

ROCKLEDGE NEIGHBORHOOD #8

HABS HAER NR 5D SHL Log
UTM: A 429100/3710580 B 429100/3710700
C 428980/3710700 D 428980/3710580

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Rockledge Neighborhood
2. Historic name: Same
3. Street or rural address: Multiple
City Laguna Beach Zip 92651 County Orange
4. Parcel number: Multiple
5. Present Owner: Multiple Address: _____
City _____ Zip _____ Ownership is: Public _____ Private XX
6. Present Use: Single family residential Original use: Single family residential

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: 20's Bungalows and Mediterranean Revival
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The Rockledge neighborhood is a small blufftop community of two streets, Rockledge Terrace and Rockledge Road. Rockledge was originally subdivided as one neighborhood entity and remains that way today. The first home, #7 Rockledge Road, is still intact as are three of the Mediterranean Revival oceanfront homes which went up in the late 20's. These four homes are itemized here.

The remainder of the neighborhood dates to the 40's and later, with most of these being very contemporary or contemporized. Rockledge is a neighborhood of houses with minimum setbacks and interior orientations so as to maximize privacy.

Houses included here are all well maintained and have been upgraded over the years. Most appear to be relatively unaltered.

Attach Photo(s) Here

8. Construction date: 1923-30
Estimated _____ Factual XX
9. Architect Some by
Garrett Van Pelt
10. Builder Various - unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 50' Depth 150'
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
November 1980

13. Condition: Excellent Good _____ Fair _____ Deteriorated _____ No longer in existence _____
14. Alterations: _____
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land _____ Scattered buildings _____ Densely built-up _____
Residential Industrial _____ Commercial _____ Other: Ocean
16. Threats to site: None known Private development _____ Zoning _____ Vandalism _____
Public Works project _____ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? Moved? _____ Unknown? _____
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

The blufftop houses of Rockledge distinguish the coastline of Laguna Beach. The three Mediterranean Revivals and the shingled bungalow are important to the bluffline legacy of Laguna; these houses are relatively unaltered and form excellent period architectural examples. The houses here in Rockledge are typical of the large estate homes built by the wealthy in the period from 1928 to 1935.

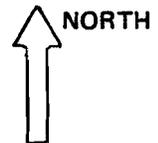
For a small community, Rockledge seems to have a large share of Laguna's history. From Dr. Beebe to Marjorie Beach, Rockledge has had an impressive array of homeowners who have contributed to the unique and eclectic history of Laguna.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure _____
Economic/Industrial _____ Exploration/Settlement _____
Government _____ Military _____
Religion _____ Social/Education _____

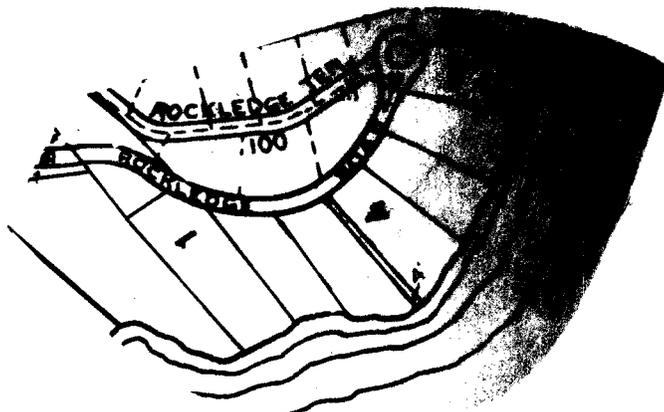
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
Orange Co. Assessor's Records
City Directories
Dorothy Stark Interview - Feb. 1981
South Coast Newspaper

22. Date form prepared April 1981
By (name) Kathleen Les
Organization Environmental Coalition
Address: 206 W. 4th St., Ste. 316
City Santa Ana Zip 92701
Phone: (714) 836-4314

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



NO PHOTO POSSIBLE



1. #1 Rockledge Road

1929 (E)

An Italian villa with blufftop location and ocean orientation. Garage is at street level and house is below at bluff edge. Large garden patio area links street entry with house. House is styled in the classic Italian Mediterranean manner.

This house was designed by Garrett Van Pelt and built as an Italian villa by William and Belle Jefferson of Pasadena. They had honeymooned in Italy and came back with the idea of building an Italian dream house. They chose this spot to do so. In addition to the architecture being very Italian, all the furnishings were as well. Roman chairs, low divans, marble topped tables, leather bound books and marble statues all graced the interior.

Christopher Wood, an Englishman, became the second owner. He was considered the neighborhood eccentric, but all were delighted with the piano playing that emanated from his house. Gerald Heard, philosopher, author and lecturer, was his frequent guest.

Beginning in the early 50's, the house came under the ownership of Marjorie Beach. She came to Laguna as a recent widow, but had come from Kansas where her former husband had been mayor and was responsible for the clean-up of Kansas City. She and her husband were pioneering sorts, and she carried on without him.

Mrs. Beach published two books, "The Mayor's Wife" and "First the Seed." She was friends with several prominent writers who came to stay as her guests. In addition, she had a fondness for the people of Laguna and opened her home to many civic and religious groups for meetings there.



2. #4 Rockledge Road

1928 (E)

A Mediterranean Revival estate on the blufftop with an ocean orientation. While it cascades down the bluff, the house has a modified box plan, a tiled hipped roof and stucco siding. A corner turret on the west corner and two ornamental vent projections deviate from the otherwise flat faces. The lower story on the ocean side has three arched windows, the center of which has a wrought iron balcony. Rectangular casement windows are on the upper story and are connected by an iron balcony with ornamental wood brackets below. The house sits on a bend in the bluff and strikes a commanding pose.

The house was originally owned by Dr. Beebe and his wife, Eva. Dr. Beebe was a medical doctor and a partner in the subdivision and development of Dana Point as well. His wife Eva named the streets in Dana Point. With the proceeds from that investment he built his family home here in Rockledge.

Dr. Beebe was fond of playing the organ and had a special room upstairs where he did so. Mrs. Beebe was a poetess whose life ended when she fell down the cliff to the rocks below one night in her sleep.

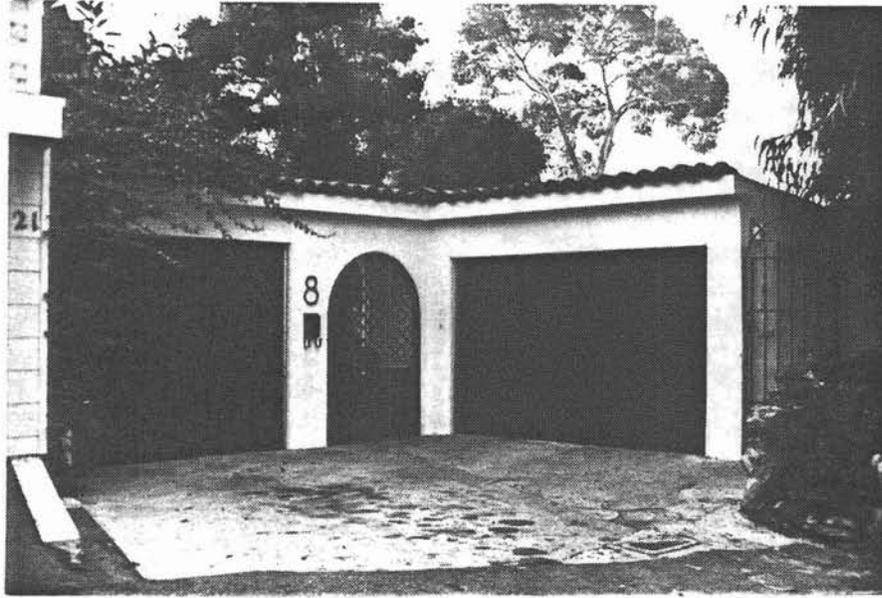


3. #7 Rockledge Road

1923 (E)

This is a large Craftsman influenced blufftop house with ocean orientation. A multi-gabled roofline and patterned shingle siding are complemented by bay windows and large fixed sash windows which extend around most of the first and second story. A porch and balcony above are located on the south wing. The roof slopes slightly outward at the eaves. A stairway descended along the cliff to the beach below, though the last segment at the beach is missing. A large retaining wall has been fashioned of beach stones at the bluff edge and across the width of the lot.

The house was originally built for the Hall's who first owned all of Rockledge and then subdivided it. In the late 30's it was acquired by Jim and Josephine Ross. Mr. Ross was an oil man who was only able to be home at the holidays. Mrs. Ross lived there with the three sons while he was gone. The eldest son, Don, was a famous engineer responsible for the underground hangers in the fortress near the Rock of Gibraltar. The other son, Darrell, produced the Shirley Temple TV show. Mr. Ross fell to his death over the cliff one day as he was trimming the bushes.



4. #8 Rockledge Road

1930 (E)

A blufftop Mediterranean Revival estate with oceanfront orientation and a brick facade with a tiled roof. From the ocean side, the side wings have sloping roof while the center is flat; pilasters marking the center and side wings are connected by tile hoods. Two elongated mullioned French doors are located on either side of a large fixed pane window. Brick chimney is on the side of the house. From the street only the garage/entry is visible. A courtyard garden links this and the house.

The house was designed by architect Garrett Van Pelt of Pasadena who intended to live in the house himself. Just as the house was finished, his plans changed and he moved to Mexico where he worked as a architect for many years.

Van Pelt worked largely in partnership with the architect Sylvanus Marston and was considered the artist of the firm. It was his firm that was largely responsible for creating the commercial and cultural setting for the then new Civic Center in Pasadena. Van Pelt largely designed Period Revival homes and was most prolific during the 20's and 30's. He later published a book on the architecture of Mexico.