



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

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November 28, 2018

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room B-50
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60.6(c) I am notifying you that the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at its next meeting intends to consider and take action on the nomination of the above-named property to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Details on that meeting are on the enclosed notice. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving California's cultural heritage. If the item is removed from the scheduled agenda, you will be notified by mail.

Local government comments regarding the National Register eligibility of this property are welcomed. Letters should be sent to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95816. So that the SHRC will have adequate time to consider them, it is requested, but not required, that written comments be received by the Office of Historic Preservation fifteen (15) days before the SHRC meeting. Interested parties are encouraged to attend the SHRC meeting and present oral testimony.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

The federal requirements covering the National Register program are to be found in the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60. State law regarding the California Register is in the Public Resources Code, Section 5024. Should you have questions regarding this nomination, or would like a copy of the nomination, please contact the Registration Unit at (916) 445-7004. **Note that staff revises nominations throughout the nomination process.**

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

Marshall McKay, Chair
Alberto Bertoli, AIA
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David Phoenix
Adrian Praetzellis, PhD
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MEETING NOTICE

FOR: State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting

DATE: Friday, February 1, 2019

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: State Resources Building—Auditorium
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

This room is accessible to people with disabilities. Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to the Registration Unit (916) 445-7008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Other names/site number: Mirlo Gate Lodge, Mirlo Gate Tower

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

DRAFT

2. Location

Street & number: 4420 Via Valmonte

City or town: Palos Verdes Estates State: CA County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☒

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century/French Eclectic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____

MIRLO GATE TOWER –

FOUNDATION – Concrete with timber support

WALLS – Palos Verdes stone (limestone) and lime mortar

ROOF – Wood shakes

PIERS and WALLS – CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING –

WALLS – Palos Verdes stone (limestone) and lime mortar or concrete mortar

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is one of the first buildings built for the Palos Verdes Project. It is considered part of the “original landscaping” of the Palos Verdes Project¹ which was under the direction of the prestigious landscape architecture firm, the Olmsted Brothers. The architect, Clarence E. Howard, who was employed by the Olmsted Brothers, designed many beginning commercial and residential buildings for the Palos Verdes Project, specifically ones targeting potential, future residents, including the Palos Verdes Estates Golf Clubhouse and the Palos Verdes Estates Riding Academy. The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is the embodiment of the ancient art of stonemasonry and techniques that are no longer handed down. Its design is closely modeled after the tower-shaped, stone pigeonier/dovecote towers found in parts of France; Howard likely saw these on his travels through France after the First World War.² The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is an exceptional and rare example of stone masonry, built in 1925.

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is located on Assessor’s Parcel Number 7537-018-900 on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the coastal city of Palos Verdes Estates, California. The lot is located on a park greenbelt belonging to the City of Palos Verdes Estates. The greenbelt runs along the north and north east border between the City of Torrance and Palos Verdes Estates. The building is sited on the west side of the lot. The address is 4420 Via Valmonte. Prominently placed at the top of a hill, the building stands on high ground in the Valmonte neighborhood of Palos Verdes Estates. The Valmonte, single-family neighborhood was advertised as being inland on high ground overlooking the metropolitan areas, the mountains, and the sea.³ The building was originally built as a gate tower and lodging for a gatekeeper but research shows that it was only ever used as a residence for city employees, including a gardener, and a policeman; it is the official east entrance of Palos Verdes Estates.

¹ Palos Verdes Peninsula News, “Walteria Grade Lookout,” 27.

² Flickr Hive Mind. “Nièvre, Pigeonnier.” Accessed September 1, 2018.
<https://hiveminer.com/Tags/ni%C3%A8vre%2Cpigeonnier>.

³ Cheney, “Where Poor Architecture Cannot Come,” 81.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Narrative Description

The building is two stories with a semi-finished basement. The total square footage is 508. The lot slopes down approximately ten feet toward the rear of the property, allowing the basement to be a walk-out. The building is round in shape, and eighteen feet in diameter. The exterior wall is built of Palos Verdes stone and the interior face is built of brick; utilizing the Scottish bond method of unreinforced masonry.⁴ The roof shape is conical, with a king post at its center peak and overlapping wood shakes, open eaves and exposed rafter tails. A low, stone chimney protrudes from the south side of the roof.

The tower's main entrance faces west toward the road, and is set back several feet from the road. A quarter-height, Palos Verdes stone wall delineates a flower garden from the landing of the main entrance door. The landing and attached walkway are also made of Palos Verdes stone, and are original. A stone wall abuts the west side of the tower and leads to two stone piers near the road, made of Palos Verdes stone, and are original. A brass, historical marker plaque is visible on the pier closest to the road. An original Olmsted Brothers planted tree is visible next to the pier. Just off the road is a stone and mortar mailbox in the shape of a stone tower.

A flower garden abuts the tower on the south side with a ground border of stone lining a garden, terraced as the ground slopes toward the back of the property, and is non-original. The north and east sides of the tower are largely unseen from the road. A non-original, stone wall and fountain pool abut the northeast side of the tower. The basement is only accessible from the east side of the tower. The driveway is asphalt which slopes approximately ten feet and ends at a small parking pad at the east, or rear of the property.

Across the road (Via Valmonte) are two additional stone piers made of Palos Verdes stone, and both are original according to the 1925 plans.⁵ (See Figure 3 and Figure 4) A non-original, newer Palos Verdes stone wall joins together the two original stone piers; the wall has a concrete insert that reads "Palos Verdes Estates."⁶ An original, Olmsted Brothers planted tree is visible near the pier. A stone retaining wall runs north just off the road, and another small stone retaining wall borders a pedestrian walkway, possibly original.

Exterior

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower's exterior wall is made of locally-sourced limestone named Palos Verdes stone. The stone is set into lime mortar; utilizing both rubble and cut stone. Evidence of

⁴ Civilology. "14 Types of Brick Bonds." Accessed August 26, 2018. <http://www.civilology.com/types-of-brick-bonds/>.

⁵ 4420 Via Valmonte architectural plans and permits. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association and City of Palos Verdes Estates, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

⁶ Lot "C" Tract 7143 Valmonte East Boundary folder. City of Palos Verdes Estates, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

tool marks are visible. The Palos Verdes stone is beige and gray in color; natural, layer striations and marine worm holes are visible on the stones.

Through-stones are visible at the main entrance and the basement entrance. The through-stone technique, although not always visible, is utilized in order to stabilize the stone building and tie together the building transversely. Every 18-24 vertical inches, a near level line of stone is visible where the stone is noticeably brought to course; stone walls brought to course are generally stronger than walls set at random.⁷ The wall is approximately eighteen inches thick at the first and second floors; the wall at basement level is thicker presenting as a buttress with sloping faces. The stone facework utilizes the Irish Gobán Saor rule of “1 on 2 and 2 on 1” laying of stones and bondstones,⁸ which can be seen as coursed layers between the through-stones. The stones are laid weathered/natural face, seam face and split face in their bedding, an indication of the level of skill of the stonemason. The style of the mortar joints varies from flush to recessed, at times cut to a depth of three inches, which tells more about the stonemason’s style and likely architect Howard’s input. Pinning stones are visible and vary in size.

The main entrance door is recessed with an overlapping lintel and landing step made of a single, massive, Palos Verdes stone. The door is wood with decorative, iron elements, and is not original. A non-original, iron, wall sconce is visible. The basement door is also recessed with an overlapping lintel. The door is flanked by stone buttresses with sloping faces. The door is a 2-panel, Dutch door with the top panel made of multi-colored, diamond-shaped window panes. The door frame is wood with evidence of sawmill marks. The landing is an asphalt parking pad. A cornerstone is visible to the basement door’s right, possibly containing a mason mark. Electrical meter, sprinkler system, and utility wires are visible.

There are six small, irregularly-placed, casement windows. Four of the six windows and casements appear to be original but the glass panes have been replaced with colored, leaded glass panes in a diamond pattern and are three-over-two windows. The other two casement windows are two-over-two and appear to be original. The roof shape is conical, with a king post at its center peak and overlapping wood shakes, open eaves, and exposed rafter tails. A low, stone chimney is visible protruding from south side of the roof.

Interior

The tower’s interior face is made of brick and covered in plaster or lathe and plaster in some areas, and is original. The mortar joints are recessed. The bricks are laid in the Scottish bond method of unreinforced masonry; this is part of the double wall, stone and brick, that have been used for unreinforced, stone structures like the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower for centuries.⁹ The first-floor ceiling has visible wood planks, and small and large, structural, wood beams that are hand

⁷ Mytton-Davies, *A Practical Guide to Repair and Maintenance of Houses*, 30.

⁸ McAfee, *Stone Buildings*, 110.

⁹ McAfee, 104.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

hewn with visible scoring axe cuts and hewing adze cuts and notched joints. The ceiling is in its original state. There is a large, original fireplace and hearth made of Palos Verdes stone in the sitting area, with an iron fireplace crane. A chimney breast is visible. The windows are recessed with curved, smooth, uneven plaster edges. (See Figure 5)

Textured wall paper covers the brick masonry, and is not original. The floor is carpeted, with wood planks likely underneath. A non-original partition wall, covered in wood paneling, divides the kitchen from the sitting area. An original, wood staircase leads to the second floor. The second floor is the sleeping room, with a small bathroom with sink, toilet and walk-in shower, which is the original configuration. The second floor also has a closet and an open storage loft above the stair landing.¹⁰ (See Figure 5)

The second-floor polygon ceiling has exposed, wood beams and planks. The planks show evidence of sawmill cuts; the beams are hand hewn with visible scoring axe cuts and hewing adze cuts. The ceiling is in its original state. An iron lantern hangs by a chain from the center of the ceiling, and is not original. The chimney breast is visible. The walls are smooth plaster, and the windows are recessed and have curved, smooth, uneven plaster edges. The floor is carpeted.

The basement is semi-finished. Evident from the exposed brick wall, the tower was built into the sloping ground. The bricks are laid in the Scottish bond method. The wall's through-stones are visible at the ceiling. Wood ceiling joists and floor planks are exposed, and are original. The floor/foundation is concrete with timber support, and is original. An exposed, horizontal, support timber is in the center, and is original.

Alterations/Conditions

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is largely unchanged since 1925 and retains excellent integrity. (See Figure 1) The original stonework is intact. There does appear to be evidence of mold on some of the stones, and some stones are cracked. Comparing a recent photograph to a 1925 photograph, the tower is in remarkably good condition. The Palos Verdes stone with hard edges have softened in some places, and mortar is more recessed in areas, but overall the tower exterior is in good condition. There is evidence of efflorescence on the brick face in the basement interior. The mortar on the west abutting wall is lifting and falling; this is common when a stone wall is built on soft soil and sloping land.

A non-original, newer, Palos Verdes stone walkway extends from the original, Palos Verdes stone walkway from the main entrance door; evidence of the non-original walkway is seen in a 1966 article.¹¹ Both the main entrance door and basement door have been replaced; the original, main entrance door may have been removed after 1966.¹² An iron, wall sconce was added to the

¹⁰ 4420 Via Valmonte architectural plans and permits. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association and City of Palos Verdes Estates, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

¹¹ Palos Verdes Peninsula News, "Stone House in Limelight," n.p.

¹² Ibid.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

side of the main entrance door. The asphalt driveway is also evident in the same 1966 article; the driveway was originally dirt. Abutting the northeast wall, which is not visible from the street, is a rock wall and fountain pool, which was added by the current tenant in the 1970s. Evidence of the existing terraced, retaining stone wall abutting the tower is seen in the 1969 photograph but does not appear to be original.¹³ Four of the six windows and casements appear to be original but the glass panes have been replaced with colored, leaded glass panes in a diamond pattern. The chimney was waterproofed in 1970. The roof was replaced with medium thickness, wood shakes in 1972. In 2001, DensDeck roof boards were applied, and the existing wood shakes reinstalled.¹⁴ The original roof had redwood shakes.

Electricity and outdoor sprinklers have been added. A stone, retaining wall on the east side of the property appears to be original. A weathervane for the tower was sketched by the Olmsted Brothers and approved by the Art Jury on September 9, 1925 but it does not appear it was ever fabricated.¹⁵

Cosmetic changes were done to the interior by the current resident in the 1970s. Red carpeting covers all the floors except the small bathroom on the second floor. Textured wallpaper and wood paneling cover most walls in the sitting room. Stereo speakers hang from the ceiling. The first-floor closet seen on the original plans was removed. The kitchen layout was reconfigured and shrunk by replacing the stove and sink with a compact kitchen combination sink, stove, and refrigerator. An added wall hides the water heater. A pass-through/half-wall was added between the kitchen and living room. The iron, wall sconces flanking the chimney breast are not original; the original sconces were last seen in a Palos Verdes Peninsula News article in 1966.¹⁶ A possibly-original plaque, hanging on the chimney breast, also has not been seen since the same 1966 article.

On the second floor, iron wall sconces and an iron lantern which hangs by chain from the center of the ceiling are not original. The configuration of the bathroom appears unchanged according to the 1925 plans; the bathroom cupboards appear to be original.

Integrity

The building possesses excellent integrity of original location, workmanship, materials and design features, and maintains most intangible elements of feeling and association to the past extending back into the beginning history of Palos Verdes Estates and the Palos Verdes Project. The setting has changed somewhat due to residential building having encroached nearer to the tower due to the housing needs of the community; however, the building is on parkland which

¹³ Daily Breeze and Peninsula Breeze, "House Made of P.V. Stone," 140.

¹⁴ 4420 Via Valmonte, Mirlo Gate Tower folder. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

¹⁵ Palos Verdes Estates Art Jury Minutes, September 9, 1925. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

¹⁶ Palos Verdes Peninsula News, "Stone House in Limelight," n.p.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

keeps any development to a certain distance. Also, the driveway and roadway have been paved with asphalt to keep up with the needs of automobile use.

Previous Historical Analyses

In 1966, the Palos Verdes Estates City Council stated that it was their intent to “preserve it (Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower) as a landmark, standing as a gatehouse to the city with a commanding view of the South Bay to the north and east.”¹⁷

The Rancho de los Palos Verdes Historical Society named the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower a historical landmark on September 10, 1988. They erected a historical marker at the site; a bronze plaque states the site name and a brief history.

In July 2018, all five Palos Verdes Estates City Councilmembers gave their endorsement for the potential listing of the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower on the National Register of Historic Places. And, both the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association and the Palos Verdes Estates Historical Status Committee are in support of its potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

¹⁷ N.A., “Tower House Relet,” n.p.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Community Planning and Development
(East Entrance into Palos Verdes Estates)
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1925

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clarence E. Howard
Employee of the Olmsted Brothers
Chief Architect of Palos Verdes Estates

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C at the local level due to its association with architect, landscape architect, and city planner, Clarence E. Howard. Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower marks the east entrance into the Palos Verdes Estates community; one of only two entrances into Palos Verdes Estates in 1925. The building respects the construction and design principals set by the new city's Art Jury, established in 1922, but Howard's French eclectic design is playful and romantic, taking cues from French Medieval and Roman stone buildings, yet fits seamlessly into the "California Architecture" Palos Verdes Estates aesthetic. Although not a well-known designer, Howard was very highly regarded among his contemporary architects and designers. Howard was voted onto the Art Jury shortly after it formed; he designed several landmark buildings in the community and his use of Palos Verdes stone became synonymous with "California Architecture" style.¹⁸

Howard's most well-known design is the Rainbow Pool at the Lincoln Memorial and its surrounding landscape, which are contributing features to the East and West Potomac Parks Historic District National Register of Historic Places listing. Nationally-celebrated, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. requested Howard be hired to design the Rainbow Pool, and to assist Olmsted in the design of the east-west pool axis (Reflecting Pool) and create a planting plan for the memorial.¹⁹ Howard worked on and off for the Olmsted Brothers throughout his career but it was with Palos Verdes Estates – "the Riviera of America" – that Howard developed his life-long affinity of designing with stone and consequently making him the go-to architect when the Olmsted Brothers needed a stone structure designed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Clarence Edward Howard was born in 1881 in Baldwinsville, New York. His father was a jeweler, builder, and business man. Howard graduated from Syracuse University in 1902 with a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture; his thesis was titled "Design for a Library and Museum."²⁰ After graduation, Howard worked with many prestigious architecture firms, including New York's J. Galen Howard (Master Plan for the University of California, Berkeley) and Carrère and Hastings (New York Public Library and premier firm associated with the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, France). From 1904 to 1908, Howard was with Chicago's D.H. Burnham and Company (1893 World's Fair in Chicago and Beaux-Arts influence); he assisted in drawings for "The Plan

¹⁸ Palos Verdes Bulletin, "California Architecture," 2, 3.

¹⁹ Historic American Building Survey, HABS No. DC-838, "Rainbow Pool," 1, 9.

²⁰ Wagner, Grace. "Clarence E Howard." Syracuse University. Email, 2018.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

of Chicago,” a plan which laid out the future city and relied heavily on the popularity of Ebenezer Howard’s “City Beautiful Movement.” The plan would have a profound impact on the field of city planning.²¹ Howard also assisted with the City Plans of Cleveland, San Francisco, Detroit, Portland, Oregon, and later Minneapolis and Syracuse.²² Like all his mentors, Howard attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, France in 1906-07 and 1909-1910. In 1910, he qualified as a city planner and architect.

In 1915, at the age of 31, Howard managed the Architectural Department for the San Francisco World’s Fair, and worked with notable architects and artists of the time, including Henry Bacon, Willis Polk, Edward H Bennett, Robert Farquhar (a future colleague on the Palos Verdes Project), and Alexander Calder.²³ Not coincidentally, the exposition’s California building was in the “old Spanish Mission style,” which would complement the future California Architecture style of the Palos Verdes Project.

Before Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. brought Howard on for the Palos Verdes Project, Howard had three known jobs working for the Olmsted Brothers firm. The Olmsted name by this time was the most recognized in landscape architecture in the United States and abroad. Frederick Law Olmsted and his partners had designed hundreds of park systems, universities, libraries, state capitals, hospitals, and residential neighborhoods, including New York City’s Central Park. Olmsted’s sons, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and John Charles Olmsted, changed the firm name to the Olmsted Brothers in 1898 after their father’s retirement. Howard’s study in City Planning for the 1913 National Conference on City Planning was his first known job with the Olmsted Brothers. Olmsted’s influence can be seen in Howard’s drawings of street type cross sections with the presence of large trees and shrubbery, but also an original vision that would flourish in the Palos Verdes Project nine years later.²⁴

Howard’s next project with the Olmsted Brothers was for a landscape treatment plan of the entire Lincoln Memorial site, including designing the axis for the Reflecting Pool, a planting plan, and the Beaux-Arts style Rainbow Pool for the Lincoln memorial.²⁵ His next project was to design a military expansion camp for the City of Syracuse. At the time, he was working for City of Syracuse and its Planning Commission as an expert in city planning.²⁶

During and after the First World War, Howard spent time in Paris and the French countryside where he was exposed to the medieval architecture that would be the impetus for the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower. His photographs from the time, reveal his study of the old, stone buildings and

²¹ Chicago Architecture Center. “1909 Plan of Chicago.” Accessed July 5, 2018.

<http://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/architecture-dictionary/entry/1909-plan-of-chicago/>.

²² Howard, Clarence (Employee), #771-1. Library of Congress, Olmsted Associates Records.

²³ San Francisco Call, “Experts at Work on Plans for Exposition,” Vol 112, No 75.

²⁴ Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, NPS. Job #3706.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/olmsted_archives/.

²⁵ Historic American Building Survey, HABS No. DC-838, “Rainbow Pool,” 1, 9.

²⁶ American Institute of Architects, Committee of Town Planning, *Progress in the United States, 1917*.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

destruction most suffered.²⁷ This exposure seems to have been a creative turning point for Howard. Howard had come to architecture through extensive academic study and cooperative work with some of the most prestigious firms and individuals in architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning. It was then his service for the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in France that would be his next major influence.

At the beginning of the great reconstruction of France's towns and cities, Howard taught at the Art School for Men of the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris from 1918 to 1919. The school offered courses in the arts as well as architecture and city planning. The school looked to Paris as an example of how city planning and architecture could be elevated to an artform. Howard and his students visited Chauny in northern France; he taught them how to look at the landscape's topography and condition to interpret what should be developed.²⁸ Howard visited several French medieval towns on school fieldtrips. One trip was to the Lot area in the Midi-Pyrenees region of southern France, which is known for its charming medieval stone buildings and round stone tower pigeonniers, which look very similar to the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower.²⁹ During this time, Howard further developed his philosophy that a newly-built environment should be influenced by its surrounding hills, marshes, rivers with the separation of industry, commercial, residential, parks and playground into districts – this would all be evident in his design and work at the Palos Verdes Project.

When Howard returned from the A.E.F., he went back to work with the Syracuse planning commission. But in 1922, he joined the Olmsted Brothers on the Palos Verdes Project. The Olmsted's had been involved with the Palos Verdes Project since 1913. From 1913 to 1916, the Olmsted Brothers firm had surveyed the peninsula, drawn topographical maps and road studies, and drawn the first studies of neighborhoods that would populate the entire peninsula. When Howard joined the Palos Verdes Project in 1922, the Olmsted Brothers had been granted the centralized responsibility of direction and preparation of all Palos Verdes Estates plans.³⁰ (The Olmsted Brothers firm was named the Directors of Design, and Charles H. Cheney was named a Consultant in City Planning.) Howard assisted Cheney in developing the final, general plan of the Palos Verdes peninsula (16,000 acres) based off the "old project in 1915."³¹ Olmsted Jr. made Howard the Chief Architect of the Palos Verdes Project.³² (See Figure 2)

Howard was elected as an Art Jury Associate in January 1923,³³ along with Myron Hunt, Robert D. Farquhar, David C. Allison, Jay Lawyer, Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr, and Charles H. Cheney.

²⁷ Clarence E Howard photographs, Collection of Lucia Howard Cushman.

²⁸ U.S. Army Expeditionary Forces, *Report of the American E.F. Art Training Center*, 33.

²⁹ Ibid, 111.

³⁰ Akimoto, "California Garden Suburbs: St. Francis Wood and Palos Verdes," 10.

³¹ Memorandum to Mr. Lewis from F.L. Olmsted, October 5, 1922. Edward Gardner (E.G.) Lewis Collection. Palos Verdes Library District Digital Archives, Rolling Hills Estates, CA.
<https://www.palosverdeshistory.org/islandora/object/pvld%3A7068>.

³² Clarence E Howard photographs, Collection of Lucia Howard Cushman.

³³ Art Jury Appointments, Bios, and Related Correspondence folder. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

He was present at the first Art Jury meeting in November of 1922.³⁴ The Art Jury was officially formed in 1923 to protect the utopian-like landscape by monitoring all building specifications and property changes to the developing peninsula. The Art Jury set a high standard by offering their expert opinions on design, aesthetics, and appropriateness of buildings and plants on their surroundings.³⁵ Howard was also named Building Commissioner in 1924; he took over the position from Cheney.³⁶ Howard was present and reported on his own designs and other's designs at the Art Jury meetings and the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association meetings. The Art Jury and The Homes Association would ensure a beautiful city with its protective restrictions and guidelines.

Howard's most lasting influence in the Palos Verdes Project can be seen through his designs for the beginning buildings for the project that would entice future property buyers, and his use of the prevalent Palos Verdes stone as a building and decorative material in Palos Verdes Estates. Howard adopted the California Architecture style but used stone in his interpretation. The use of Palos Verdes stone created a sense of place and regional character in his designs.³⁷ The California Architecture style had been naturally developing since the 19th century, with the influence of Mission and Spanish Colonial styles and taking architectural inspiration from Italy, France, and Mexico, making it an extremely eclectic style.³⁸

In 1923, as Chief Architect for the Palos Verdes Project, Howard was the first to use Palos Verdes stone when he designed the stone patios, feature walls, and fountain for Palos Verdes Estates' first building, La Venta Inn, which was built to be a popular destination for dining, sightseeing trips, and ultimately to entice potential buyers.³⁹ Howard's design of the Palos Verdes Estates Golf Club and its architecture set the standard and in a sense made the formal commitment to the California Architecture style as being synonymous with Palos Verdes Estates architecture. Howard also designed the Palos Verdes Estates Riding Academy.

The Palos Verdes Homes Association and its newly formed Palos Verdes Bulletin magazine used Howard's buildings to advertise the idea of the idyllic life in Palos Verdes Estates. Articles showcased different characteristics of California Architecture, particularly the patios, walkways, garden walls, and stairways made of the Palos Verdes "native stone." Advertisements in the Los Angeles Times featured drawings and photographs of Howard's buildings, a bucolic setting and easy living, where residents and their families could golf, ride horses, and garden among a truly virgin and burgeoning landscape. It was in a sentence – "American living at its finest."⁴⁰

³⁴ Palos Verdes Estates Art Jury Minutes, November 21, 1922. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

³⁵ Los Angeles Times, "Display Ad 121—No Title," D18.

³⁶ Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association Minutes, April 23, 1924. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

³⁷ O'Hara, Christine Edstrom, "Ecological Planning in 1920s California: The Olmsted Brothers Design of Palos Verdes Estates," 229.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Morgan, *The Palos Verdes Story*, 51.

⁴⁰ PV Peninsula News, "Foresight Shown in Planning P.V.," No 1.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Before Howard started designing the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower, he had solidified the use of stone into the California Style vernacular. Howard designed the Palos Verdes landmark residences for Charles H. Cheney, Olmsted Brothers landscape architect James F. Dawson, and Palos Verdes Estates postmaster E.L. Etter, plus several charming round and rectangular stone pump houses, and footbridges made of stone or wood. Howard had clearly mastered the Olmsted Brothers design principles – a landscape design plan which appears true and organic, having fluid movement in walking or driving paths, and the most important principle, a sustainable design, which features and utilizes natural features and a continued “ecological health” of the area.⁴¹

In 1925, Howard was tasked with creating a landscape design for the east entrance into Palos Verdes Estates, only the second entrance into the community at the time. (The north entrance which was the first and main entrance to Palos Verdes Estates, would “plunge directly into the wood of eucalyptus”⁴² and the color of various species of trees and shrubs with wide roads and sidewalks.) The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower stands unparalleled to any other stone design created by Howard. The tower shows Howard’s grasp of the Palos Verdes aesthetic and him putting his own personal artistry into it in the form of the tower with its pastoral whimsy and the distinction and depth of stonemasonry. Based on the tower’s construction techniques, it is likely that it was constructed by a highly-skilled stonemason of Irish or Scottish descent.

Although there is not much material written on the tower or the east entrance, we know Howard’s design was called “delightful” and “charming” by the Art Jury, which was likely its purpose since the small building would have such a commanding presence.⁴³ A tower connotes strength, longevity, stability, which would be something a new community would want to connote, especially Palos Verdes Estates. A new resident might drive past the tower and wonder if it had been there for centuries, perhaps left over from the pastoral rancho days. And, since the Palos Verdes Project was partly in response to what was perceived as ugly, modern cities, the tower would be the first clue that one was entering somewhere new.

The tower sits on a narrow, “protective strip” of Palos Verdes Estates parkland, which encloses the entire development on its landward boundary.⁴⁴ The tower stands on high ground in the Valmonte neighborhood of Palos Verdes Estates. The Valmonte, single-family neighborhood was advertised as being inland on high ground overlooking the metropolitan areas, the mountains, and the sea.⁴⁵ The original intent of the tower was for it to be a guard tower but research shows that it was never used for that purpose. The tower was used, however, as a residence for city employees, including a gardener, and a policeman. Howard imagined a masterful design, which kept in line with the Olmsted design principles especially in relation to

⁴¹ National Association for Olmsted Parks. “Design Principles.” Accessed September 6, 2018.

<http://www.olmsted.org/the-olmsted-legacy/olmsted-theory-and-design-principles/design-principles>.

⁴² FLO Binder 1 – Correspondence, drawings – FLO to J.F.D., 1922, 1923 folder. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

⁴³ Palos Verdes Estates Art Jury Minutes, March 11, 1925. Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

⁴⁴ Olmsted Jr., “Palos Verdes Estates,” 262.

⁴⁵ Cheney, “Where Poor Architecture Cannot Come,” 81.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

regional climate. For example, the tower stays cool in the summer, its irregular placement of windows allows for wind drafts, and the tower shape and conical roof stand up to winds.

The tower clearly was an architecture form that Howard saw during his travels in France. Different styles of pigeonniers, for example, were in the shape of round or square towers, with small windows and often would have two faces – the interior of brick, and the outer of a native stone. Generally, they ranged two-stories tall, but some were as tall as four-stories. From as early as the Middle Ages, the pigeonnier towers were literally buildings, only owned by the aristocratic and landed gentry, which housed pigeons for consumption. The function was to allow the pigeons to fly freely in and out, lay their eggs, and during the winter time use their meat for needed protein, and the spring time use their waste for fertilizer. Pigeonniers were symbols of privilege and power of its owner. And, perhaps not unrelatedly, pigeons were used extensively to carry messages during the First World War.

With the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower, Howard designed a building based likely on his personal experiences, while expanding the California Architecture design aesthetic to include an enduring design that is artful, unique, with a bit of intrigue, magic, and romance, and consequently not to be repeated. Howard was intimately involved in the creation and design of Palos Verdes Estates, and it was with the Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower that Howard used native Palos Verdes stone and hand-hewn wood to elevate architecture to the level of art, and Howard to the level of master architect.

Throughout Howard's time with the Palos Verdes Project, it was said by the Olmsted Brothers firm that Howard was the chief architect and designed all of the beginning architectural buildings for the Palos Verdes Corporation.⁴⁶ Howard was called a "clever" and "splendid" designer, and it can be assumed that because he was "a little shy" and not known as a "go-getter," that his name has gotten somewhat lost in the beginning years of the project. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. writes that Howard was a "first rate architectural designer" and that his "quiet unassuming strength" allowed him to have a natural aptitude for working with engineers, landscape architects, architects, and even lawyers to come up with solutions.⁴⁷

Howard continued on at Palos Verdes Estates until late 1925. He also designed a stone gateway for the Point Vicente lighthouse, a fountain at the end of Via Corta in Malaga Cove (Farnham Martin Park), an Artist Colony which unfortunately never came to fruition, numerous stone Pump Houses and bridges made of stone, numerous residences, and even a model house for Palos Verdes Estates. His architecture won numerous accolades with the Art Jury.⁴⁸ He also co-designed the street signs for Palos Verdes Estates along with his future wife, Lucia Barber, who had spent a year in Spain before joining the Palos Verdes Project in the spring of 1923, and used

⁴⁶ Howard, Clarence (Employee), #771-1. Library of Congress, Olmsted Associates Records.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Various Palos Verdes Estates Art Jury minutes and Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association minutes, Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association, Palos Verdes Estates, California.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

that experience to name the streets after Spanish historical and personal figures, birds and other animals, and flowers and trees.⁴⁹

He returned to the building commission for the City of Syracuse as a city planning expert and architect after the Palos Verdes Project. As Chief Engineer with the Planning, Parks, and Recreation Commission, Howard drew plans with Harold A. Smith for the James Pass Arboretum in Syracuse, New York but the extensive five-year plan Howard had suggested was halted with the stock market crash of 1929. In 1994, it was made a Syracuse historical landmark. Since 1997, citizen volunteers have been slowly following the Smith-Howard plan.⁵⁰

Howard again worked with the Olmsted Brothers for the Fort Tryon Park project in New York City. Howard is listed as architect for the hillside, two-story stone building with hipped roof known as the "Concession Building," and it appears that he also was involved with the overall plot plan of the park.⁵¹ Constructed from 1931 to 1935, Fort Tryon Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and designated as a New York Scenic Landmark in 1983.⁵²

Other known Olmsted Brothers projects Howard was involved in was the Ganymede development (1925-1926) and its local stone entryway in Daytona Beach, Florida; the Burr Memorial (1926) in Hartford, Connecticut; Roosevelt Island National Memorial (1934) just east of the Lincoln Memorial; and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial (1938) in Washington, D.C.

One of the last projects Howard did in Syracuse was designing the Columbus Monument in Fayette Park.⁵³ In the late 1930s and into at least the 1940s, Howard worked with the Land Planning Division of the Federal Housing Administration with the site planning of landscape design work.⁵⁴ While in D.C., he also helped develop requirements for the planning of shopping centers.⁵⁵

Howard then retired in Bennington, Vermont. He was briefly brought out of retirement in 1962 to design a Veterans park and stone memorial for the Bennington townspeople.⁵⁶ He was involved in other projects in the Bennington area, including the layout and design of the Colgate Estates on Fillmore Farms which never came into fruition.⁵⁷ He and his wife remained very

⁴⁹ Palos Verdes Peninsula News, "Colorful Derivation of Streets Explained," 19.

⁵⁰ Syracuse, New York. "James Pass Arboretum." Accessed July 2, 2018.

<http://www.syracuse.ny.us/Parks/JamesPassArboretum.html>.

⁵¹ Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, NPS. Job #0529.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/olmsted_archives/.

⁵² New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Fort Tryon Park," September 20, 1983.

⁵³ The Post-Standard, "25 Years Ago Today," 4.

⁵⁴ Howard, Clarence (Employee), #771-1. Library of Congress, Olmsted Associates Records.

⁵⁵ The Burlington Free Press, "Clarence E. Howard," *The Burlington Free Press* (April 9, 1975): 12.

⁵⁶ Bennington Banner, "Veterans Groups Unveil Plan for Park, Stone Memorial," 16.

⁵⁷ Bennington Banner, "Life of the Land," 15.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

active in city politics; his wife ran for a seat in the Vermont House of Representatives in 1965.⁵⁸
In his later years, Howard enjoyed growing vegetables and painting.

His paintings of the Bennington Monument, the Old First Church, the Old Fire House, and Silk Road Bridge are located at the Bennington Museum.⁵⁹ Howard died in 1975, leaving his wife, two children, and eight grandchildren.

⁵⁸ Bennington Banner, "Mrs. Howard Run for Seat in Vt. House," 1.

⁵⁹ Bennington Museum. "Clarence Edward Howard." Accessed June 22, 2018.

<http://bennington.pastperfectonline.com/byperson?keyword=Howard%2C+Clarence+Edward>.

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Los Angeles, CA
County and State

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Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
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Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository: Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.82 (Palos Verdes Estates parkland)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.7986 | Longitude: -118.3554 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower is sited on the northwest side of Lot C of Tract No. 7143. The lot is located on parkland belonging to the City of Palos Verdes Estates. Lot C borders the city of Torrance to the northeast. Via Valmonte is located to the west. Parkland extends northwest and southeast, creating a border to Torrance to the east. The Assessor Parcel No. is 7537-018-900.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the property is the original boundary of the original parcel currently occupied by the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kate Eggert, Krisy Gosney
organization: GEHPC
street & number: 6444 Kraft Avenue
city or town: North Hollywood state: CA zip code: 91606
e-mail kate@gehpc.com, kateblaine@gmail.com
telephone: 323-481-4167
date: September 24, 2018

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

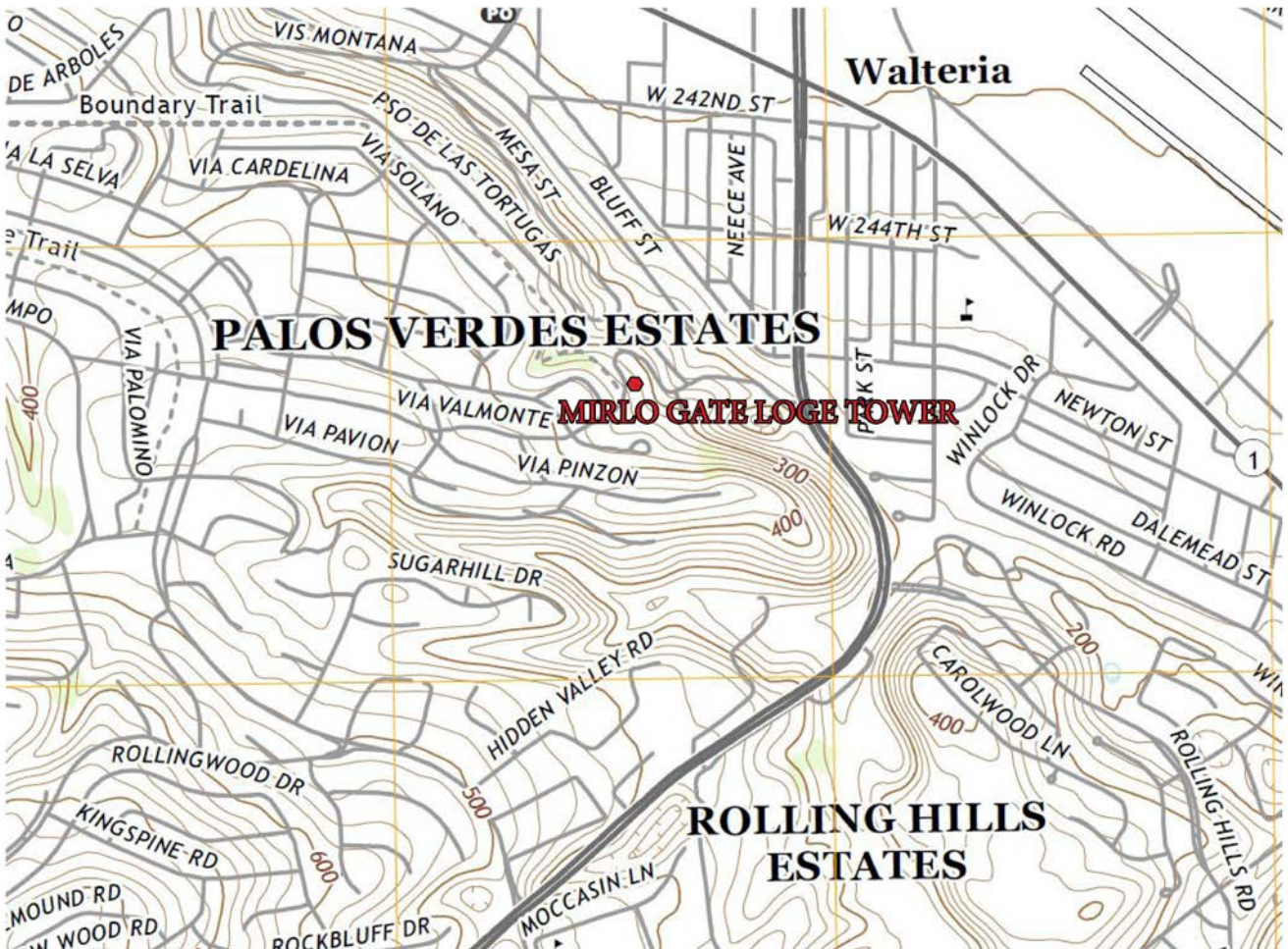
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

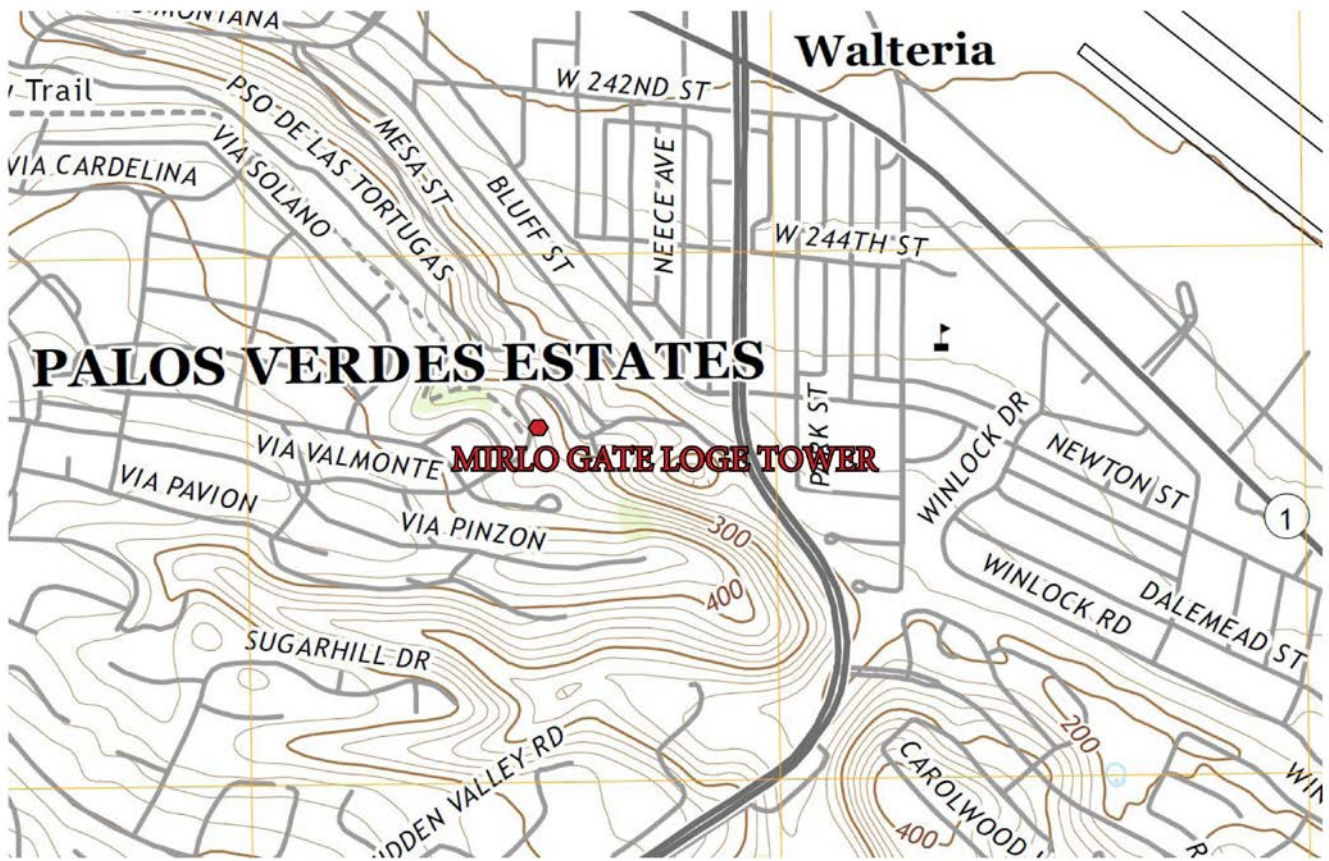
Map 1



Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Map 2



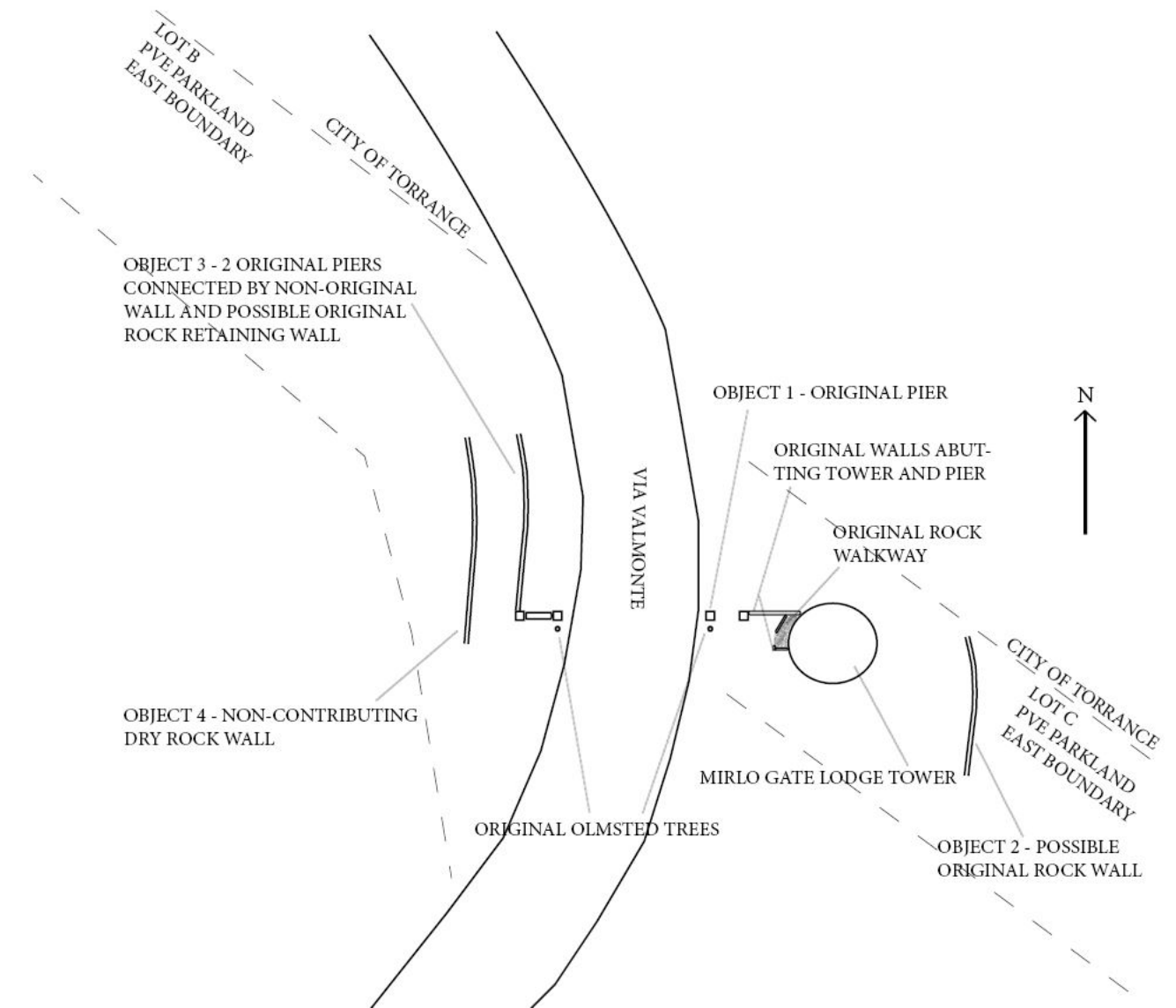
Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

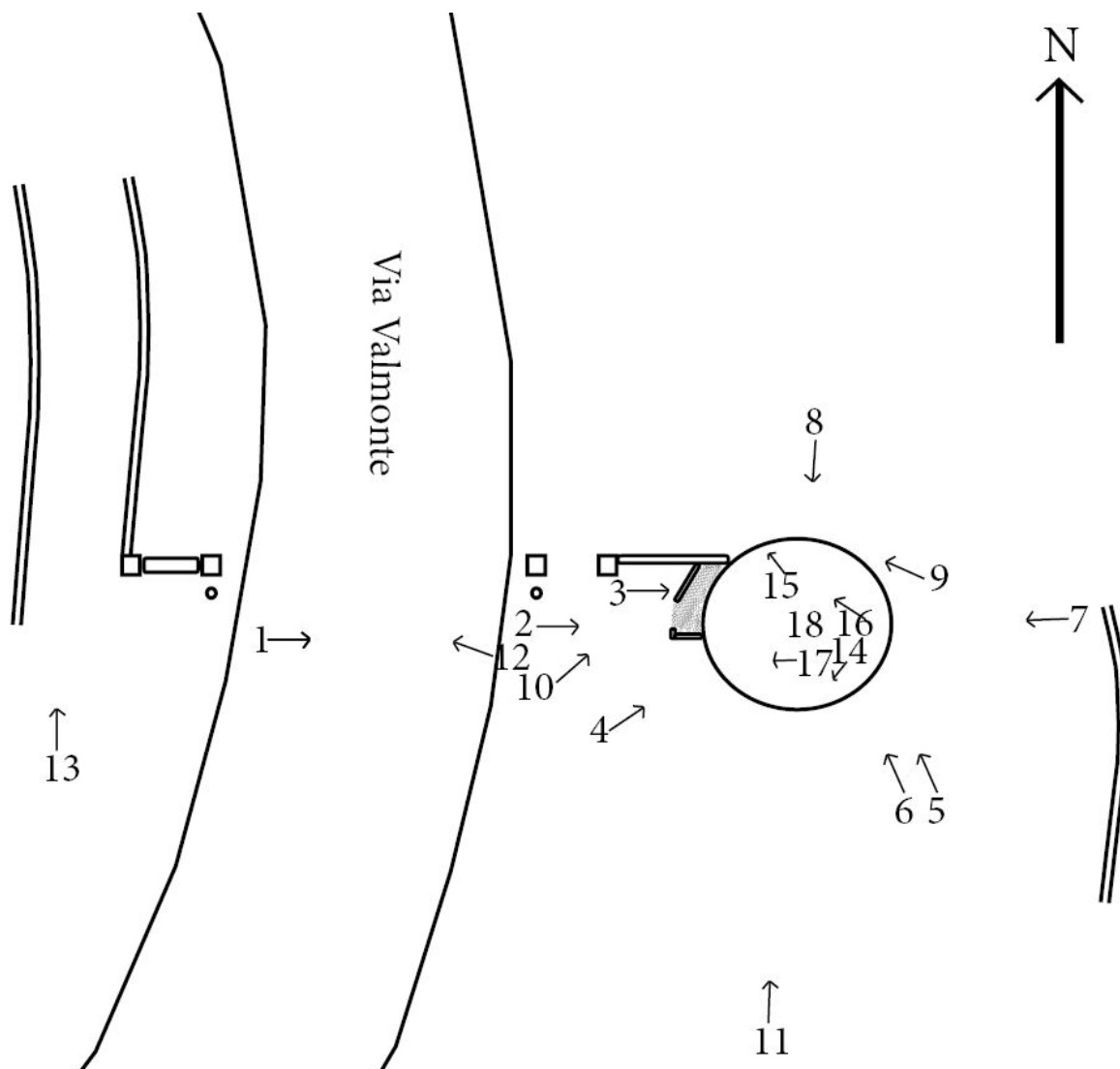
Sketch Map



Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Photograph Map Log



Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

Photograph Log

Name of Property:	Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
City or Vicinity:	Palos Verdes Estates
County:	Los Angeles
State:	California
Name of Photographer:	Kate Eggert
Date of Photographs:	June 14, 2018; July 27, 2018
Location of Original Digital Files:	4420 Via Valmonte
Number of Photographs:	18

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0001

West façade, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0002

West façade detail, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0003

West façade detail, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0004

Partial west façade and south façade, camera facing northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0005

South façade and partial east façade, camera facing northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0006

South façade and partial east façade detail, camera facing northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0007

East façade and partial north façade, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0008

North façade, camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0009

North façade detail, camera facing west-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0010

West façade detail, camera facing northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0011

South façade detail, camera facing north (on heavily sloped ground)

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower

Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA

County and State

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0012

Object details across the street, camera facing northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0013

Object details across the street, camera facing north

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0014

Basement detail, camera facing southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0015

First floor detail of fireplace, camera facing southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0016

First floor detail of ceiling, camera facing southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0017

First floor detail of ceiling, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower_0018

Second floor detail of ceiling, camera facing up

Index of Figures

Figure 1

Photo of Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower, 1925 (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association via the Palos Verdes Library District Digital Repository)

Figure 2

Photo of Clarence E. Howard with draftsmen and architects, circa 1922-1925. Howard is second from right. Inscription on back says, "Palos Verdes Architects" (Photo courtesy of the Collection of Lucia Howard Cushman)

Figure 3

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower Plans, north elevation (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association)

Figure 4

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower Plans, lot boundaries (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association)

Figure 5

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower Plans, main floor and second floor (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association)

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Figure 1



Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower, 1925

Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association via the Palos Verdes Library District Digital Repository

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Figure 2



Photo of Clarence E. Howard with draftsmen and architects, circa 1922-1925. Howard is second from the right. Inscription on back says, "Palos Verdes Architects"

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Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

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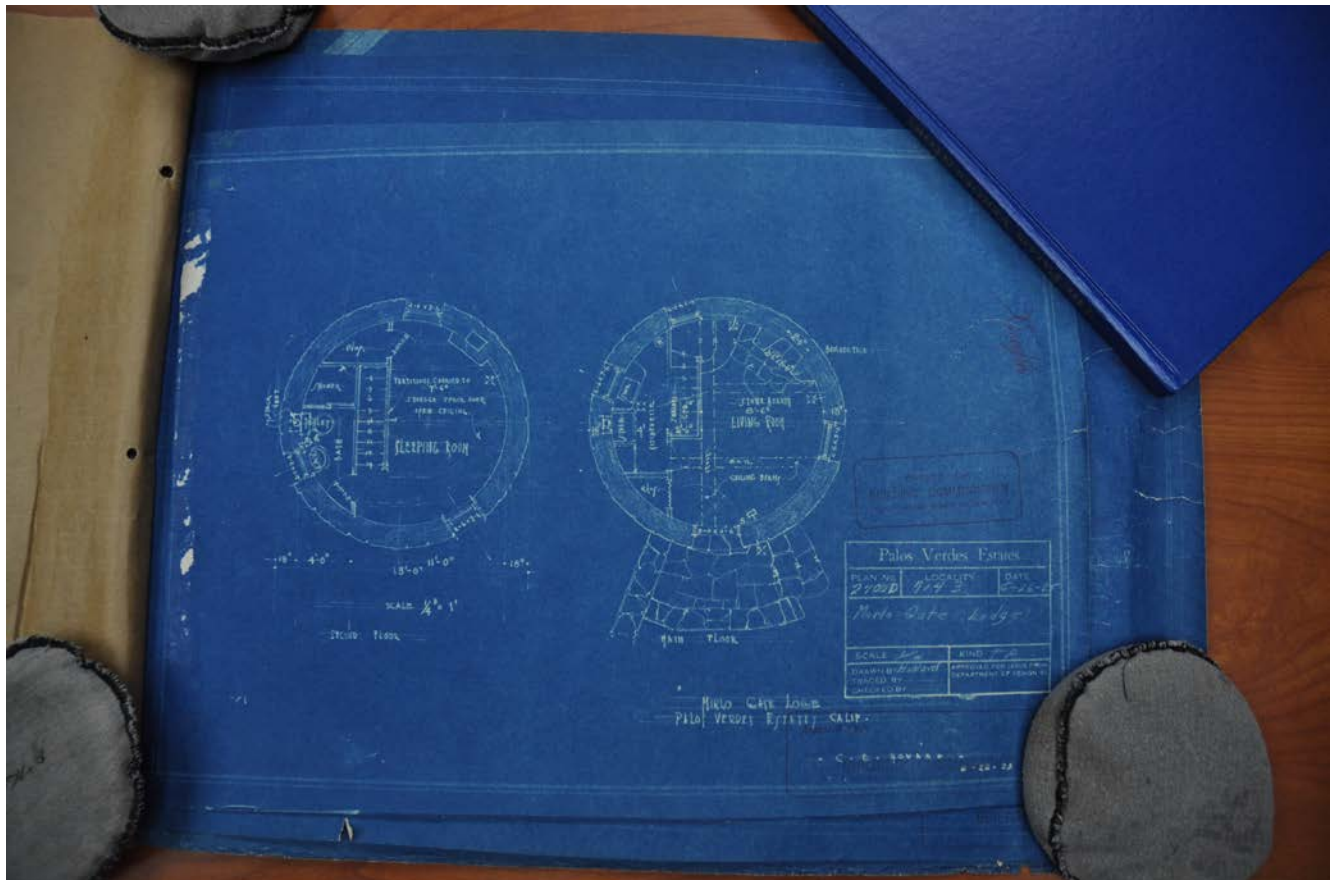


Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower Plans, north elevation (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association)

Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

Figure 5



Mirlo Gate Lodge Tower Plans, main floor and second floor (Photo courtesy of the Palos Verdes Estates Homes Association)