VAL VERDE

LANDMARK NUMBER: 38

KNOWN AS: Val Verde aka Dias Felices, Henry Dater house, Wright Ludington house, Dr. Warren Austin home

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 2549 Sycamore Canyon Road, Montecito

LOCATION: 2549 Sycamore Canyon Road, Montecito

TYPE OF SITE: Estate

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 96-515

LANDMARK DATE: December 17, 1996

DESIGNATION OBTAINED BY: Application for Nominations for Historical Landmarks or Places of Historical Merit submitted by Dr. Warren R. Austin

PAST OWNERS:
- Henry Dater, Jr. (1915-1925)
- Charles H. Ludington (1925-late 1920s)
- Wright Ludington (by inheritance in late 1920s-1955)
- Marjorie Buell (1955-June 1956)
- Heath Horton Gillat who married Dr. Warren Austin (1956-until her death in 1991)
- Dr. Warren Austin (inherited 1991-???)
- 2549 Sycamore Canyon LLC and Heath Horton Austin Val Verde Foundation
- Sergey Grishin (2009-2010)
CURRENT OWNER: Unknown

CHANGES/ALTERATIONS: Various alterations were made to the original house when Wright Ludington inherited the property from his father in 1930. A loggia on the south side was replaced with a reflecting pool and four large columns. The French doors in the dining room at the north end were replaced with large single pane picture windows, and a window in the entrance hall was closed in. Modifications in recent years include the remodeling of the servant’s quarters to include a new door, diamond panes in some of the windows, and replacement of other windows with French doors. Diamond pane muntins were added to several second floor windows overlooking the central patio.

CONDITION: Good

DESCRIPTION: The main house is designed by Bertram Grovenor Goodhue and is one of few Montecito estate homes designed by a nationally known architect. The gardens were designed and implemented over a twenty-three year period by noted landscape architect Lockwood de Forest, and the lower gardens represent an important period of early experiments with hybridization of plants and have ties to the famed Kew Royal Botanical Gardens in London.¹

Val Verde sits on 17+ acres in Montecito. It is a two story Mediterranean Revival style house constructed in 1918 for Henry Dater of New York. The landscape consists of numerous man-made elements such as walls, brick pathways, colonnades, and pools that are complemented by formal plantings of olive, cypress, ficus, and oak trees and boxwood hedges. A number of palm trees and Moreton Bay fig trees, as well as other exotic plants, formerly part of the neighboring Gillespie gardens, are located in the southeast corner of the property.

When Wright Ludington inherited the property, he had several cottages and garages added to the property and transformed the gardens under the auspices of Lockwood de Forest. The gardens were designed to highlight Ludington’s sculpture collection.

RESOURCES:
Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California (96-515)
Dr. Warren R. Austin, Nominations for Historical Landmarks or Places of Historic Merit

¹ Board of Supervisors resolution
Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the

County of Santa Barbara, State of California

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THAT "VAL VERDE",
LOCATED AT 2549 SYCAMORE CANYON RD.
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
(A.P.N. 11-120-3 & A.P.N. 11-120-39),
IS WORTHY OF PROTECTION UNDER
ORDINANCE No. 1716, AND PRESCRIBING
CONDITIONS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE
LANDMARK. ( # 38 )

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Commission has considered the Historical Significance of Val Verde, an estate of 17+ acres, located at 2549 Sycamore Canyon Road, in Santa Barbara, California, A.P.N. 11-120-3 and A.P.N. 11-120-39; and

WHEREAS, use and ownership of the property can be traced back to the earliest inhabitants of Santa Barbara, the Chumash Indians, a presidio soldier-Jose Dominguez, the early Montecito estates of Issac G. Waterman (Mira Vista) and James Waldron Gillespie (El Furcides); and

WHEREAS, the Main House of Val Verde, designed by Bertram Grovenor Goodhue is one of the few Montecito estate homes designed by a nationally known architect, and the gardens of Val Verde were designed and implemented over a twenty-three year period by noted landscape architect Lockwood de Forest, and the lower gardens represent an important period of early experiments with hybridization of plants and have ties to the famed Kew Royal Botanical Gardens in London; and

WHEREAS, Val Verde represents an important era in our local history and is closely associated with Wright S. Ludington, well known for his philanthropy and contributions to the arts in Santa Barbara; and

WHEREAS, under the care of Dr. Warren Austin, Val Verde has been preserved and due to his generosity Val Verde will continue to be preserved and made available for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors, having duly set a public hearing, has heard all interested parties and has closed said public hearing, adopting the conditions set out in Paragraph 2 of this Resolution.

2. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares Val Verde to be an historical landmark pursuant to Ordinance No. 1716 and hereby imposes the following conditions on Val Verde pursuant to said ordinance.

   a. Demolition, removal or destruction, partially or entirely, is prohibited unless express consent in writing is first had and obtained from the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmarks Advisory Commission. Such consent may impose all reasonable conditions deemed appropriate by the Commission to accomplish the purposes of Ordinance No. 1716.
b. No alterations, repairs, additions or changes (other than normal maintenance and repair work) shall be made unless and until all plans therefore have first been reviewed by the Santa Barbara Historical Landmark Advisory Commission and approved, or modified and reasonable conditions imposed as deemed necessary, and all such work shall be done under the direction and control of the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Commission or other qualified persons designated by it.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 17 day of December, 1996, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Schwartz, Graffy, Wallace, Staffel, Urbanske

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE BOARD

By Robert Cohen

Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

STEPHEN SHANE STARK,
COUNTY COUNSEL

By Deputy County Counsel