

Supporting Materials

Proposed Niodrara Drive Historic District

May 28, 2013

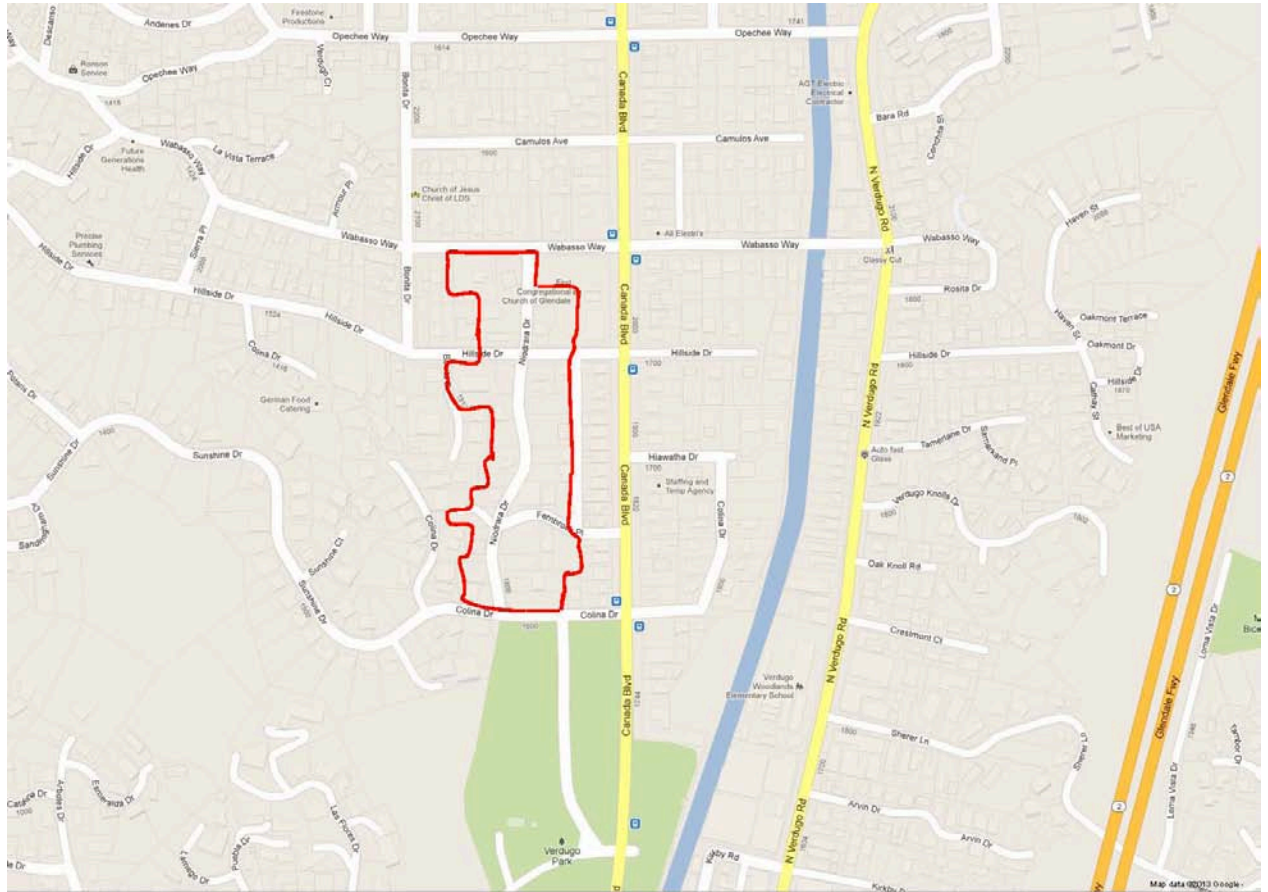


Figure 1. Map of boundaries of proposed Niodrara Drive Historic District.

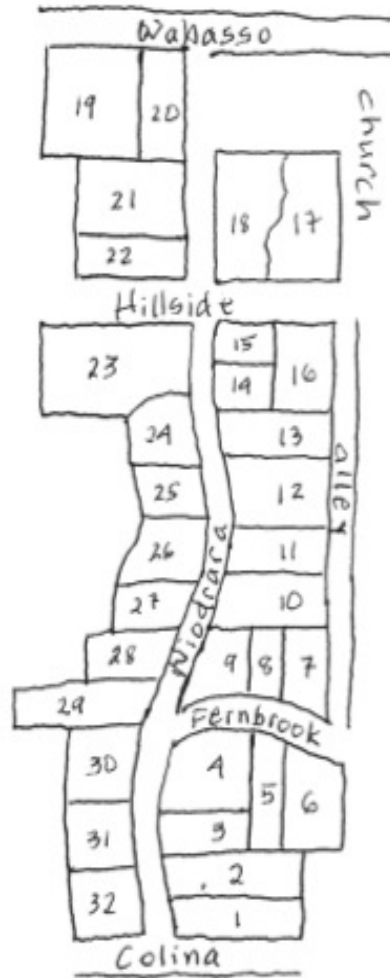


Figure 2. Sketch map of proposed Niodrara Drive Historic District. Property numbers, assigned by primary applicant, are used throughout the application

Table 1. A complete list of properties in the proposed Niodrara Dr. Historic District

Property No.	Address	Assessor No.	Year Built	Style	Contributor
1	1800 Niodrara	5614-019-033	1947	Ranch	Yes
2	1808 Niodrara	5614-019-041	2009	Contemporary	No
3	1812 Niodrara	5614-019-035	1940	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
4	1630 Fernbrook	5614-019-036	1939	French Revival	Yes
5	1640 Fernbrook	5614-019-037	1946	Minimal Traditional	Yes
6	1646 Fernbrook	5614-019-038	1927	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
7	1647 Fernbrook	5614-019-040	1925	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
8	1641 Fernbrook	5614-019-016	1952	Modern Ranch	Yes
9	1635 Fernbrook	5614-019-017	1956	Ranch	Yes
10	1840 Niodrara	5614-019-018	1955/1990	Contemporary	No
11	1900 Niodrara	5614-019-019	1950	Rustic Ranch	Yes
12	1910 Niodrara	5614-019-020	1941	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
13	1916 Niodrara	5614-019-039	1941	Modern	Yes
14	1920 Niodrara	5614-019-022	1949	Ranch	No
15	1926 Niodrara	5614-019-025	1951	Ranch	Yes
16	1644 Hillside	5614-019-024	1950	Ranch	Yes
17	1645 Hillside	5614-018-027	1925	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
18	1635 Hillside	5614-018-022	1925	Tudor Rev/ Farmhouse	Yes
19	1616 Wabasso	5614-018-008	1912	Prairie Style/ Foursquare	Yes
20	1630 Wabasso	5614-018-009	1951	Ranch	Yes
21	2011 Niodrara	5614-018-023	1930	Spanish Revival	Yes
22	2001 Niodrara	5614-018-005	1942	Minimal Traditional	No
23	1620 Hillside	5614-018-036	1918	English/Tudor Revival	Yes
24	1915 Niodrara	5614-020-013	1939	Minimal Traditional	Yes
25	1909 Niodrara	5614-020-014	1950	Modern Ranch	Yes
26	1845 Niodrara	5614-020-015	1941	Modern	Yes
27	1839 Niodrara	5614-020-016	1938	Minimal Traditional	Yes
28	1833 Niodrara	5614-020-041	1955	Ranch	Yes
29	1825 Niodrara	5614-020-021	1955	Modern	Yes
30	1819 Niodrara	5614-020-044	1985	Contemporary	No
31	1811 Niodrara	5614-020-019	1962	Modern Ranch	Yes
32	1619 Colina	5614-020-018	1953	Ranch	No

Niodrara = Niodrara Way; Fernbrook = Fernbrook Place; Hillside = Hillside Dr.; Wabasso = Wabasso Way; Colina = Colina Dr.

Building year is from the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office website.

Status of contributors is provisional only.

Historic District Context Statement

Development History

The proposed Niodrara Drive Historic District comprises part of Tract 250, a subdivision of a portion of the 2,629.01 acres allotted to Teodoro and Catalina Verdugo, the grand-nephew and the daughter of the original owner of the vast Rancho San Rafael, in the Great Partition of 1871 (figure 3). Following the death of Teodoro in 1904, the land in Tract 250 changed hands three times within two years before coming into the possession of the Forest Grove Land Company in 1906.¹ According to articles in the *Glendale News*, there were plans to subdivide the land for residences; these failed, the *News* darkly hinted, because “certain high railway officials” did not fulfill a promise to develop an electric railway to the area from Los Angeles.² Until 1910, the only public transportation to the property was by the Salt Lake Railway, which served it only infrequently.

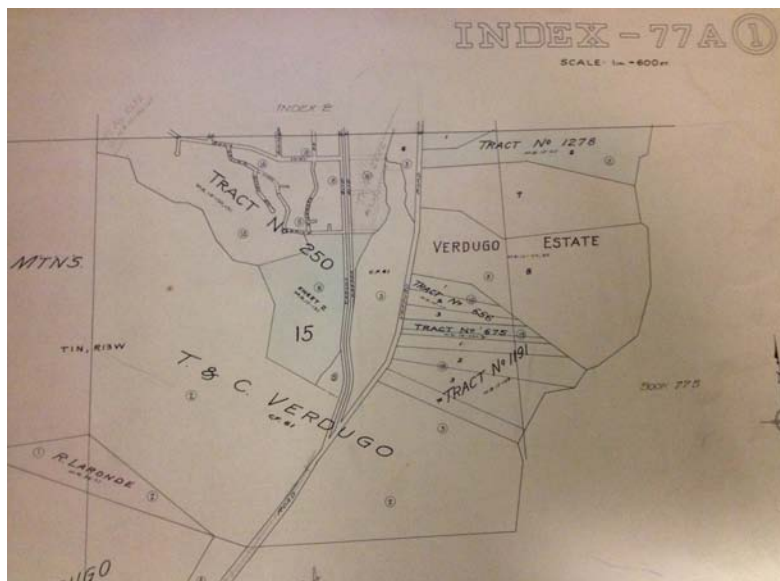


Figure 3. Excerpt from Index map of Tract No. 250, 1909. Niodrara Dr. is the curved street running north just above the number 250. Map Book 77A, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, Archives.

In 1909 the land was acquired by the Verdugo Canyon Land Company.³ Verdugo Park, a favorite picnicking spot for southern Californians since at least the 1890s, lies immediately south of the proposed district and was a part of tract 250 as well, but it remained open space before the city began acquiring land for an official city park in 1944.⁴ Subdivision of the rest of the tract began in 1909. It was facilitated by the extension of the Glendale-Eagle Rock Railway line (a private line, opened in 1909) into the Verdugo Canyon in July 1910. The president of the Verdugo Canyon Land Company, John A. Pirtle, provided the necessary right-of-

¹ References to the appropriate deed books are given in “A Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Verdugo Adobe,” Glendale, California, Prepared by Chambers Group, Inc. (August 1993), 5, Glendale Public Library, Special Collections (hereafter GPL-SC), Verdugo Adobe/Verdugo Family binder.

² “The Verdugo Ranch,” *Glendale News*, October 2, 1909, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders. See also “Verdugo Park to Be Cut Up,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1906, proquest.

³ See “A Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Verdugo Adobe,” 5.

⁴ See E. Caswell Perry and Carroll W. Parcher, *Glendale Area History*, 2nd ed. (Glendale, CA, 1981), 22, 167.

way through the company's property and subscribed \$20,000 to guarantee construction.⁵

Originally the proposed district comprised twelve large lots, which varied significantly in shape and size, especially along Niodrara, and illustrated the lofty goals of the developer (figure 4). Pirtle, whose name dominated Verdugo Canyon Tract advertising, was called "the moving spirit" of the project, and he aimed for a high-class clientele. (figure 5).⁶ John McLaren, "the father of Golden Gate Park" in San Francisco, was reported to have laid out the streets in keeping with the natural contours of the land.⁷ An ad in the *Los Angeles Times* described



Figure 4. Annotated map of original general boundaries of proposed Niodrara Drive Historic District, as configured in the 1909 subdivision, Tract 250. Map Book 15, pp. 130-131, <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/sur/nas/landrecords/tract/MB0015/TR0015-130a.pdf>.

⁵ See "Road to Verdugo Park," *Glendale News*, April 22, 1910; and "Extended to Verdugo Park," *Glendale News*, July 8, 1910, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

⁶ "Transformation of Big Ranch," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1909, proquest.

⁷ See *ibid.*



Figure 5. Postcard advertising the Verdugo Canyon Tract, with John Pirtle's name, 1910. Glendale Public Library, Special Collections, Panoramas, Mountains, Canyons binder.

lots "one-half acre to three acres, rolling grounds, live oaks, sycamore trees, running water and parks."⁸ In May 1910 the company likewise advertised the creation of "the most beautiful and artistic illustrated booklet of its kind ever published in Los Angeles," for which interested parties could write.⁹ This expensive brochure touted "large villa lots, trees, running water" but primarily told its story in pictures, including photographs of Verdugo Park, a wonderful asset to potential homeowners, and the lot on which Pirtle himself was to build a house (figures 6 and 7).¹⁰ Two of the oldest houses in the entire Woodlands



Figure 6. "Lover's Bridge" in Verdugo Park. "Verdugo Canyon Tract," pamphlet, n.d. (circa 1910), Huntington Library.

⁸ Ad for Verdugo Canyon Tract, *Los Angeles Time*, October 27, 1909, proquest.

⁹ Ad for Verdugo Canyon Tract, *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1910, proquest.

¹⁰ "Verdugo Canyon Tract," n.d. (circa 1910), Huntington Library. It is not clear that Pirtle ever did build a house there; he is first listed as a resident of Glendale in the 1917 City Directory, on "Wabassa Way" (no address), but gone by 1919, the next year the Directory is available.

Figure 7. Lot of developer John Pirtle. "Verdugo Canyon Tract."



neighborhood, a 1912 Prairie Style with Foursquare elements on Wabasso Way (property 19) and a 1918 English/Tudor Revival on Hillside Dr. (property 23), both included in the proposed district, illustrate the original villa-like quality Pirtle promoted, as well as the lush landscaping, river rock elements, and running water that still characterize it (figures 8 and 9).



Figure 8. Side view of the district's oldest house. Glendale Public Library, Special Collections, Housing and Apartments binder, n.d.

Figure 9. This 1918 English/Tudor Revival retains its original “villa” lot Los Angeles Public Library, Photo Collection, n.d., online.



The tract continued to change hands, and the proposed district exemplifies the vagaries—the unevenness and unpredictability—of residential development in an era when houses were built one at a time, often by the people who planned to live in them. Large lots were purchased but not built on and later resubdivided. In some cases, lots were built on but a portion was later divided and sold as a separate property. Bena Way was renamed Hillside, and a new street, Fernbrook Place, was mapped in 1924, as part of the new Fernbrook Place Tract between Niodrara, Hillside, Cañada Blvd., and Colina Dr (figure 10).

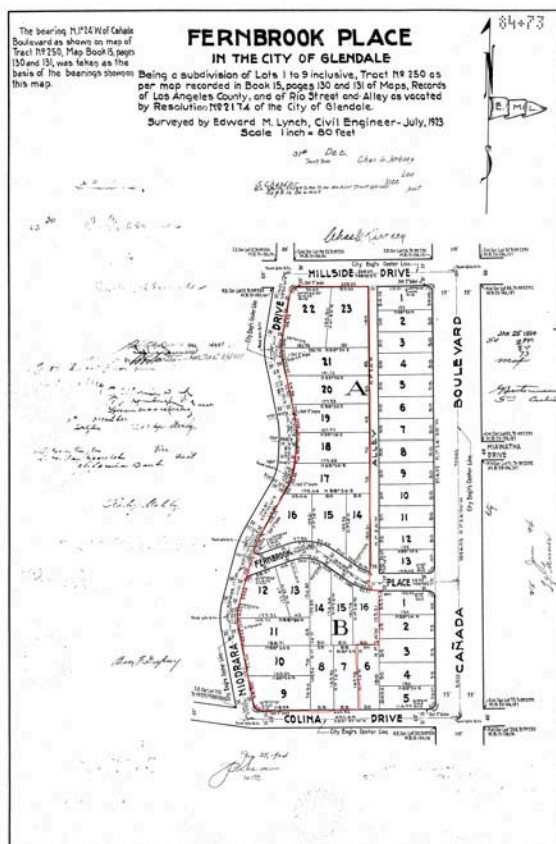


Figure 10. Map of the Fernbrook Place Tract from 1924 . The red lines outline the portion of the tract included within the proposed historic district. Tract Map Book 84, p. 73, <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/sur/nas/landrecords/tract/MB0084/TR0084-073.pdf>.

The nine lots originally laid out in this section of Tract 250 became thirty-nine lots in Fernbrook Place, including twenty that fall within the proposed district. In addition, in 1925 lot 23 of Tract 250 (properties 17 and 18 in the proposed district) became lots 6 and 7 in a new tract, 9151, the boundaries between them defined by the course of the stream (figure 11). (The remaining lots are now property of the First Congregational Church of Glendale.)

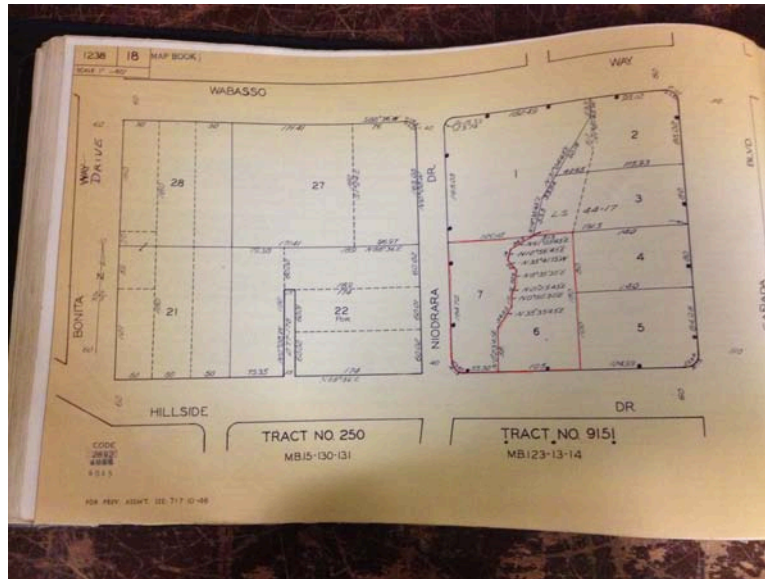


Figure 11. Reconfigured lots in Tract 9151. The red lines outline the portion of the tract included within the proposed historic district and the boundary between properties 17 and 18. Map Book 1238, p. 18, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, Archives.

Frederick Pennington Newport was a southern California developer and the most important figure in the Woodlands's development from 1917. A brief biography of Newport in John Steven McGroarty's *Los Angeles from the Mountains to the Sea* (1921) specifically mentioned his "pioneering" development of "surpassingly beautiful home sites" in the "fertile foothill and valley lands in historic Verdugo Canyon."¹¹ It was the F. P. Newport Company that gave the entire neighborhood its current name. After acquiring land in the canyon (which he continued to do well into the 1920s), Newport formally reopened the development as Selvas de Verdugo, later Verdugo Woodlands, in June 1917, with a fiesta featuring Spanish music and dancing as well as lectures on California history by Charles F. Lummis (whose former home and collection are now the Southwest Museum of Los Angeles) and former State Senator Reginaldo Francisco del Valle.¹²

A hallmark of the Woodlands was the creation of the Fernbrook Place Tract in January 1924, before Newport had even finished acquiring all the property, which he did in 1925.¹³ Its unique, and uniquely lovely, visual coherence

¹¹ John Steven McGroarty, *Los Angeles from the Mountains to the Sea: With Selected Biography of Actors and Witnesses to the Period of Growth and Achievement* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921), 900.

¹² "Grand Spanish Fiesta Program is Announced," *Glendale News*, June 7, 1917, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders. Similar articles/promotions ran on June 8 and June 9 as well.

¹³ See Map Book 308, 1921-1928, p. 69, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, Archives.

continues to the present day. With the stream running along Niodrara, the river rock details along Fernbrook, Niodrara, and Hillside, and lush landscape, the new tract exemplified the qualities for which Newport celebrated the Woodlands. As with Pirtle's efforts to interest buyers in the Verdugo Canyon Tract, references to mature trees and the flowing stream were ubiquitous in later advertisements, which perfectly illustrate the riotous hyperbole endemic to real estate promotion in this era. An ad put out by the F. P. Newport Co. in 1924, for example, refers simultaneously to the subdivision's history as the "estate of the distinguished Verdugo family" and the area's "early hacienda days," while also claiming its affinities with "the Riviera, Switzerland, and the rustic lanes of the English countryside" (figure 12).

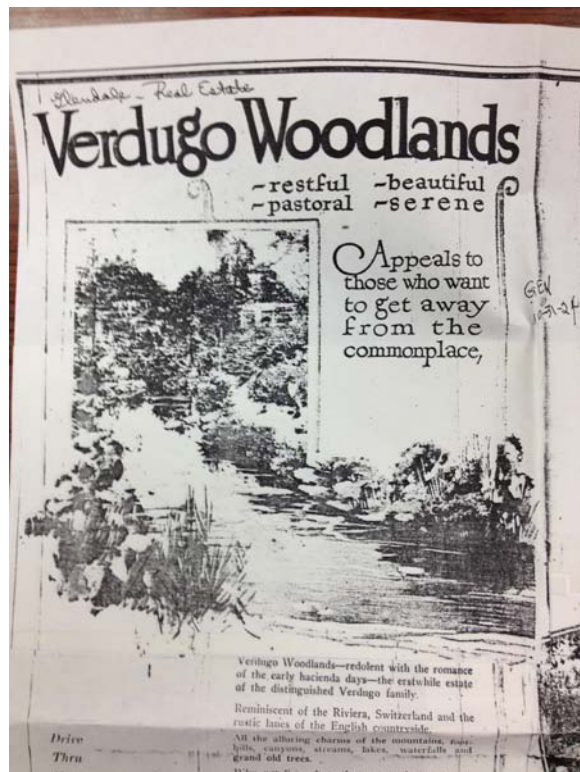


Figure 12. Ad for "Verdugo Woodlands," *Glendale Evening News*, October 31, 1924, Glendale Public Library, Special Collections, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

The Woodlands could be whatever the buyer wanted it to be. The ad bids the reader "to see 'Fernbrook'—a bit of rural England in sunny California."¹⁴ An article in the same issue of the *Glendale Evening News* described Fernbrook as "stream-coursed and heavily-wooded," where "a large force of men" had "constructed lakes, waterfalls, roads, rustic and stone bridges."¹⁵ Newport created an extravagant pamphlet of his own, which urged that "Verdugo Woodlands is like a touch of old Switzerland," with "[c]hattering brooks of sparkling mountain water—clear vistas of rugged mountains...laurel-covered foothills—great gnarled sycamores—evergreen live-oaks, clusters of alders."¹⁶

¹⁴ Ad for Verdugo Woodlands, *Glendale Evening News*, October 31, 1924, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

¹⁵ "Beauties of Nature Are Carefully Preserved," *Glendale Evening News*, October 31, 1924, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

¹⁶ "The Story of Verdugo Woodlands told in pictures," n.d. (1920s), GPL-SC, Sparr Heights/Verdugo Woodlands binder.

Pre-development oaks and especially sycamores, which thrive in wet areas near streams, are still a prominent feature of properties in the proposed district. He also promised potential buyers a “high class” environment of single-family homes: “Restrictions on the property protect it against the encroachment of commercial, tenement, apartment house, bungalow court” and other “undesirable feature[s].”¹⁷ The F. P. Newport Company offered more tangible benefits as well: Newport, an avid golfer, was one of the forces behind the creation of the Oakmont Country Club, which opened in 1924, and in 1926 the elementary school opened in close proximity to the proposed district, on Colina Dr. across Cañada Blvd.¹⁸

In 1934 Security First National Bank came to own twelve of Newport’s lots in Fernbrook Place.¹⁹ One of many developers undone by the Depression, his company declared bankruptcy in 1935. The final major act of subdivision in the proposed district took place two years later, when lots 13, 14, and 15 in the original Tract 250 (see figure 4) were resurveyed as lots 8–18 of Tract 11424, which included an existing house from 1918 on lot 12 (figure 13). The owner was the Kohler & Chase Company, a celebrated music store in San Francisco that began in 1850. 102 years later the company would open an office and store in

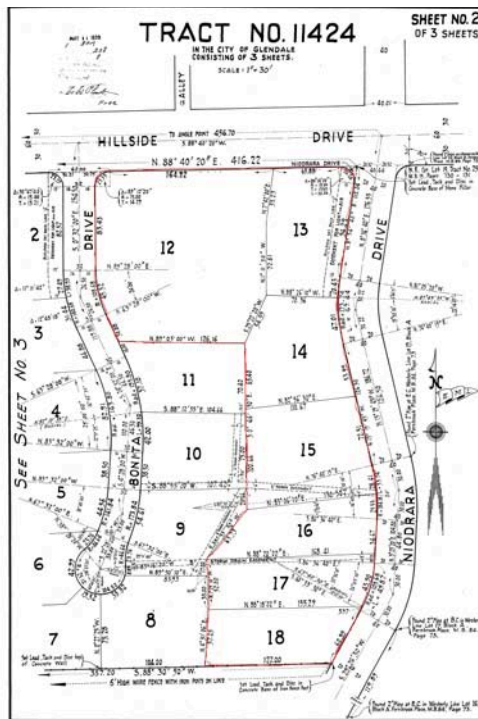


Figure 13. Reconfigured lots in the new Tract 11424. The red lines outline the portion of the tract (roughly) included within the proposed historic district. Tract Map Book 208, p. 8, <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/sur/nas/landrecords/tract/MB0208/TR0208-007.pdf>.

¹⁷ “Restrictions Aid Tract’s Development,” *Glendale Evening News*, January 29, 1927, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

¹⁸ See “History of Oakmont Country Club, Glendale, California (1977), http://oakmontcc.memberstatements.com/Clubs/CSG-Oakmont/Uploaded/FacilityPics/Oakmont_History_3.pdf, 1-2, and Chester Baker Lynch, “A History of the Glendale Public Schools from 1879 to 1957, with Emphasis on School Organization and Administration,” M.A. thesis, Occidental College, June 1957, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

¹⁹ See Map Book 717, 1935-1941, p. 28, and Map Book 717, 1928- 1939, p. 28, Los Angeles County Assessor’s Office, Archives.

downtown Los Angeles, but what brought it into the Glendale real estate market fifteen years prior is not known.²⁰ In addition to these changes, parts of individual lots, with or without houses on them, were resubdivided. Lot 22, Block A, of Fernbrook Place and lot 22 of Tract 250 each became two building sites; lots 10, 11, and 12 of the original Tract 250, which originally ran street to street from Niodrara to Colina, became nine separate properties. Five of them are located on Niodrara Drive and are included in the district (compare figures 2 and 4). Even the 1912 mansion on Wabasso eventually sold about a third of its property, upon which another house was built in 1951. The owner of lots 14 and 15, Block A, of the Fernbrook Place Tract, who built the first house there in 1925, similarly sold a portion of one lot; a house was built on it in 1952. The last division of a lot took place in 1983, for a house built two years later.²¹ Many of the thirty-two houses in the proposed district occupy property divided in this fashion. It is a significant aspect of the history of the development, particularly in the construction of houses after World War II.

Period of Significance

The suggested Period of Significance for the proposed district comprises fifty years of building and dates from 1912, with the Prairie Style/Foursquare house, through 1962, with the completion of the last of ten contributing Ranch houses. The district comprises thirty-two houses in all. Six are likely non-contributors: two were built more than twenty years after the period of significance (properties 2 and 30); the others, built between 1942 and 1955, have been extensively remodeled (properties 10, 14, 22, 32). The remaining twenty-six houses are highly likely to be contributors and comprise a rich variety of popular buildings styles including, with variations: English/Tudor Revival, Spanish Revival, French Revival, Minimal Traditional, Modern, and Ranch, with the first and last of these predominant.

Of the likely contributors, five houses were constructed between 1918, shortly after Newport reopened "Selvas de Verdugo," and 1927: all are variations on English/Tudor Revival (properties 6, 7, 17, 18, and 23; number 7 has American Farmhouse thrown in for good measure). The 1930s were slow as in many subdivisions. A Spanish Revival (property 21) was built in 1930; 1938 and 1939 witnessed the construction of two Minimal Traditionals (properties 24 and 27) and a French Revival (property 4). Four houses were built in 1941 and 1942 before wartime restrictions virtually halted residential construction: two English/Tudor Revivals (properties 3 and 12) and two Moderns (properties 13 and 26). Almost half of the likely contributing houses were built after the war, when the Ranch style prevailed. Of the twelve built after 1945, ten are variations on the Ranch theme (properties 1, 9, 15, 16 and 28), including three Modern Ranch (properties 8, 25 and 31), the latter with subtle Japanese touches also found in property 20. There is also what may be termed a Rustic Ranch by noted southern California architect Robert Byrd (property 11), who is famous for

²⁰ Information on the Kohler and Chase store in Los Angeles is available at <http://mtr.arcademuseum.com/MTR-1952-111-5/MTR-1952-111-5-08.pdf>.

²¹ See Parcel Map-Glendale, No. 1328, Book 162, p. 78. Information about lots and boundaries is also available with the address on the Los Angeles County Assessor's website: <http://assessor.lacounty.gov/extranet/DataMaps/Pais.aspx>

a somewhat higgledy-piggledy style that has led his works to be affectionately known as “Byrd houses.” There is also a Minimal Traditional (property 5) and a Modern Post and Beam (property 29) from this period. The Prairie Style/ Foursquare house (property 19) represents an earlier period in the history of the development, but it was a mainstay of advertising into the 1920s, including a prominent position on the cover of a Selvas de Verdugo pamphlet and in “The Story of the Verdugo Woodlands” (figures 14 and 15). The house clearly reflected the kind of tasteful yet ambitious residences Newport wanted to encourage.

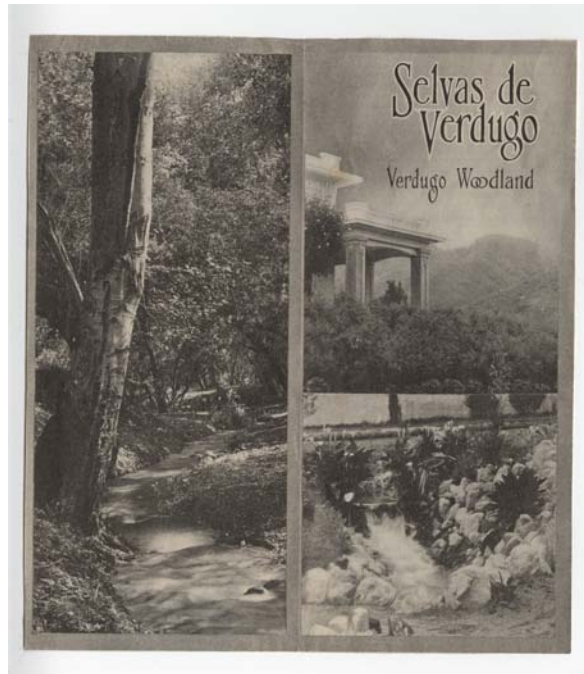
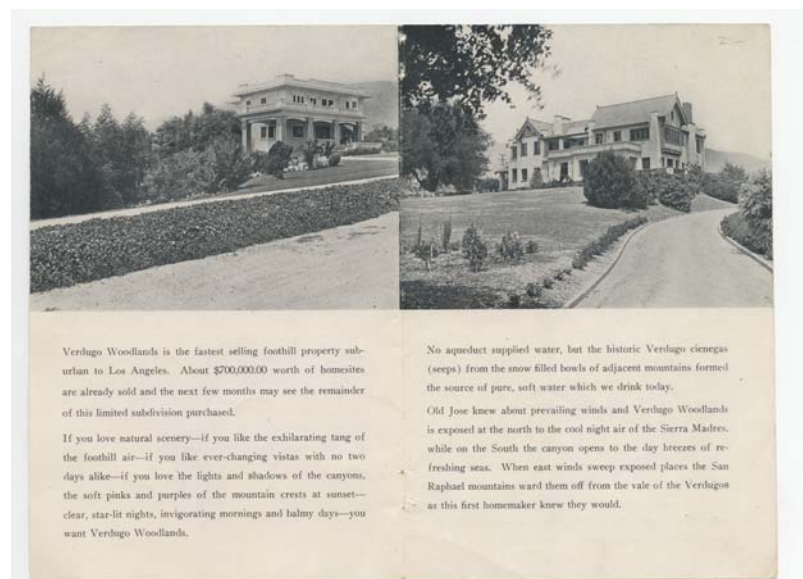


Figure 14. The district’s oldest house. Compare with figure 8. “Selvas de Verdugo” pamphlet, n.d., Glendale Public Library, Special Collections, Sparr Heights/Verdugo Woodlands binder.

Figure 15. Front view, house on the left, in “Story of the Verdugo Woodlands,” pamphlet, n.d., Glendale Public Library, Special Collections, Sparr Heights/Verdugo Woodlands binder.



The Landscape

As the Development History section doubtless made clear, advertising for the Verdugo Woodlands area obsessively promoted two features: natural streams and trees. Coast live oaks and California sycamores are the most common native trees in the Verdugo Woodlands, and examples abound in the proposed historic district (figure 16). Coast live oaks are visible in both front and back yards;



Figure 16. Front yard oak along Niodrara Dr. (property 27)

sycamores are especially predominant, including the literal centerpiece of the proposed historic district (figures 17 and 18). The landscaping overall is extremely lush, as befits a riparian environment.



Figure 17. Sycamore cluster in the intersection of Niodrara Dr. and Fernbrook Place. Los Angeles Public Library, Photo Collection, n.d., online.



Figure 18. The same cluster, May 2013.

There is evidence of the water everywhere (figure 19). Niodrara below Hillside curves like a stream, which distinguishes it from linear Bonita Drive, the longer, nearby residential street that also runs north-south. In the Fernbrook Place



Figure 19. The stream that runs between properties 17 and 18 on Hillside Dr.

Tract, properties were divided from the street with a river rock border, most of which is intact, drawing attention to the landscape's connection with the water. The east side of Niodrara features ponds (figure 20) and a few stone bridges over the stream bed, including one on the northeast side of Hillside. On the west side, traces of the old bed, no longer active, remain as well as a stone bridge and a



Figure 20. Ranch house with pond at property 9.

Japanese-style bridge (figures 21 and 22). This combination of features is found nowhere else in the Verdugo Woodlands and justify the proposed district boundaries as defined in this proposal.



Figure 21. Stone bridge, dated 1941, over dry stream bed at property 24.



Figure 22. Japanese-style bridge over dry stream bed at property 20.

Because of the alley in the Fernbrook Place Tract, behind properties 7, 10-14, and 16, many of the houses have very deep setbacks, creating an almost rural feel. A lack of city street lighting also contributes to this quality (the proposed boundary on the east side of Wabasso is marked by a contemporary city streetlight adjacent to church property). As does the virtual absence of sidewalks, which are found only on the northeast side of Hillside (in front of properties 17 and 18), and on the southeast half of Wabasso Way, across from the proposed district, where the church property line begins. The First Congregational Church building is located on Cañada Blvd.; landscaping along Niodrara provides a buffer between its parking lot and building and the proposed historic district.

Relationship of District to Glendale Development Patterns, Events, and Persons

The development of the proposed district is roughly coincident with some of Glendale's other identified and proposed historic districts: Cumberland Heights (c. 1900-1950s), Ard Eevin (1903-1955), Rossmoyne (1923-1948), and Brockmont Park (1910-1956). Like these other areas it too comprises a wealth of houses that document historical trends in architectural taste with heavy emphasis on Period Revival and Ranch. The style of architecture is eclectic rather than homogeneous, as to be expected with active development across half a century.²²

Glendale's other identified and proposed historic districts were part of the original Rancho San Rafael like the rest of the city; Niodrara Drive and the surrounding Woodlands area also formed part of the very last parcels of land owned and inhabited by heirs of the original rancho, Jose Verdugo. The land was sold only with the death of his grandson Teodoro in 1904, after which the

²² In this section, as at many other points, the author is indebted to the exemplary application for the proposed Brockmont Park Historic District, written by Francesca Smith and submitted in 2010.

Verdugo Canyon Tract Company eventually subdivided it in 1909, along lines still recognizable today. The Catalina Verdugo adobe (#1 on Glendale's Register of Historic Resources), at 2211 Bonita Dr., was the last home of Jose Verdugo's daughter, and developers were committed to its preservation from the subdivision's inception, as an artifact saturated with historical meaning for the community and region at large.²³

The proposed district differs in two significant regards from other historic districts in Glendale. First, there is only one Spanish Revival house (from 1930), fewer than any other district, despite the style's enormous popularity in subdivisions across Glendale in the 1920s. Of the four houses built in the proposed district during the 1920s, all are versions of English/Tudor Revival, a style that recurs in subsequent building. Given the emphasis on Fernbrook's English country charm in this decade, the relative absence of the Spanish Revival in the proposed district, in contrast with the rest of the Verdugo Woodlands where it is quite common, is a feature of its distinctive history. Even a house constructed in the proposed district as recently as 1985 (property 30) nodded to this history when adopting a contemporary English/Tudor Revival style.

The second exceptional feature pertains to the stream that flowed through it. The Verdugo Canyon territory was annexed to the city of Glendale in 1912, only the second area to join after incorporation in 1906. As both the *Glendale News* and *Los Angeles Times* reported at the time, the annexation had little to do with Verdugo Canyon development and everything to do with its valuable south-flowing water. As the *Times* put it: "It is a matter of common knowledge on the part of all of the people of Glendale, and that adjoining community [Tropico], that the people of this valley get substantially all the water used for domestic purposes from this canyon." Annexation was required to regulate water the city depended on but didn't actually own. The Verdugo Canyon Land Company did not technically own the water either; indeed, in contemporary newspaper articles, ownership of the Verdugo Canyon Tract was frequently attributed to the Glendale Consolidated Water Company: John Pirtle was involved in that as well.²⁴ The water in the canyon had been divvied up in the Great Partition of 1871 as carefully as the land. Teodoro and Catalina Verdugo were awarded access to the East Stream "so far as their necessities require," but they had to let the surplus water flow south into the West Stream (the one along Niodrara), whose supply belonged proportionately to the various claimants in the Partition, based on the amounts of land they were awarded.²⁵ Over the years various owners consolidated their water interests in the form of companies such as Verdugo Canyon Water, Verdugo Pipe and Reservoir, Verdugo Springs, Miradero, and Glendale Consolidated Water (Leslie Brand was involved in the

²³ See "The Verdugo Ranch," *Glendale News*, October 2, 1909; and "Beauties of Nature Are Carefully Preserved," *Glendale Evening News*, October 31, 1924, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

²⁴ See "The Verdugo Ranch," *Glendale News*, October 2, 1909, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders; and "The Beautiful Verdugo Canyon," *Los Angeles Herald*, April 17, 1910, California Digital Newspaper Collection. The *Herald* says that Pirtle was president of both companies.

²⁵ John Calvin Sherer, *History of Glendale and Vicinity* (Glendale: Glendale History Publishing Company, 1922), 116. Sherer would know: he helped to organize the Verdugo Canyon Water Company and was president, secretary, and treasurer at various times as well as a stockholder. As such he was an internenor in the 1893 lawsuit mentioned below.

latter two).²⁶ The owners of Glendale Consolidated controlled roughly 13% of the canyon's water, according to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*.²⁷

For decades, then, the Verdugo streams provided Glendale with much of its water and were controlled by a relatively small group, often prominent figures in the city's early development. They included Captain C. E. Thom, who purchased 2700 acres from Catalina Verdugo in 1870, before the Great Partition, and his nephew Judge Erskine Ross, who built the original Rossmoyne house on an 1100-acre ranch he in turn purchased from his uncle. Together they owned 20% of the Verdugo Canyon water.²⁸ The water was the subject of numerous disputes, resulting in litigation. There were lawsuits against the Verdugos: in 1893, other water owners including Ross and Thom accused them of obstructing the flow to create new marshes on their property, and in 1904 Thom and Ross were defendants *with* the Verdugos, when wells dug on their land again jeopardized surface water flow (figure 23).²⁹ But the water companies' power dissipated

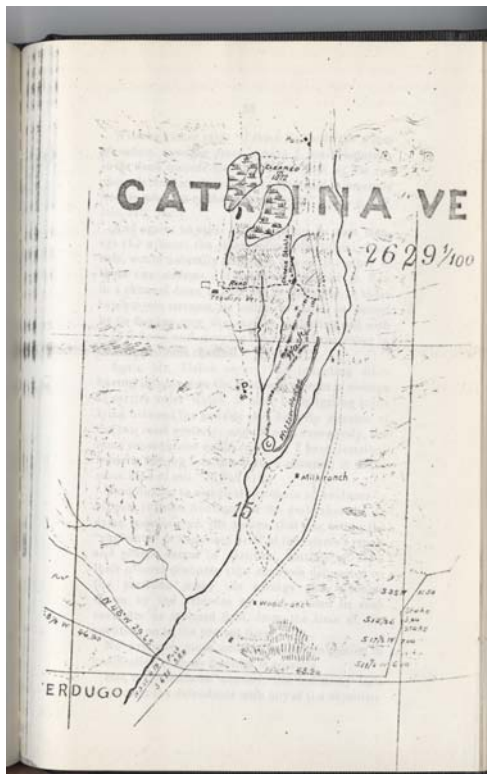


Figure 23. Map of Verdugo Canyon streams from the Appellants' brief of 1894. Dark lines that join together represent the water; the shapes over the name "Catalina" mark the place where the disputed marshes had formed. See fn. 27 for citation.

²⁶ See Perry and Parcher, *Glendale Area History*, 32; and Sherer, *History of Glendale*, (128). Brand's involvement with Glendale Consolidated Water was based on his role as founder and president of the Title Guarantee and Trust Company, which was trustee for the bondholders. See "Glendale Con. Water Company Gives Satisfaction," *American Globe* (November 1916), 5.

²⁷ See "Vexatious Water Problem," *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1912, proquest.

²⁸ See "Royal Boulevard Historic Resources Survey," prepared by Historic Resources Group, City of Glendale, March 2008, 12; and "Vexatious Water Problem."

²⁹ See Case no. 15508 in the Supreme Court of the State of California, Andrew Glassell, et als., Plaintiffs and Respondents, J. C. Sherer et als, Internenors and Respondents, vs. Teodoro Verdugo et als., Defendants and Appellants, Brief for Appellants (August 1894), GPL-SC; *Verdugo Canyon Water Co. v Verdugo*, in *Reports of Cases Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of California* vol. 152 (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney, 1908), 655-87; and Sherer, *History of Glendale*, 120.

after annexation. With the construction of the Owens Valley aqueduct, Los Angeles offered to sell water to Glendale. Thereafter the city was able to purchase some local water rights as their value diminished; Glendale Consolidated sold its pipes, plant, and water rights to the city in 1918.³⁰

That was hardly the end of the controversy over water in Verdugo Canyon, although the controversy shifted from competing claims among owners of the water pertaining to domestic, livestock, and irrigation needs, to a conflict over its utilitarian versus ornamental value. In 1917 F. P. Newport wanted to divert water to ornamental ditches to beautify another part of the subdivision. City Trustees refused to grant him permits to construct pipes, claiming that the water could only be used for the purposes stipulated in the partition agreement; Newport in turn filed an injunction against the city.³¹ An agreement appears to have been reached in 1919, when stream and water rights were deeded to the city under "the provision the city maintain the flow in the ornamental streams," an obligation that expired in 1942.³² The water continued to be a valued amenity among property owners. In 1945 the city's Public Service Department sought to build wells to lower the stream's water level and maintain the purity of the public's water, which was otherwise difficult to control; residents of Niodrara Dr., Wabasso Way, and Cañada Blvd. fought the proposal on aesthetic grounds.³³ Another proposal for seven wells in Verdugo Park as a water conservation measure was championed in 1983; residents in and outside the proposed district again wanted to save their "picturesque stream" as well as protect the water table in the Woodlands, which they feared would harm trees both in their community and in the park.³⁴ They blamed the wells built near the Glorietta Reservoir for the diminishing volume of the stream, which had already run dry

³⁰ City Council Minutes note an offer from the Title Guaranty & Trust Company, trustee for the Glendale Consolidated Water bondholders, to sell the water company to the city for \$55,000, which the Council accepted pending the sale of bonds (vol. 6 [May 2, 1918], p. 417. In *Glendale Area History*, Perry and Parcher state that a bond measure to buy Glendale Consolidated Water passed, but they give the date as 1915 (60).

³¹ See "Injunctions Will Be Heard Today," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1917, proquest; "Trustees' Meeting," *Glendale Evening News*, June 22, 1917; and *Glendale Trustee Meeting Minutes*, vol. 5, June 21, 1917, 673-75.

³² "City Wants to Pump Ground Water From Park Stream," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1983, proquest. City Council Minutes note a contract regarding water rights between the city and George Hanna, the successor to the Newport Company in Verdugo Canyon. Hanna was affiliated with the Verdugo Syndicate, and the lawyer who represented his interests with the city was Newport's own, Charles Chandler (who purchased a three-acre lot in the Woodlands, east of Cañada Blvd., that was resubdivided in 1958 as Capistrano Circle). Hanna is shown to have purchased lots 1-6 and 8 of the original Tract 250 in 1920; in 1921 Newport began acquiring property in that section of the tract, which became the Fernbrook Place Tract, with the purchase of lot 7 (see Map Book 308, 1913-1921, p. 23). F. P. Newport had acquired the entirety of the Fernbrook Place Tract by 1925. See *Glendale City Council Minutes*, vol. 7, May 15, 1919, 199, and May 29, 1919, 221-23; and Katherine Yamada, "Chandler Property Gave Way to Capistrano Circle," *Glendale News Press*, December 3, 2010, GPL-SC, Verdugo Woodlands folders.

³³ "Verdugo Well Drilling Hit by Property Owners," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 8, 1945, proquest; "Property Owners Rap Plan to Drill New Wells," *Glendale News Press*, February 7, 1945; *Glendale City Council Minutes*, vol. 45, Feb. 6, 1945, 112-13.

³⁴ "City Wants to Pump Ground Water From Park Stream," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1983, proquest.

toward the upper end, and pointed to an inadequate EIR, which the Council did not accept at that time.³⁵ The proposal was ultimately defeated.

The stream from Wabasso to Verdugo Park went dry anyway in 1986.³⁶ Plans to revive it on the east side of Niodrara were put in place in 1991 as part of the Verdugo Park Water Treatment Plant project, which included the construction of two wells. Homeowners agreed to line channel bottoms to prevent released water from percolating into the ground and also, much as the Verdugos had been required to do more than a century earlier following the Great Partition, not to obstruct the water as it flowed downstream. The released water was designed to be recovered by the wells and pick-up system at the Plant; the water also protects the park sycamores and other trees by maintaining ground water levels jeopardized by the wells.³⁷ The stream began flowing again in 1997.

Profile of Historic Resource Types

The district includes the range of architectural styles—and the often dazzling variations within them—that one associates with fifty years of development activities beginning in the early twentieth century. Architectural styles of the twenty-six potentially contributing houses include various examples of Period Revivals, which were popular from the turn of the century until roughly 1940 and in these cases drew on European architectural traditions. They include: one Spanish Revival, one French Revival, and seven English/Tudor Revivals. The last Period Revival house was constructed in 1941. By the late 1930s simpler designs, as exemplified by the Minimal Traditional, had begun to prevail. The Minimal Traditional was popular into the 1940s; three houses in the proposed district fall into this category, with the last constructed in 1946. The Ranch became the ubiquitous symbol of gracious southern California living in the post-World War II period. There are ten potentially contributing Ranch houses within the proposed district, and their influences vary from classic California to modern to rustic to Japanese. Half of these were built on land that was resubdivided after World War II, the last in 1962. In addition, there are three Modern houses from 1941 (two) and 1955 and a single example of a hybrid Prairie Style/Foursquare house. That some examples can be classified as hybrids suggest that the actual houses within the proposed district exhibit a variety that generic stylistic labels scarcely address. That is, the houses demonstrate numerous interpretations of basic styles, as builders loosely borrowed from rather than thoughtlessly imitating architectural precedents.

Architectural Styles within the Proposed District

The following photographs are by no means a comprehensive survey of architectural styles but rather are designed to serve as an introduction to the

³⁵ See Glendale City Council Minutes, vol. 59, November 15, 1983, 217-19, and November 29, 1983, 232.

³⁶ See "Stream Is Now Bed of Controversy," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1991, proquest; and "Council Oks Plan to Tap Verdugo Park Water," *Glendale News Press*, October 3, 1991.

³⁷ See Memo from Bernard V. Palk, Director of Public Service to David H. Ramsay, City Manager, August 26, 1996, Verdugo Woodlands West Homeowners' Association, Westside Stream binder. See also "Council Oks Plan to Tap Verdugo Park Water."

range of styles. The author is very grateful to Jay Platt and Francesca Smith for their kind assistance with identifications.

Prairie Style/Foursquare



The oldest house in the district is something of a hybrid of two styles popular from about 1900 through the 1920s (property 19). Heavyweight boxing champion Jess Willard owned it from 1924 – 1931. He was perhaps more famously known by an unfortunate nickname, “The Great White Hope.”

English/Tudor Revival (see also figure 9)





This house and the one on the bottom of p. 23 face one another on Fernbrook Place. Note the river rock border that commences along the street at each property. English/Tudor Revival houses are the second most common style after the Ranch, in keeping with the promotion of Fernbrook as a bit of rural England (properties 6 and 7).



Another hybrid, English Revival meets American farmhouse (property 18).

Spanish Revival



Property 21 is the only Spanish Revival in the proposed district; the style predominates elsewhere in the Woodlands.

French Revival



Property 4 is the sole example of this style; the stream runs in front of the river rock wall.

Minimal Traditional



Minimal Traditional with Vernacular Elements (property 27).

Ranch



Built in 1947, this is the district's first ranch house (property 1).



This pristine 1950 rustic ranch by architect Robert "Byrd" is likely eligible for Glendale's Register of Historic Resources (property 11).



A modern ranch from 1952 (property 8).



The deep eaves and corner overhang of this 1962 Ranch house are suggestive of a Japanese influence. It has an original stack bond retaining wall (property 31).

Modern



The Rodriguez House, designed by Rudolf Schindler, one of southern California's most important architects, is #24 on the Glendale Register of Historic Places (property 26).