-light casements lights the pantry. The service court's façade features a pair of 4-light casement windows that illuminate the maid's room, while a smaller 2-light casement lights the former mudroom, now converted to a bathroom.

Courtyard Facades

The exterior facades featured either large sheets of glass to view the expansive surroundings, or imposing blank walls to provide privacy. In contrast, the interior courtyard is a private space with a domestic scale. Its friendly, inviting ambiance is underscored with the use of low overhanging eaves and gridded red clay tile flooring. Its central garden features warm-hued, broken stone paving that compliments the lush vegetation provided by clumps of Raphis palms, tree ferns and an enormous olive tree. All rooms enjoy both views and access to the courtyard through French doors and multi-paned casement windows.

South and East Courtyard Façades: Due to the position of the garage and workroom, the blank wall treatment of the South Courtyard Façade is similar to that of the exterior walls. However, bedrooms #2, #3 and #4 in the south and east wings enjoy double French doors that open to the central space. This contrasts with their more closed exterior facades. Because bedroom #1 enjoys distant ocean views and exterior access, it is not directly connected with the interior courtyard. Rather, it accesses this space with a single 4-light door through a small vestibule next to the entrance foyer.

North Courtyard Façade: In the north façade foyer, a floor-to-ceiling, 8-light window, located opposite the front door, hints at the central patio that awaits the privileged guest. An even larger 16-light window looks into the courtyard from the living room. This inviting space accesses the central courtyard through two 4-light doors that flank the window.

West Courtyard Façade: The service wing facade, like the garage wing facade, is mostly closed to the courtyard with blank stucco walls. With the exception of a kitchen door at the far north end and a grilled window in the maid's room at the far south end, this façade is visually closed to the courtyard. Its blank wall, however, provides a backdrop to the *corredor* work and gathering space on this side of the interior patio.

Interior character defining features: An arched entryway to the west of the entry foyer accesses the living room. Its character defining features include a pitched, painted and trussed open beam ceiling, rounded corner fireplace, arched book nook, and wooden plank floors. This room overlooks both the interior courtyard and the exterior terrace with its views.

Cliff May's original design incorporated almost floor-to-ceiling windows on the northern and southern walls of this room. The courtyard window consisted of horizontally framed, 16-light, glass panels, while the enormous single paned ocean viewing window was flanked by narrow, multi-light casements. Both windows maximized light and views with available products.

A dining room with an open truss and beam ceiling and pegged plank floors occupies the northwest corner of the plan. Accessed through an arched opening from the living room, it shares the ocean view. This was originally accomplished through a pair of multi-paned 4-light casement windows that was flanked by raised panel shutters. Today, the terrace is viewed through a pair of single paned French doors. The dining room occupied a pivotal spot in the floor plan. Located at a corner of the square, it bridged the living room and the kitchen that was entered through a second arched opening to the south.

The service wing faces west and includes a kitchen, pantry, maid's suite (bedroom and ensuite bath). Pedestrian entrances from both the garage and driveway access the courtyard. A large covered patio, emulating a Mexican

era “*corredor*,” located on the courtyard side of the service wing, also serves as an informal dining and gathering area. Accessed from the living room, kitchen and garage, it is comprised of a sloped, open beam, wooden ceiling (the underside of the roof extension) that is supported on thick wooden posts and lintels, and a red clay tile floor.

This house exhibits several characteristic elements of Cliff May’s design at this early period in his career that was so strongly influenced by early California ranchos. Among them are: the U-shaped, rustic Mexican roof tiles that are stacked several layers deep, heavily mudded and irregularly laid; broad overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails with rounded ends; deeply inset entrances with exposed wooden lintels on the northern and western facades that mimic adobe thick-walled construction; softly undulating stucco finishes to emulate hand applied plaster; wrought iron light fixtures; heavy exterior shutters and solid vertical plank doors; irregular plank floors and exposed wooden beamed ceilings; built-in arched nooks for storage shelves; a rounded and plastered corner fireplace typical of adobe *hornos*; arched openings between rooms; an enfilade floor plan; and an interior courtyard directly accessed by each room in the complex.

Typical of early California ranchos, the courtyard becomes an outdoor “work room,” circulation element and social space that extends the interior living areas both visually and functionally. It is also a garden that adds shade and greenery to the middle of the home. As is typical of Cliff May, the courtyard has a southern exposure for maximum sunlight, which is most noticeable in the living room.

The garage wing, located close to the southern property line and next to a cut embankment, has little opportunity for natural light. Because of the utilitarian function of the garage and storage/workroom, their placement on that side of the courtyard is a practical solution to the site’s topographical constraints. Private terraces adjacent to the eastern bedrooms provide additional outdoor living areas and views for those spaces. The exterior terraces are more fully discussed under “setting” in the integrity section.

Another Cliff May feature is the conscious insertion of quirky elements to make a new building appear as if it had been built over an extended period of time. This is evident on the ocean façade, where both the dining room and eastern corner bedroom are distinguished from the main living space with a slightly lower roofline. This subtle break supports the social importance of the main space and hints at sequential construction campaigns that are characteristic of vernacular ranchos.

The home is approached through a formal entryway of matching stuccoed pillars that support a wrought iron gate. The garage and its drive provide an impressive and elegant entrance for those arriving by car that mimics similar approaches of rural haciendas historically located far from major highways. The solid plank entry door, covered by a sturdy wooden lintel, is recessed into what appears to be a massive blank adobe wall.¹

Site & Orientation: A drawing published in August 1936 prior to the home’s construction, announced the project, architect and first owners, George F. and Marion Cottrell.² Recently relocated retirees from Denver, they

¹ When the Spanish government granted land to a person of rank, laws required the grantee to erect improvements in the form of a house to secure the grant. The grantees could not rely on the Spanish soldiers to protect them from hostile forces, so the adobe houses were often designed along the Presidio model with rows of rooms around a central courtyard, from which to run the many operations of a farm or livestock ranch. The early 19th century haciendas usually consisted of an “L” or “U” shaped layout of rooms with a thick outer wall, minimal windows, thick heavy front door, and tall rear walls. Ron V. May and Dale Ballou May, “The John R. and Florence Porterfield Beardsley House,” National Register Nomination, October 12, 2010, p. 16 of 19.

² “Rancheria Home Under Construction for Cottrells,” *San Diego Union*, Sunday August 30, 1936.

owned the three lots (Lots 34, 35 and 42,) that contained the home, its driveway and ocean view terrace (Figure 2).³ Located east of downtown La Jolla and overlooking La Jolla Shores, the property was situated in the middle of a fairly level mesa with northward views up the coast. Although subdivided in 1911 (La Jolla Hills Subdivision, Map #1479), the neighborhood was far enough out of town to be inconvenient without an automobile. Development by the mid-1930s was slow and spotty; but, ample raw land was an attractive draw for large estate development, especially for those fortunate few who were able to afford it.

Mr. May maximized both the site and its ocean views by placing the home on the highest spot at the eastern edge of the site that had the best view. He then provided an approach from the west via a long, leisurely driveway. Access was easily taken at a point that was more or less level with Lookout Drive, since the Soledad Road alternative on the eastern side of the property was initially 10-20 feet below grade. Originally, both lots 42 and 34 were increasingly sloped uphill from north to south as one progressed east across the underlying mesa. Hence, a level building pad, driveway and front yard terrace were created by grading anywhere from 0-10 feet into the uphill trending slope.

Although the north façade had a formal entrance with a doorbell and entry foyer, it is unlikely it was ever much used by guests, who would have arrived by automobile from the west, via the estate-type driveway. Ample guest parking is currently available in the auto court adjacent to the garage and driveway entrance to the home, so there is no need to park on the street. There is also no evidence of a pedestrian walkway or parking area from the property's eastern side that is 5-10 feet above Soledad Road. Indeed, the historic photo shows only grass leading up to the front door. Conversely, the driveway and forecourt entrance gained function and significance as the automobile inserted itself into American life.

By the late 1930s, Cliff May began to design grand auto entrances for his more elaborate ranch homes in Los Angeles. These combine eloquent points of arrival and parking for guests with daily utilitarian functions, such as hauling groceries into the kitchen, using the most convenient path. Hence, the auto and pedestrian functions become integrated into one elegant and functional point of arrival, focused on automobile transportation, that becomes the hallmark of middle class suburban living. Cliff May's innovative solution at the Cottrell house is only possible because his clients provided sufficient space to design an authentic Mexican-era hacienda arrival pattern and update it for the modern age. As one of the last homes May built in San Diego, the Cottrell House becomes a pivotal transitional work to his later production in Los Angeles.

Boundaries: The building is located on Lot #34 and a portion of Lot #35, La Jolla Hills Subdivision #1479 of 1911, currently identified as Parcel 1, APN #352-012-16. The original Cliff May designed house was located on a larger lot that was later subdivided, with subsequent loss of integrity to the surrounding landscape. Thus, the currently identified boundaries are limited to the immediate building parcel.

³ Deed, Lots 34 & 35, La Jolla Hills Subdivision, recorded April 5, 1936, Book 508, p. 364, San Diego County Recorder, San Diego, CA. Notice of Completion, November 10, 1936, Book 578, Page 405, San Diego County Recorder, San Diego, CA.

***B10. Significance:** (Continued from p. 2)

California Register Criterion 3, Architecture: The Keeper of the National Register recognized the Hacienda style by May in the 2000 National Register listing of the Lindstrom House, located at 4669 East Talmadge Drive, in San Diego, California.⁴ Like the National Register listed Lindstrom and Beardsley houses, the Cottrell House, as noted in the description section of this nomination, clearly shares the defined characteristics of his trademark Hacienda style. These three properties, among others, contribute to understanding the historical context of Cliff May's early architectural career in San Diego. The Hacienda style Cottrell House has high artistic value and embodies the distinctive characteristics reminiscent of the Mexican era 19th century adobe dwellings that were true to Old California. It is also architecturally significant as one of the only foursquare haciendas Cliff May designed prior to his move to Los Angeles. It clearly meets all categories noted under California Register Criterion 3 for architectural significance.

California Register Criterion 3, Master Architect: The Cottrell House/Yianilos Estate is a notable work of Master Architect Cliff May and it has high artistic value. Cliff May's designs contributed to the Spanish Revival of the 1930s, proffering low, rambling dwellings, red tile roofs, and completely walled-in courtyards in a fusion of the Spanish Hacienda and his own invention: the California Ranch House style.⁵ As a sixth generation San Diegan, May had firsthand understanding of the true borderlands architectural vernacular and its appropriateness for modern living.⁶ His plans featured attractive, highly functional arrangements that combined indoor and outdoor living spaces.

Originally a business major in college, May dropped out to build handcrafted furniture modeled on the sturdy Monterey-style. His apprenticeship under master carpenter Wilbur F. Hale, association with building contractor Orville U. Miracle, and real estate contacts through his future father-in-law, Roy Lichty, positioned him for contracts to furnish new houses built for speculative sale. These associations led in 1932 to financial backing for his first home design, a suburban Hacienda-style ranch in Talmadge Park.⁷

Despite the Depression, it quickly sold for \$9,500. As the National Housing Act, National Recovery Act, and National Defense Act began providing work opportunities and financing housing construction, May and his backers began selling speculation Hacienda houses that proved exceeding popular. Their success caught the attention of the *San Diego Union*, *Sunset Magazine*, and other periodicals. Such public acclaim inspired other investors to provide vacant lots and to develop additional partnerships with May that fueled his business. In 1936, the *San Diego Union* described May as:

Probably the youngest builder of fine homes in San Diego. With the belief that California's architecture has a historic background more vivid and real than any other part of the country, May,

⁴ Ron V. May and Dale Ballou May, "The John R. and Florence Porterfield Beardsley House," National Register Nomination, October 12, 2010, p. 8 of 49.

⁵ Joseph Giovannini. "The Man Behind the Ranch House," *New York Times*, July 3, 1986: C1.

⁶ Carol Greentree. "May, Cliff (1908-1989) architect/builder, author," in Birnbaum, Charles A. and Robin Karson, editors, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000: 246-248.

⁷ May & May, *ibid*.

with the cooperation of the Century Lumber Co., has been building homes for permanent San Diego residents in which the early settlers of the Golden state would have been happy.”⁸

Considering the severity of the economy in 1931 through 1934, this fortuitous partnership allowed May to advance his career at a time when his youth, inexperience, and lack of personal funds and creditworthiness would otherwise have prevented others from entering the building industry. Miracle’s business connections and construction expertise, and Lichty’s financial sponsorship, coupled with popular media publications, enhanced May’s local career.

Equipped with his solid, comfortable furniture, May’s houses began to sell quickly. By the mid-1930s, he was a developer-architect offering a choice between houses based on native California adobe models and what was called a “Yankee version” that had the same plan but was surfaced in board-and-batten.⁹

By the end of the decade, May’s name became synonymous with the Western Ranch House architectural style.¹⁰ May’s work during this period had a powerful and pronounced influence on the shape of architecture designed and created by post-Depression builders, contractors, architectural designers, and custom architects. Projects ranged in size from individual and tract ranch homes to large-scale subdivisions, and in price from budget conscious ranchers to Mid-Century Modern custom estates for the rich and famous. Examples can be found in virtually every community across America, and even abroad.¹¹

May’s patio centered, easy-living plans became staples of domestic architecture and garden design in the postwar years.¹² His use of inexpensive construction materials and practical concepts earned May recognition in *House Beautiful*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Sunset Magazine*. The publishers of *Sunset* were so impressed by May that they published two books on his work and commissioned him to design their own Menlo Park headquarters.¹³

May continued his design career until his death in 1989, with a productive career that spanned six decades.¹⁴ He has been recognized by the San Diego Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, with three of his homes already designated: 7477 Hillside Drive (HRB Site #679, 8/26/2004); 3130 Shadowlawn Street (HRB site #1031, designated 11/18/2011); and, 4777 Avion Way (HRB Site #1053, designated 5/24/12).¹⁵

Despite the extensive publicity during his lifetime and later scholarship following his death, very little has been published about the beginning years of May’s career in San Diego until recently. Most accounts gloss over this period with sketchy yet colorful lore that includes his stint as a jazz saxophonist and local bandleader, and his familial association with the Estudillos--one of San Diego’s early California families during the Mexican period.

⁸ *San Diego Union*, “History Provides Background for New Residences,” January 12, 1936. Quoted in May & May, *ibid.*, p. 10 of 49. For a listing of his building production, see Attachment E.3: “Cliff May Designed & Built Projects, 1931-1936.”

⁹ Giovannini, *ibid.*

¹⁰ May and May, *loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Milford Wayne Donaldson, *La Jolla Historical Survey*, City of San Diego Planning Department, 2003: 49.

¹³ Greentree, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Donaldson, *ibid.*

¹⁵ “Register of Historical Resources,” Historical Resources Board, City of San Diego, <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/historical/pdf/2013/register130124.pdf>, accessed August 12, 2013.

They note his birth in San Diego on August 29, 1908, his marriage to Jean Lichty, daughter of San Diego's Talmadge Park developer Roy Cook Lichty, and the story of how the young couple visited furniture stores for ideas for custom furniture that they then built and stocked in model homes. These accounts then jump to 1937 and later, when he and his family moved to Los Angeles to begin a long career that is well documented.¹⁶

Local research into his San Diego beginnings were initiated in the 2003 *La Jolla Historical Survey*, conducted by Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson. Cliff May was one of 11 architects recommended for inclusion in an emerging historic district of master architects who worked in La Jolla. At the time, only 4 properties were identified with Cliff May, and two of those (6116 and 6117 Avenida Cresta) were jointly associated with Thomas Shepherd.¹⁷ Mr. May was also so included in the 2007 *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement* in the "Contributing Designers of Modern San Diego" section, with a brief entry as follows:

Cliff May (1908-1989)

Master Designer and builder Cliff May, who had gained earlier notoriety in San Diego and Los Angeles for his Spanish Revival style residences, was also a well known designer of Ranch style home as early as the late 1930s. His homes were grand in scale with expansive, sprawling floor plans frequently encircling a landscaped central courtyard. A strong connection between interior and exterior was a key component of May's houses. May designed and built hundreds of tract homes, as well as several custom-designed ranch style homes.¹⁸

Three other inventories of Cliff May's work have been consulted for this report to provide an overview of his production in San Diego, prior to his moving to Los Angeles. Mary van Balgooy, who has written two articles on Cliff May, states in her publications that by the time May moved to Los Angeles, he had designed over 50 homes.¹⁹ That means between 1932-1936, he designed, on the average, 10 houses per year--or almost one a month.²⁰ However, Van Balgooy's inventory, prepared for her articles, notes 47 houses have been verified through field and archival documentation.²¹ Ten were located outside San Diego County, ranging from Montecito to Tijuana, Mexico. In the San Diego area, 15 were within San Diego County, 12 were within San Diego City,

¹⁶ May & May, *ibid.*, p. 12 of 49.

¹⁷ Donaldson, *ibid.*, "Master Architects Emerging Historic District," pp. 46-56.

¹⁸ *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*, City of San Diego, October 17, 2007: 98.

The San Diego projects included in the report were:

The Lindstrom House, 4669 East Talmadge Dr, San Diego (1933)

Colonel Arthur J. and Frances O'Leary House, 4725 Norma Drive, Kensington (1932)

Alexander and Nancy Highland House, 2400 Presidio Drive, Mission Hills (1934)

Violetta Horton Spec House #1, 7445 Hillside Drive, La Jolla (1935)

Violetta Horton Spec House #2, 7447 Hillside Drive, La Jolla (1935)

Violetta Horton/Cliff May Spec House #3, 7477 Hillside Drive, La Jolla (1935)

Violetta Horton Spec House #4, 7575 Hillside Drive, La Jolla (1935)

¹⁹ Mary van Balgooy, "Designer of the Dream: Cliff May and the California Ranch House," *Southern California Quarterly*, 2004: 127-144. Accessed JSTOR, July 24, 2013.

²⁰ "Before LA: Cliff May's Beginnings in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History*, Fall 2011, Vol. 57, NO. 4:255-271.

²⁰ This calculation assumes an even rate of home production over the 5-year period. In actuality, May's earliest production was quite small, but it picked up dramatically in 1935 and 1936 as his work became better known. In fact, the "unbuilt" projects date from the two later years. He may have simply been unable to scale up his production.

²¹ Van Balgooy, Mary. "Cliff May In_Process Project Index," La Jolla Historical Society, Cliff May files.

and 10 were in La Jolla. Even though Van Balgooy does not include the two Thomas Shepherd homes on Avenida Cresta in her inventory, it is clear that Cliff May did more than a quarter of his pre-1937 San Diego area work in La Jolla.

Keith York's *San Diego Modern* website identifies 32 homes built in San Diego County prior to Mr. May's move to Los Angeles.²² Nine were located in the City of San Diego and 9 were in La Jolla. An inventory done by Ron and Dale May, Bruce Coons and Mary van Balgooy for a 2011 SOHO tour of Cliff May properties notes 36 properties in San Diego County prior to Mr. May's move to Los Angeles.²³ Of these, 13 were built in the City of San Diego, and 11 were built in La Jolla. (Both inventories include the two properties on Avenida Cresta identified in the La Jolla Historical Survey with Thomas Shepherd.) A recent field survey of the La Jolla properties verified that all the homes exist today and are in very good condition. The only home to exhibit a four-sided courtyard is the Cottrell house, making it an unusual example in his early work.²⁴

This early Hacienda style house represents an important stage in May's development of the style that led up to the later Rancheria and then Western Ranch style, for which he became so famous across the nation in the next decades. These comfortable and casual homes met the needs of modest and low cost housing for millions of families. As one of the last of his custom commissions prior to moving to Los Angeles, the Cottrell House's significance lies in understanding how May drew from surviving 19th century adobe ranch buildings to create custom residential architecture during the depths of the Great Depression in Southern California.

Its use of a completely enclosed courtyard and its impressive lengthy driveway, imposing double car garage door and auto court, point to his design direction in the postwar years. His suburban ranch houses eloquently accommodate widespread automobile use with: wide lots designed for low, rambling plans; flipped floor plans with kitchens near the garage; and, garages prominently oriented toward the street. Within the context of May's long career as a designer and architect whose designs influenced mainstream residential architecture across America, the Cottrell House has importance as a pivotal project that closes a locally influenced historicist chapter in his life and points to another, more populist and modern one in Los Angeles and elsewhere, therefore meeting California Register Criterion 3 for its association with Master Architect Cliff May.

Landscape Design of Cottrell House:

Little is known of the original Cliff May landscape associated with the Cottrell House, although Cliff May is known to have favored a specific plant palette that added to his home's "Early California" ambience. These included olives, bananas, pepper trees, oleanders, wild grapes, Castilian roses, aloes, yuccas, dracaenas, prickly pear cactus and brightly colored annuals like marigolds and zinnias. May was not opposed to suburban style green lawns, often placing them in his courtyards to provide a lush green contrast with his simulated whitewashed adobe walls.²⁵

²² York, Keith. "Cliff May," Modern San Diego: <http://www.modernsandiego.com/>
Accessed July 30, 2013.

²³ Bruce Coons, Ron and Dale May, Mary van Balgooy, "Cliff May's First Houses in San Diego, 1932-1936," undated spreadsheet, La Jolla Historical Society, Cliff May files (courtesy Mary van Balgooy).

²⁴ Bruce Coons, private communication, August 12, 2013.

²⁵ "Recreating an ancient Mexican hacienda," Eloise Roorbach, *American Home Magazine*, 1935.

A conceptual drawing published in the *San Diego Union* prior to its construction in 1936 shows low shrubs assembled in beds surrounding the exterior perimeter of the structure. These are anchored with tall trees at the corners (Figure 5). The drawing's small size, poor resolution and sketchy hand make plant identification conjectural at best. Similar trees with slightly better resolution are depicted in an undated *San Diego Union* ad for Cliff May Homes, published that same year.²⁶ This image shows a background similar to the Cottrell's distant view up the coast, and includes a view into an open courtyard that shows what may be an olive tree. The tall trees could be eucalyptus and/or bearded Mexican Fan Palms. An undated photo of the north façade that was taken prior to the development of the front yard terrace and pool area in the mid-1960s shows a flat grass lawn, low foundation plantings, a mature banana tree and two potted dracaenas, all associated with May's landscaping concepts as described in print, photos and drawings.

The second owners, J. Logan and Zemula Abernathy, added Lot 41 in 1943. They became avid cymbidium orchid growers after their retirement to La Jolla from Kansas City in the late 1940s and presumably used the additional parcel to pursue their horticultural interests in hybridizing orchids. The third owners, Spero and Theresa Yianilos were palm enthusiasts. They acquired Lot 41 from the Abernathys five years after they purchased the home in 1963, also using it for horticultural purposes. Consequently, Lot 41 was formerly associated with the property's horticultural history, and until recently, contained greenhouses and specimen palm plantings that over time turned it into a lush, private enclave that was almost invisible from the street. Indeed, it was not included in the *2003 La Jolla Historical Survey* due to its lack of visibility that impeded assessment from the public right of way.

Other than the driveway that was lined with Queen and King palms interspersed with huge Cycads (Photo 2 of 10), the placement of the palms seems to have had no particular design. A 1988 article stated that: "feathery kentias (Theresa's favorite) are scattered about. Rhaps palms fill one whole greenhouse (located on Lot 41). Groves of banana, mango, macadamia and mulberry trees flank other boundaries of the property."²⁷ The tropical nature of the property intensified after Mr. Yianilos died in 1996 and Mrs. Yianilos became seriously ill. Lack of regular maintenance over the past decade allowed the plantings to naturalize. The City of San Diego's Historical Resources Board supported the contention that the landscape was not sufficiently historic for listing in the local register, and most of its elements have been removed.

The terrace, with hand painted tiles that Mr. and Mrs. Yianilos created in the 1960s, and its adjacent pool, were removed in 2014-15. Other extant features that contribute to the property's setting include the original driveway and entry gate, but the Yianilos era title "Casa de Bananas" sign has been removed. Several covered patios on the eastern and southern exterior perimeters are private outdoor spaces associated with the home's bedrooms #3 and #4. These were added by Mr. and Mrs. Yianilos and are associated with their tenure in the home.²⁸ It is clear from the home's plan that the French doors leading from the bedrooms to the home's exterior were intended to provide access to the yard; but to what type of yard is not established. That decision, left to the owner's discretion, evolved over time.

²⁶ "Preserving for California the Fascinating Architectural Traditions of Its People," Advertisement, *San Diego Union*, 1936.

²⁷ Bailey, *ibid*.

²⁸ No doubt, Cliff May would have endorsed this modification of the home, since he practiced continuous experimentation on his own property to meet evolving needs. Giovanni, *ibid*. In a 1988 *Los Angeles Times* article, Cliff May refers to Mandalay as a "demonstration house," where he experimented with design approaches used on more than 1,000 houses during the course of his career. Ruth Ryon, "For May, Less Is More: Architect Takes Aim at 'Monuments,'" *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1988. <http://articles.latimes.com>, accessed January 7, 2013.

Integrity Analysis: This survey addresses the historic integrity of the property utilizing the seven aspects of integrity as defined by National Park Service Bulletin #15, as applied to California Register integrity criteria. The threshold of integrity between National Register and California Register is not identical. Specifically, historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information or specific data. (California Code of Regulations 4852(c), Paragraph 2.) This analysis combines the original analysis of integrity by Diane Kane in October 2013 with post-rehab analysis provided by the owner, written by OHP historian William Burg.

Location: Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The Cottrell House is in its original location and has not been relocated, thus it retains full integrity of location.

Design: Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The Cottrell House's Cliff May Hacienda/Rancheria design of 1936 is virtually intact as originally constructed, except for modifications to the fenestration of the north façade in the mid-1960s. The first change involved a single paned picture window that was inserted into the north wall of bedroom #1 in the original multi-paned window opening. The second change swapped an existing fixed picture window with a floor-to-ceiling picture window. This was flanked by two glazed and hinged doors that provided direct access to the new pool and terrace. The third change occurred in the dining room, where the original casement windows were replaced with paired single paned doors that likewise accessed the pool terrace.

The 2014-2015 restoration of the property replaced some of the components of the original Cliff May design, including a new roof, repair and restoration of windows, doors and walls. Rnd the restorations retained original materials or replaced in kind, leaving intact a preponderance of elements of Cliff May's design. A new annex to the southern side of the building demolished materials assessed to have been added later than the original construction date, and are complementary to the building's architectural style but differentiated by differing wall height and a lack of hollow clay tile roof atop the parapet wall. This practice conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's standards regarding additions to historic buildings. Thus, the property retains sufficient integrity of design to remain eligible for listing in the California Register.

Setting: The Cottrell House was originally built on Lots 34, 35, 42 of the La Jolla Hills Subdivision of 1911. The three lots provided spacious grounds for a gracious rambling hacienda with a spectacular north facing view of La Jolla cove. Shortly after construction, the Cottrells added a portion of Lot 36 to their holdings, presumably to protect their ocean view from future development. This is the property's extent during the Cottrell's tenure in the home.

Due to changes in building landscape, the property lacks integrity for purposes of association with Mr. and Mrs. Yianilos during the 1963-2007 period. Its setting for its association with Cliff May is consistent with Mr. May's landscaping concepts from the 1936 period of construction. These include the site's terraced topography, ocean views, entrance gate, elongated driveway, auto court, mature foundation plantings and courtyard olive tree. Subdivision of the property has resulted in further loss of integrity of setting, but the property as a whole still

retains sufficient integrity of setting to convey its significance. Thus, the Cottrell House retains sufficient integrity of setting to remain eligible for the California Register based on its existing setting, limited to Lot 1 of the site.

Materials: Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Cliff May chose a hand applied stucco that exhibits soft undulating surfaces and rounded edges, chamfered and distressed wood, massive wooden lintels, and rustic wood casement window and shutter systems with distinctive wood grills that evoke Old California farmhouse themes. The wrought iron entry gate, massive custom double garage door and enormous multi-paned picture window are extant and in original condition. Other trademark artistic embellishments include terra cotta Mission half-barrel tiles that are stacked and heavily mudded. These are supported on wooden rafters that are visible in the overhanging eaves. The restoration work performed in 2014-2015 replaced some of these materials, including the re-done tilework of the main roof, but retained materials and utilized similar materials where retention was not possible. Thus, the property retains sufficient integrity of materials for California Register eligibility.

Workmanship: Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. From the beginning of his career, Cliff May provided certificates of excellence in workmanship. These listed each of the subcontractors for the house, with a promise of excellence in materials and workmanship.²⁹ Few of these certificates survive, but it is a known fact that each house came with this guarantee. For this reason, along with the survival of much of the original materials over time, it is clear that the Cottrell House retains integrity of workmanship. In Cliff May's case, the workmanship at this time was purposely rustic to emulate unskilled laborers of Early California. The wall stucco has been hand applied to create a subtle undulating surface that evokes a sense of an old adobe building and interior edges have been hand rounded. The wooden window grills, chamfered garage door, and shutters are custom designed and hand detailed examples of conscientious workmanship. The roof tiles on the building did not match the heavily mudded style used on the original roof but uses like materials. Rustic workmanship is a character defining element of Cliff May's early designs like the Cottrell House, which exhibits high integrity in this category. The recent rehabilitation appears to have resulted in limited loss of workmanship, but the documented photographs of the site, compared to recent photographs taken before the rehab work, shows that much of the original workmanship is still extant, and replacement/repair is sympathetic to the existing historic fabric.

Feeling: Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Cliff May's Hacienda style houses were intended to convey the relaxed feeling of the old 19th California ranchos that were part of his family heritage. Being intimately familiar with the historic design elements that characterized these buildings, he took care to integrate them into his Hacienda/Rancheria designs. Details include the hand-troweled stucco, mudded and stacked tile roofs, exposed beam ceilings, custom doors, windows, shutters, grills, and ironworking. The fully enclosed courtyard plan with its open-air *correadors* and enfilade circulation patterns fundamentally evokes earlier times, when this outdoor room was used for working, entertainment and relaxation. The Cottrell House is faithful to this 1930s romantic Hacienda expression, and has excellent integrity of Feeling.

²⁹ See illustration of an original certificate for 4669 Talmadge Drive in San Diego, in May & May, *ibid.*, p. 39.

Association: Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The Cottrell House is directly associated with architect Cliff May, who was an important 20th century architect in California. This association represents the earliest portion of his productive years and exhibits the evolution of his design development from Hacienda to Rancheria and eventually his Western Ranch style.

Integrity Conclusion: The Cottrell House retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although the surrounding landscape is dramatically changed and the overall lot size reduced, the property overall retains sufficient historical integrity for its association with master architect Cliff May, its Spanish/Mexican Hacienda design and its property type as a full courtyard ranch house, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Recent rehabilitation work resulted in limited loss of integrity of materials and workmanship, and alterations to the building site resulted in some loss of integrity of setting, but the property clearly retains sufficient historic integrity for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

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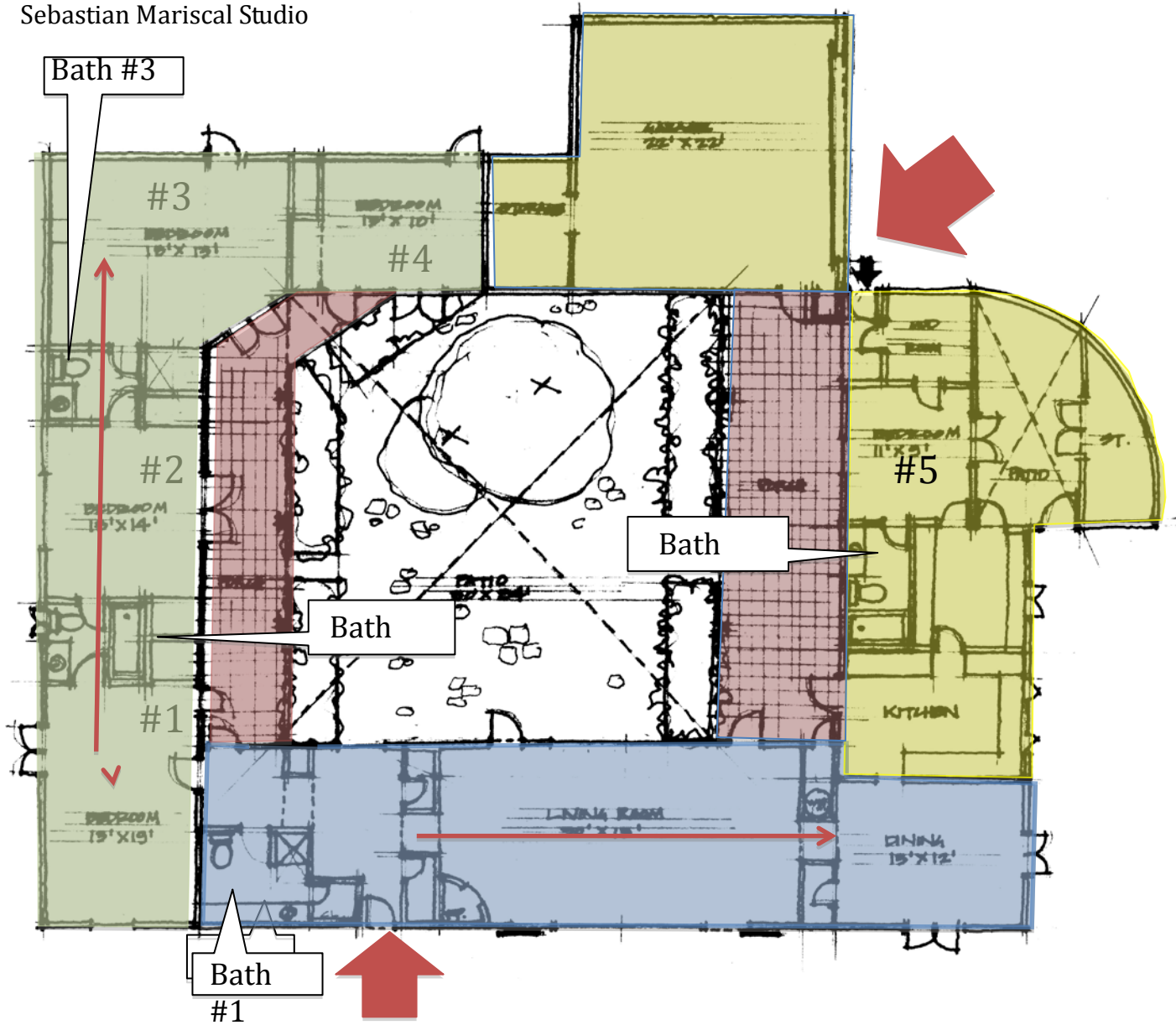
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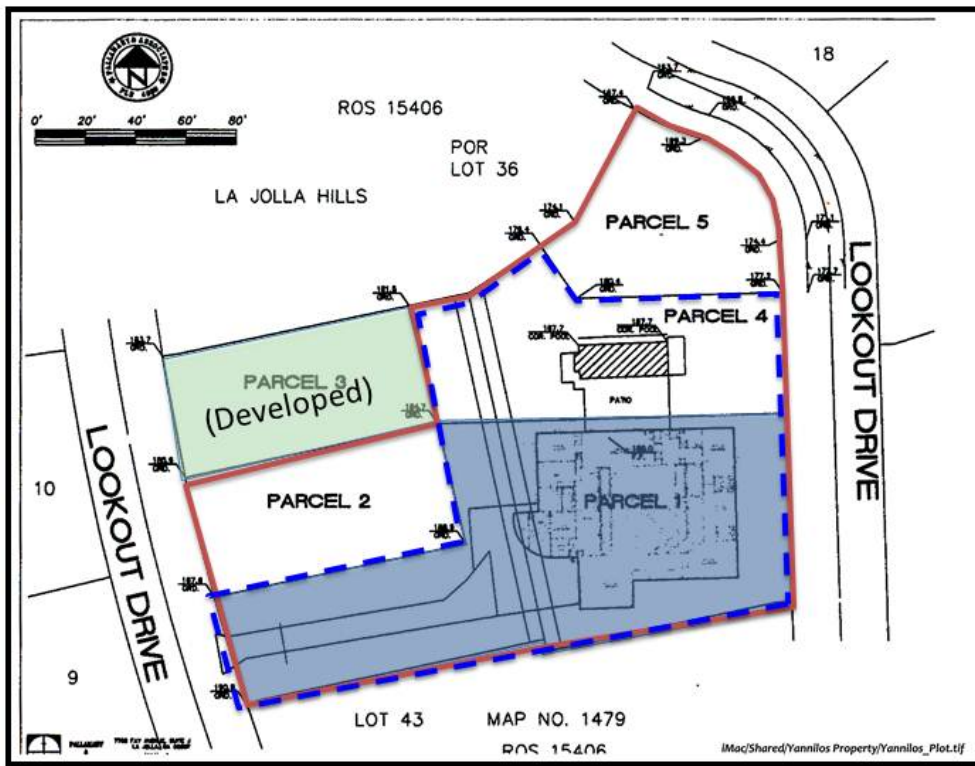
Figure 1. Cottrell House “As Built” Floor Plan

Cottrell House “As Built” Floor Plan

Mauricio de la Pena, c. 2011
Sebastian Mariscal Studio



Cottrell House Site Plan



Record of Survey #15406, showing estate boundaries, new parcel lines and proposed historic designation boundaries.

Figure 2. Record of Survey #15406 showing estate boundaries, old and new parcel lines and historic property boundary as identified by the City of Los Angeles. The boundary for purposes of this nomination is Parcel 1, the shaded blue portion of the map above.

Historic Photographs



Figure 3. Cottrell House North Façade, c. 1965 Courtesy, Yianilos Family



Figure 4. Cottrell House Living Room, c. 1937
Courtesy UCSB Art & Architecture Museum Archives, Cliff May Files

Cottrell House Landscape, 1936 & 2012



Figure 5. *San Diego Union* Announcement, August 30, 1936 Source: GenealogyBank. com

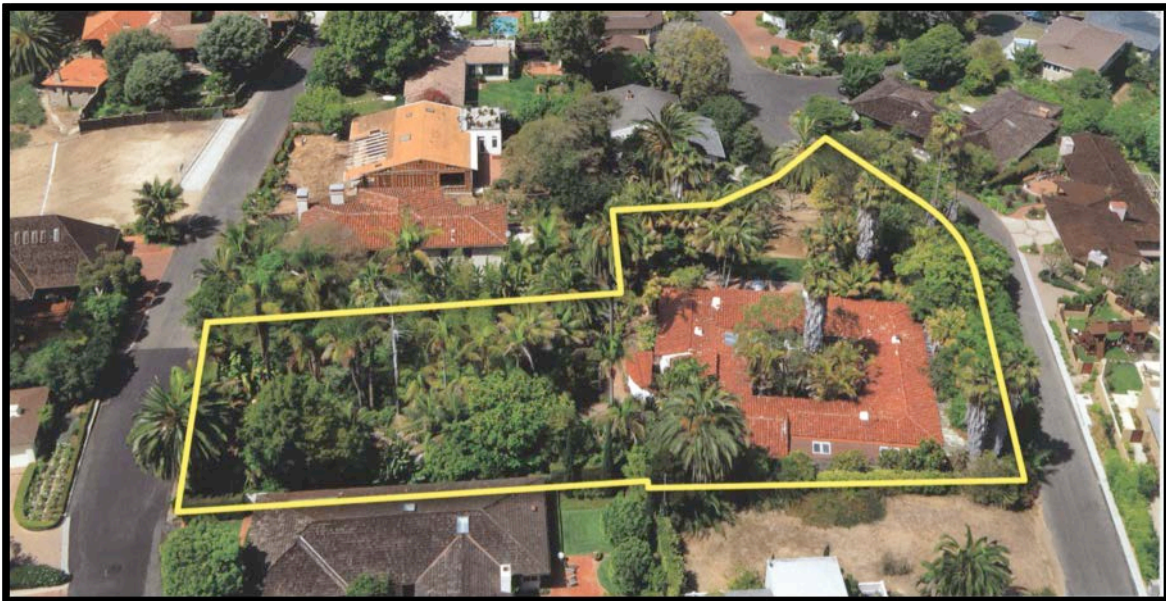


Figure 6. Yianilos Estate, Aerial Photo, 2012 Courtesy: Willis Allen Real Estate
Note that the yellow outline includes an adjacent parcel not covered by this nomination, and shows the palm trees surrounding the site prior to their removal in 2013-2014.