

Historical Assessment of Silver Spur Stables 1900 Riverside Drive, Glendale, California:

The oldest surviving and active 1930 “Pole Barn” characteristic of barns post Great Depression, and in 1939 as a result of World War II in the United States

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Silver Spur Stables

A 1939 Pole Barn, the oldest, existing and active horse barn and stable in Glendale along the Los Angeles River, and plays a vital role in the Riverside Rancho horse community.



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I. Purpose and Qualification

Purpose

The aim of this paper is to provide a historical basis for Silver Spur Stables, located at 1900 Riverside Drive, Glendale, California in the Riverside Rancho. The purpose is to provide the Glendale Historical Society with sufficient historical background and references to provide a basis for historical designation of the “old barn” and related structures at Silver Spur Stables.

A NOTE TO THIS ASSESSMENT (added September 19, 2021). It must be noted that, after the completion of this assessment and submitting it to the Glendale Historical Society, the author was informed that the historical society learned that there was a historical assessment in 2018. On September 19, 2021 the author was provided a copy of the 2018 assessment, whereas Historic Preservation Consulting, found Silver Spur Stables at 1900 Riverside Drive, Glendale, California, as historic (Snow, 2018). This current assessment provides additional historical perspectives as described in each of the criteria for historic designation, that should also be taken into consideration for designation. It must be further noted that, while not part of this 2021 historical assessment, a 2019-2020 study by California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, College of Environmental Design, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, conducted a study with Save Glendale Riverside Rancho, recommended a historical overlay for the Riverside Rancho, whereas the application process is currently being planned.

Qualification

While the author’s doctoral and graduate school education is in applied sciences and public health, he has college and graduate education in Urban and Regional Planning from California State Polytechnic University with specialization in historic preservation, Public Administration/Intergovernmental Management Policy from the University of Southern

California, and Architectural Historic Preservation from Mansfield College, University of Oxford. He was also a fellow at the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington DC. He was also a planner in historic preservation for the City of Claremont, California for three years. He maintains relationships with alumni networks and is active with consultancy in historic preservation in the United Kingdom and in the United States.

II. Designation Criteria Overview

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

- a. Silver Spur Stables “old barn” is an example of a broad pattern of United States history, characteristic of barns constructed during the 1930’s of the Great Depression and World War II in 1939
- b. Silver Spur Stables, including the “old barn”, continues operating as an active horse barn, since 1939
- c. Silver Spur Stables has contributed to local and regional history providing western culture by providing the community with a long history of riding lessons, children’s riding camps and at-risk youth equine-assisted therapy programs and riding club
- d. Silver Spur Stables continues to be a host as an emergency equine and animal rescue center during fires and earthquakes

2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

- a. Silver Spur Stables is associated with the lives of actors and performers in the film industry as equestrians in Los Angeles and Hollywood, dating back to the 1930’s to the present.
- b. Silver Spur Stables has been the home to a long history of film and entertainment horses
- c. Silver Spur Stables has had a long history contributing to the fashion industry, since the early days of Bette Davis in the 1930’s.

3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values

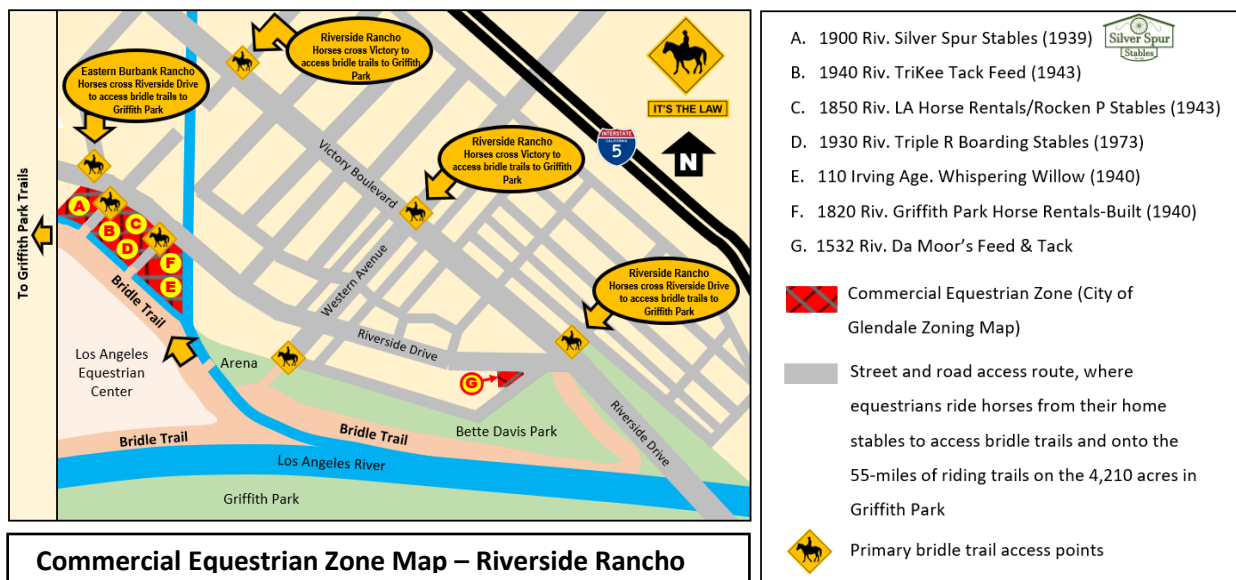
- a. The old barn has characteristic of pole barn construction that was common during the 1930's that is representative of the design of barns constructed during World War II in 1939
- b. The central barn, office, living room, and stables are characteristic of 1939 construction during that time period

4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation

- a. The Silver Spur Stables "old barn" yields a pattern of cultural heritage in California, as part of the original 1894 Rancho La Providencia that was dedicated to host cattle and horses
- b. To date, Silver Spur Stables, including the "old barn", continues to operate as a horse barn and facility
- c. Horses have been on the land of 1900 Riverside Drives, continually since 1894, for 187 years

III. Location and Setting

Located in the Riverside Rancho, Silver Spur Stables, located at 1900 Riverside Drive, is an active, community horse barn and stable facility that includes a Pole barn build in 1939 with 78 horse stables. The facility includes several buildings, including two tack rooms, staging area, horse cleaning, arena, offices, barn living room, barn kitchen, a one-bedroom home, and outdoor barbeque facility (Exhibit A). Records show “old barn” in the rear of the property adjacent to the stone creek was built in 1939, with front buildings following. The property is located within the Commercial Equestrian (CE) zone, which allows equestrian-related business activities. It is part of the larger Riverside Rancho horse community. The property, is located within, what was the original 1894 Rancho La Providencia. Silver Spur Stables, including the old barn continues to be an active horse barn and stable (Exhibit B, 1-2). As shown in the map below, the property facing Riverside Drive to the north; Allen Avenue to the east; the historic stone creek, the public bridge trail and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center to its south; and the City of Burbank to its westerly side. Silver Spur Stables plays an active role supporting and contributing to the Glendale Riverside Rancho, as well as neighboring rancho communities and Los Angeles Griffith Park (Save Glendale Riverside Rancho, 2018).



IV. Criteria For Eligibility

The criteria for eligibility for this document was based on the National Register (Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.4). Whereas the property in question must be at least 50 years of age; significant in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology; and meet one or more of the four of the following criteria.

CRITERION 1: ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF LOCAL OR REGIONAL HISTORY OR THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CALIFORNIA OR THE UNITED STATES

Historical Rancho La Providencia 1894 Mapping

The address 1900 Riverside Drive, Glendale, California is located on the southwestern most corner of the current City of Glendale, adjacent to the City of Burbank and City of Los Angeles at Griffith Park. Using overlay mapping technology, the current property address, overlayed on an 1894 USGS map is within Rancho La Providencia, when overlayed onto a 1926 map, using USGS mapping overlay (United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2021). This is notable, as a portion of the current Riverside Rancho was part of the original Rancho La Providencia. This land was originally designated by a land grant in 1849 for cattle and horses. While many other areas of the original Rancho La Providencia have vacated horses, since that time, horses have continually on this land for 187 years in the Burbank Rancho Equestrian District and the Glendale Riverside Rancho (Ogden Hoffman & Hubert, 1862; Bearchell & Fried, 1989; United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2021; *Brief History of Vicente De La Ossa and Family*, n.d.).

The Great Flood of 1938

Flood events along the Los Angeles River between the years of 1914 and 1934, left Los Angeles economically devastated (US Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, 2013). As a result, the Flood Control Act of 1936 was established by the Federal Government which provided funds

to assist the County of Los Angeles in the development of flood control infrastructure that included channeling 52 miles of the Los Angeles River. Construction began in 1936 and lasted through 1959 (US Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, n.d.). The flood of 1936, breached the Los Angeles River within this area of the Riverside Rancho during its construction period.

During the Great Flood of 1938, the Los Angeles River breached, causing flooding throughout southern California, including south the Riverside Rancho (*35 Black and White Photos of the 1938 Los Angeles Flood*, 1938). According to an arial photograph shows the flooded area along the Los Angeles River by Victory Boulevard and Riverside Drive. Comparing the photograph with a Google Earth map overlay, shows the approximate location of 1900 Riverside Drive (United States. Army. Corps of Engineers, 1938). The comparison suggests that this location might have been spared, but looked like there might not have been structures, or it could be in the adjacent area that might have been flooded (Exhibit C). In either case, in 1938 it shows no structures at the property location of 1900 Riverside Drive. Chicago Title historical property data shows only two properties within this portion of the Riverside Rancho in 1938. This included Bette Davis Estate located at 1907 Rancho Avenue, build in 1934 and another property located at 1752 Riverside Drive, built in 1941.

The Pole Barn at 1900 Riverside Drive: Its history and characteristics in the United States during the 1930's

It is the oldest barn among the other 4 neighboring barns and stables in the Commercial Equestrian Zone in the Riverside Rancho (Table 1). What is known as the oldest building on the property, is referred to as the “old barn”. It is located on the back part of the property with its side adjacent and parallel with the stone creek (Exhibit D) and community bridle trail that the rancho community equestrians of Glendale Riverside Rancho, Burbank Rancho, horse rental facilities and other riding stables programs and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, use to



Front of the Silver Spur Stables 1939 old barn
(Photo by Jim DeCarli)



View of the stone creek and bridle trail from
the front of the Silver Spur Stables old barn
(Photo by Jim DeCarli)

access the 55-miles of riding trails within the 4,210 acres of natural chapparral-covered mountain terrain of Griffith Park in Los Angeles (Exhibit E). At some point in time, a front roof cover and extension was added to the front of the old barn. This has provided protection from environmental elements. The old barn, is the oldest surviving and active American-made pole barn, characteristic of barns built in 1939 during World War II.

The name “pole barn”, evolved in the 1930's in America as a result of economic pressures of the Great Depression that forced farmers in rural communities to use recycled utility poles as building materials (Vlach, 2021). H. Howard Doane, founder of Doane's Agricultural Service, developed the pole barn concept in 1930, combining the availability of utility poles and metal roof sheeting. This method of construction with reinforced wood trusses with metal or wood that made pole barns stronger, while having the ability to be built larger and taller using less materials (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017).

At the time when the “old barn” was constructed in 1939, was during World War II, when the United States government imposed a \$1,500 limit for constructing new barns (Delmarva Buildings, n.d.). The pole barn became more common throughout the United States during this time period. Its unique design, reduced the amount of lumber needed by two-thirds, meeting governmental restrictions during the war. Pole barns were constructed primarily from utility poles or natural shaped or round wooded timber between 4 to 12 inches in diameter. These posts also included tree trunks, engineered lumber or chemically pressure treated squared timbers. Posts were buried into the ground or anchored to concrete, reducing the need for additional bracing. Posts were generally spaced 8 to 12 feet apart (Stalnaker, 2021). Pole barns did not require walls. Those that were enclosed had posts about 2 feet on center to provide for siding. Siding generally ranged from 32- or 26-inches galvanized steel siding, lap siding, cedar boards or brick. The pole barn was common to have a smaller pitch roof, constructed with rafters every 2 feet, with 1 inch of sheathing placed 12- to 18- inches apart. The shape included a gable or lean-to, with metal roofing or whatever was the least expensive or available material. The floors were generally soil, and sometimes gravel, concrete or wood framed (Ontario Architecture, n.d.; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017).

Comparing Pole Barn Design Characteristics to the “Old Barn” at 1900 Riverside Drive

The Silver Spur Stables “old barn” has characteristics of the American pole barn that was representative of what was common in the United States during the Great Depression and World War II. These images of a 1930 pole barn for cattle, and farm equipment outbuilding pole barn, illustrate the height, low pitch roof and material, siding, pole, and design are observed from the exterior of Silver Spur Stables old barn. See Exhibit F, Plates 1-5, for larger photographs of 1930 American pole barn examples and Silver Spur Stables “old barn”.



1930 Pole Barn for Cattle

Source: <http://www.zncobb.com/restorations.html>

Farm Equipment Outbuilding 1930 Pole Barn

Source: <https://meadowsbuildings.net/what-is-a-pole-barn>

Silver Spur Stables “old barn” Pole Barn

Silver Spur Stable’s continued role providing western culture to local and regional history

Since the beginning, in 1939 when Silver Spur Stables began as a horse barn and stables, it continues as an active horse barn, serving the community of Glendale and the greater Los Angeles. It continues providing western culture by providing traditional riding lessons, in addition to children’s riding camps that provide not only riding lessons, but also horsemanship and care, and exposing children to western culture, affiliated with The Autry Museum. Child campers range

from local to as far as Malibu and Orange County, by participating in horse camps throughout the summer, and between school breaks in the fall, winter and spring. Silver Spur Stables has had a long history of providing western culture with horses by providing programs for at-risk youth with the Los Angeles Police Department, Operation Progress. Many of these children from the community of Watts in Los Angeles who have graduated from the Operation Progress programs for grades K-12, have attended Boston College, studied abroad, and competed nationally for various competitions. Silver Spur Stables continues to recruit a long history of equestrian participants to the Silver Spur Riding Club. The western horse culture goes beyond Silver Spur Stables, with 184 barns and stable facilities within the greater Los Angeles and 44 within the City of Los Angeles, that include over 150,000 horses, with 400,000 horses within southern California (Save Glendale Riverside Rancho, 2021). Silver Spur Stables, continues to operate as an emergency horse and animal rescue center. Most recently from victims of wildfires in Malibu, Topanga, Pacific Palisades, and other burn areas along the foothills that have horses and animals (KCRW, 2019).

CRITERION 2: ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS IMPORTANT TO LOCAL, CALIFORNIA OR NATIONAL HISTORY

Silver Spur Stables is associated with the lives of people who have visited and who are or have been equestrians at Silver Spur Stables who are notable to local, California and National history.

Equestrians in the film industry

Silver Spur Stables has had a long history of having actors and performers in the film and music industry, visiting, boarding their horses and those who have become part of Silver Spur Stables and Silver Spur Riding club. This relationship with the film industry, began during its early days with Bette Davis. She and her husband Arthur Farnsworth resided at her Rivergate Estate that was built in 1934. It was located at 1705 Rancho Avenue, just a short ride down the trail in the Riverside Rancho. According to a longtime resident of Glendale, who grew up in the area, Gloria Genie, recalled as a teen, seeing Bette Davis many times riding on the trail with her Trotting horse “Tom” throughout the Riverside Rancho, as well as by the new and only barn at the time, Silver Spur Stables (Exhibit G). Since that time, Silver Spur Stables has continued being affiliated with equestrians in the film industry. Susanne Peika, the current barn manager for over 20 years, has had a long history in the equestrian community. Beginning with the early days of beginning the University of Southern California Polo Team and Club, to teaching and participating with polo matches and teams at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center. She carries a wealth of knowledge associating Silver Spur Stables with Hollywood and the film industry. Whereas, Johnny Grant, former Honorary Mayor of Hollywood, a common visitor, recalled that when Michael Jackson was a boy that he often visited to ride at Silver Spur Stables. More recently equestrian visitors and boarders include, William Shatner, Stefani Powers (equestrian and boarder), and Adam Sandler. Stefani Powers has been a regular at Silver Spur Stables, including being featured with her horse at Silver Spur Stables (Exhibit H & I). To this day, Silver Spur Stables provides annual awards

barbeques and holiday events, inviting members from its Silver Spur Riding Club, inner-city, at-risk though programs, and children's riding camps and programs. These were often attended by many in the film and music industry with these equestrians also performing casually at these events and activities. Most recently was Austin Moody, an equestrian and Country music writer and performer from Nashville, Tennessee.



Austin Moody at
Silver Spur Stables
June 2, 2018



LAPD Operation Progress Horse Program Cookout at
Silver Spur Stables with Austin Moody
(Photo taken at 5pm, June 2, 2018 by Jim DeCarli)

In addition, to Hollywood film stars, and other performers, Silver Spur Stables has also been featured on the cover of magazines with Stefani Powers (Exhibit H) and others in Vogue Magazine. While the Riverside Rancho filled with history with Vogue Magazine with Bette Davis, Silver Spur Stables continues being on the cover of Vogue Magazine and videography. Recently these included Bella Hadid, as well as video interviews with horse Coco throughout Silver Spur Stables (Exhibit J & K). Vogue Magazine at Silver Spur Stables has also included Kendal Jenner with the horse Coco (Exhibit K). Silver Spur Stables is also home to many longtime film and entertainment horses such as Coco, who has been in Vogue Magazine several times.

CRITERION 3: EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, REGION OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTIONS OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES

Silver Spur Stables embodies distinctive characteristics of a type of barn (pole barn) that was common during the 1939 period of construction. As shown in Exhibit E, Plates 4 and 5, shows the old barn at Silver Spur Stables, characteristic of pole barn construction that was common during the 1930's. It is representative of the barns constructed during World War II in 1939 in the United States as a result of the U.S. government restrictions on barn construction, which reduced the amount of lumber needed by two-thirds, to meet restrictions during World War II. (Delmarva Buildings, n.d.; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017). In addition to being characteristic of this time period, it continues an active barn in the community.

Silver Spur Stables also has other buildings and aesthetics that are characteristic of the time period. Most specifically is the central barn, seen from Riverside Drive. It includes the central stables, office, restrooms, kitchen, and living room, that are characteristic of 1939 materials and construction (Exhibit M).

CRITERION 4: HAS YIELDED, OR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO THE PREHISTORY OR HISTORY OF THE LOCAL AREA, CALIFORNIA OR THE NATION

Silver Spur Stables yields information important to the history of the local area, as well as the nation. The Silver Spur Stables, its structures, including the “old barn”, yields a pattern of cultural heritage in California, as part of the original 1894 Rancho La Providencia that was dedicated to host cattle and horses. To date, Silver Spur Stables, the oldest and original active pole barn in the United States, continues to operate as a horse barn and facility. Its location, the land of 1900 Riverside Drive, has had horses in this area of the Riverside Rancho, continually for 187 years, since 1984, as shown in Exhibit N, Plates 1-3 (Save Glendale Riverside Rancho, 2018a).

V. Conclusion

This historical assessment of Silver Spur Stables, located at 1900 Riverside Drive in Glendale, California, is found to have historical significance, as discussed in each of the four criteria for historical designation. The 2018 assessment should also be included upon designation by the City of Glendale. This designation will also contribute to the planning of the historical overlay of the Riverside Rancho.

Table 1

*Barns and stables in the Riverside Rancho by year built
(Reference: Chicago Title Company)*

Barn/Stable Name	Address	Year Built
Silver Spur Stables	1900 Riverside Drive	1939
Griffith Park Horse Rentals	1820 Riverside Drive	1940
Whispering Willow	110 Irving Avenue	1940
LA Horse Rentals and Stables	1840 Riverside Drive	1943
Triple R Stables	1830 Riverside Drive	1973

Exhibit A

Silver Spur Stables blueprints and site plan

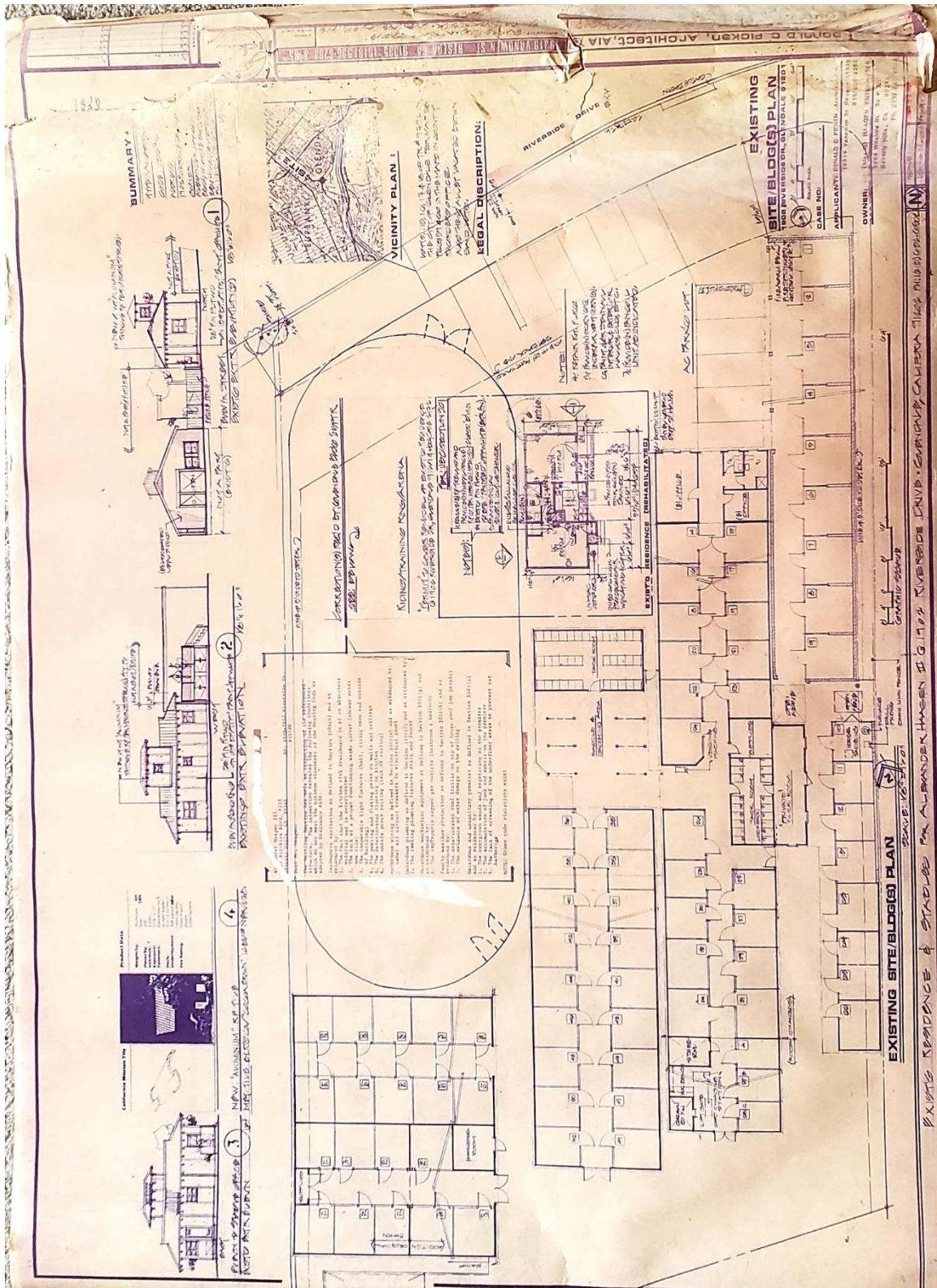


Exhibit B-1

Silver Spur Stables an active barn and stable serving greater Los Angeles County since 1939



Silver Spur Stables

Established 1939

The first and longest lasting community barn and stable in the Riverside Rancho. It is a 78-stall horse stable, that provides lessons, children's riding camps, annual events and activities, programs for at-risk youth equine therapy, boarding for film industry horses, the Silver Spur Riding club, and community barbeques adjacent to the stone creek.



Exhibit B-2

Silver Spur Stables an active barn and stable serving greater Los Angeles County since 1939



Exhibit C

Arial photograph of 1900 Riverside Drive location of the Great Flood of 1938



Exhibit D

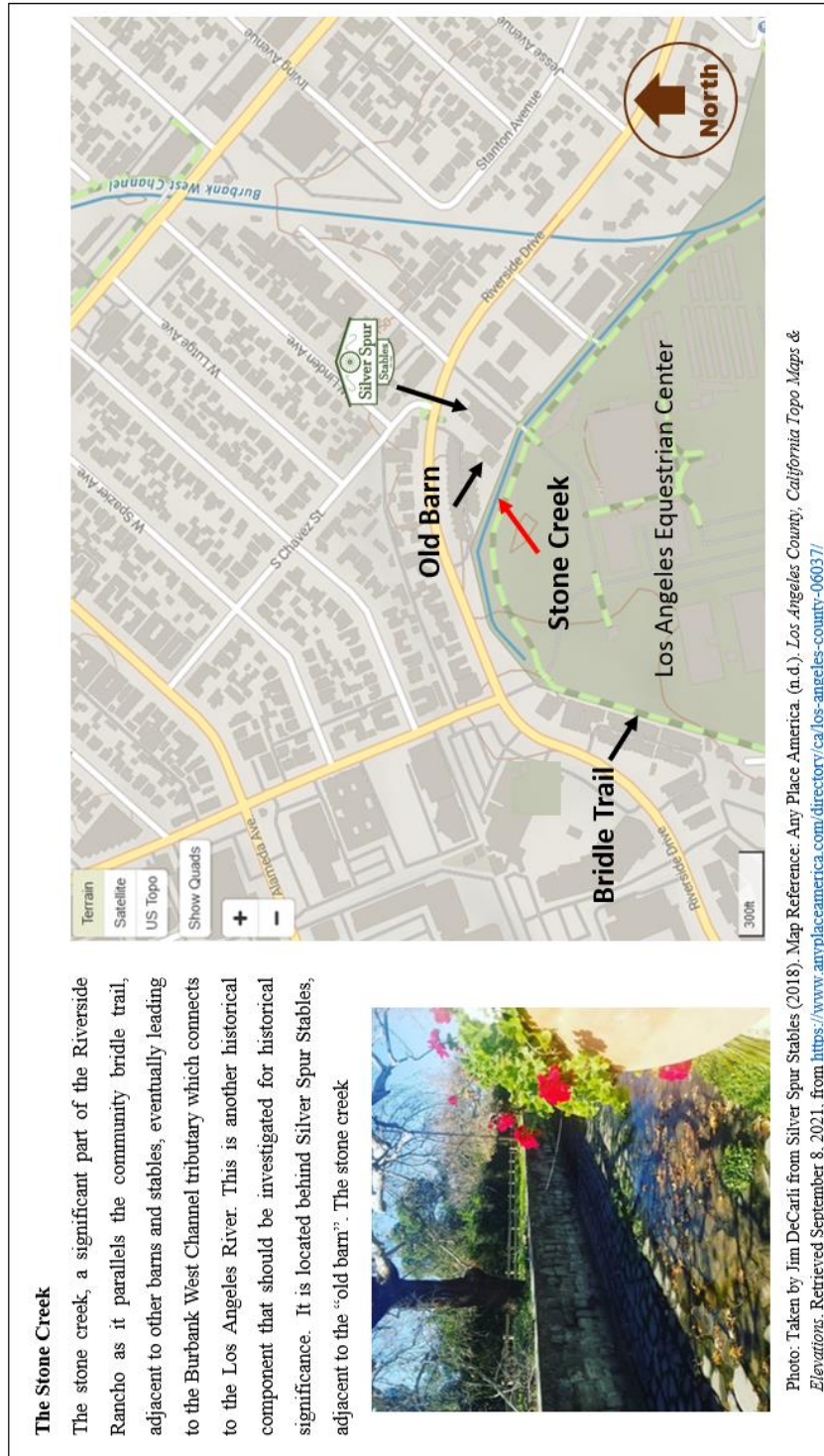
Map of the stone creek and vicinity within the Riverside Rancho and Silver Spur Stables

Exhibit E

Current Map of Ranchos: Location of Silver Spur Stables within the Riverside Rancho, and neighboring rancho communities of the Burbank Rancho, Los Angeles Atwater Equestrian District, and Los Angeles Equestrian Center, that share Griffith Park trails

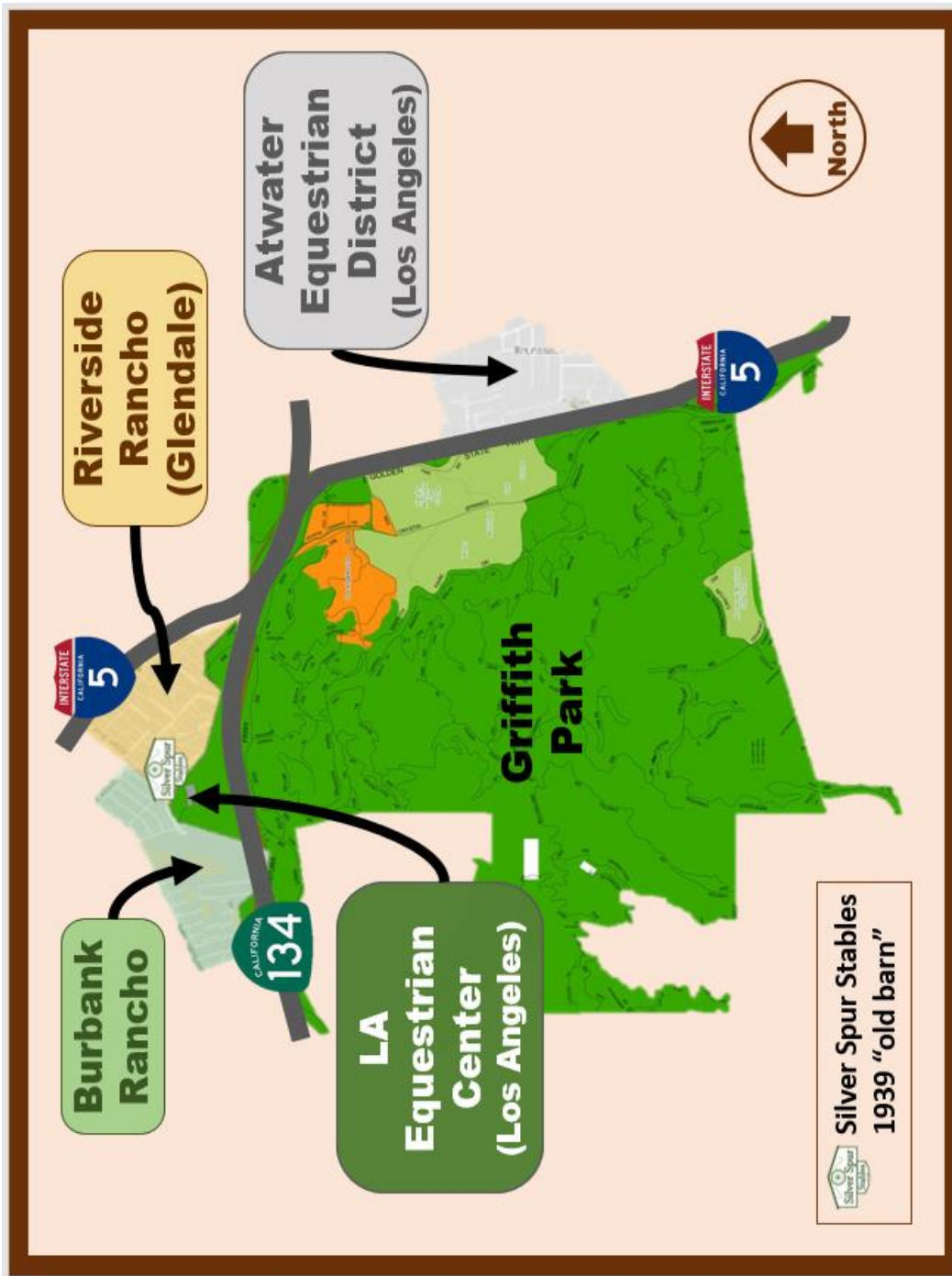


Exhibit F (Plate 1)

Example of a 1930 American pole barn with round posts on concrete footing

Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/35/d4/e4/35d4e48e773f3ce5ad1138d0e9d43b77.jpg>



Exhibit F (Plate 2)

Example of a 1930 American pole barn with round posts illustrating design of posts between 8 to 12 feet apart and, rafters and sheathing

Source: <https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/en/view-image.php?image=210581&picture=rustic-barn>

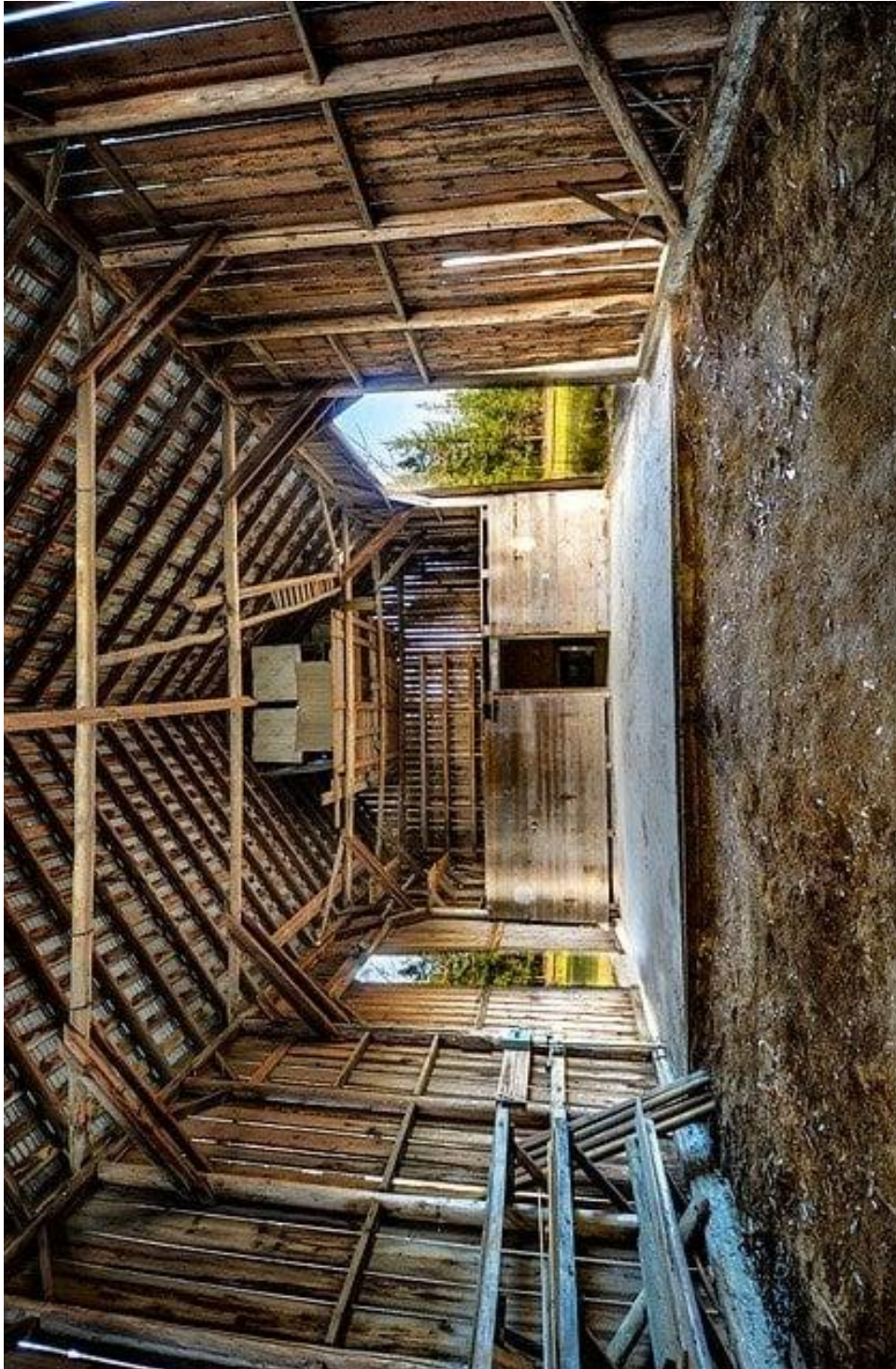


Exhibit F (Plate 3)

Example of a 1930 American pole barn with round posts illustrating common spacing of rafters about 2 feet apart with 1 inch sheathing, about 12 inches apart.

Source: <https://kbpconstructionplus.com/faqs/metal-building-vs-pole-barn/>



Exhibit F (Plate 4)

Shown: Silver Spur Stables old barn. Illustrating common spacing of rafters about 2 feet apart with 1 inch sheathing, about 12+ inches apart.

Photo: Jim DeCarli



Exhibit F (Plate 5)

Shown: Silver Spur Stables old barn front entry view. Illustrating common spacing of rafters about 2 feet apart with 1 inch sheathing, about 12+ inches apart seen inside. Common siding, roof pitch and design is also observed.

Photo: Jim DeCarli



Exhibit G

Bette Davis and husband Arthur Farnsworth with Trotting horse "Mike" at Silver Spur Stables



The above article was provided by Gloria Genie, who gave us a copy of this newspaper article and said she was about 15 or 16 when she saw the newspaper man taking photographs of Bette Davis with her horse Mike. She kept the photo she saw in the newspaper she told us. She originally responded to our inquiry in 2018 on social media about the history of the Riverside Rancho, and responded to Save Glendale Riverside Rancho.

Exhibit H

*Shown: Stefani Powers on the cover of Life After 50. Taken with her horse at Silver Spur Stables
(Photo: Taken from framed photo on the wall at Silver Spur Stables)*



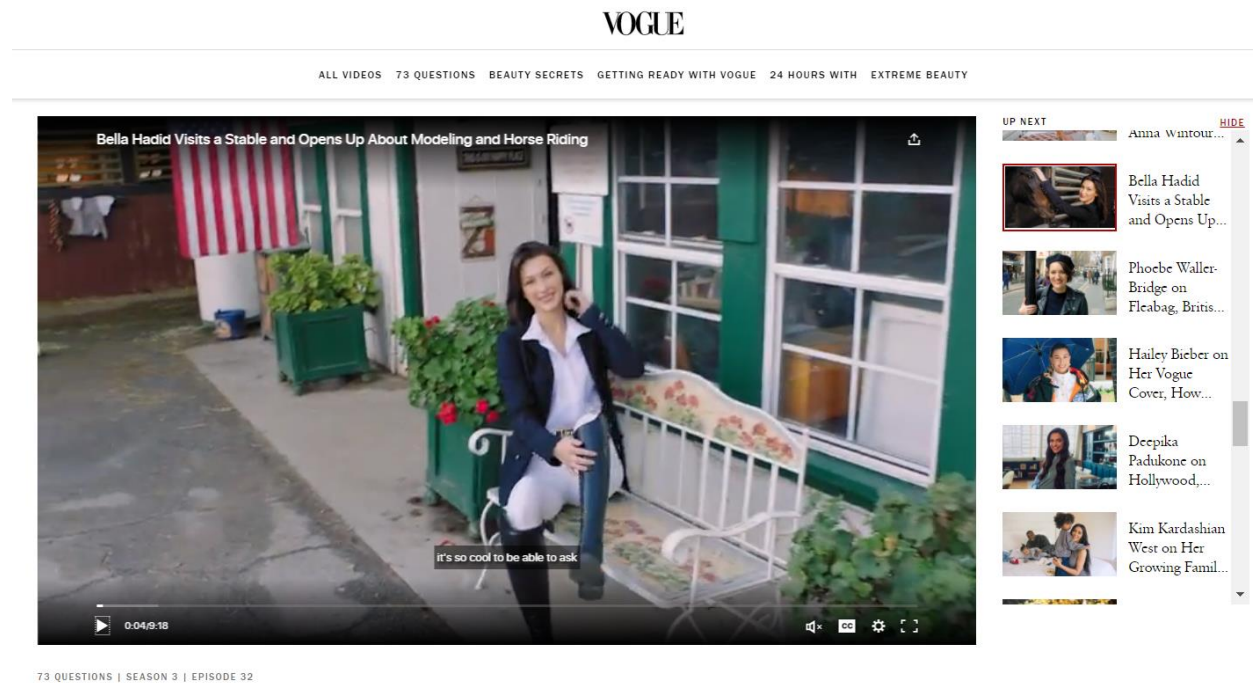
Exhibit I

*Shown: Stefani Powers with Susanne Peika (barn manager and polo friend) at Silver Spur Stables
(Photo: Take at a social event in 2021 at Silver Spur Stables)*



Exhibit J

Shown: Bella Hadid in Vogue Magazine video interview at Silver Spur Stables
[<https://www.vogue.com/video/watch/73-questions-with-bella-hadid>]



73 QUESTIONS | SEASON 3 | EPISODE 32

Bella Hadid Visits a Stable and Opens Up About Modeling and Horse Riding

Exhibit K

Shown: Bella Hadid riding on Coco at Silver Spur Stables



Exhibit L

Shown: Kendal Jenner in Vogue Magazine on horse Coco at Silver Spur Stables



Exhibit M. Plate 1.

Shown: Silver Spur Stables, central barn, front, interior, 1900 Riverside Drive

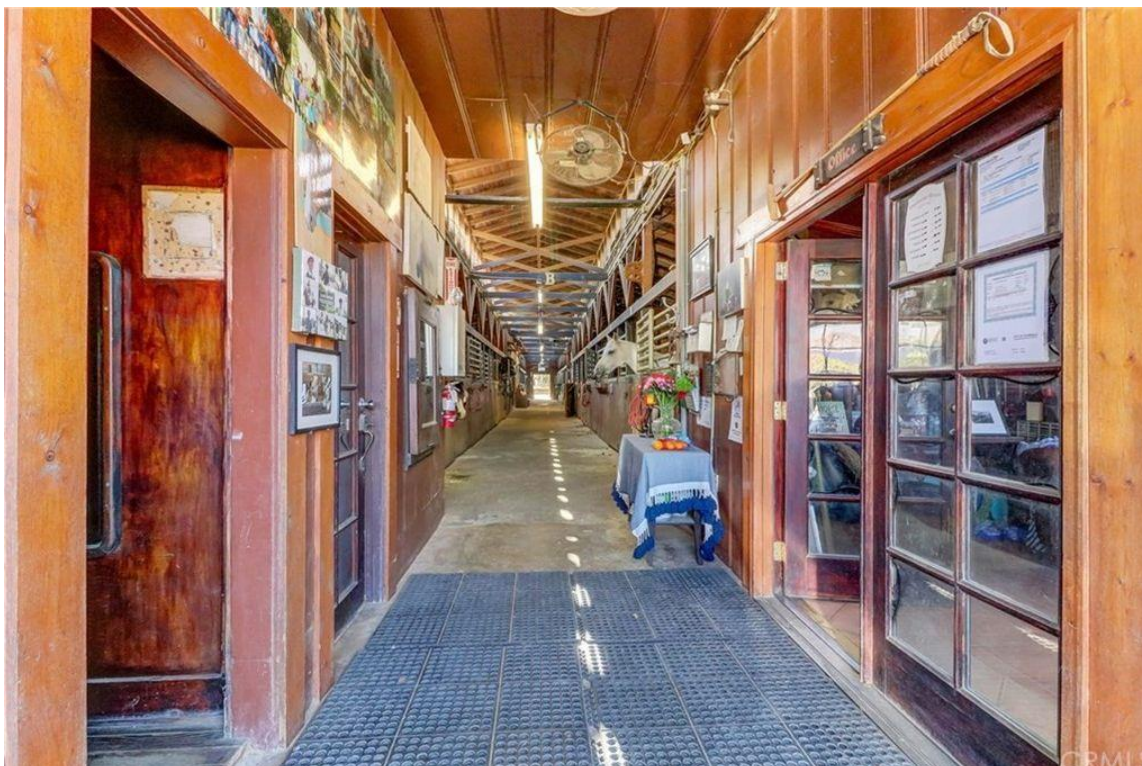


Exhibit M. Plate 2.

Shown: Silver Spur Stables, central barn, living room, 1900 Riverside Drive



Exhibit M. Plate 3.

Shown: Silver Spur Stables, central barn, 1900 Riverside Drive



Exhibit M. Plate 4.

Shown: Silver Spur Stables, central barn, restrooms, office, 1900 Riverside Drive



Exhibit M. Plate 5.

Shown: Silver Spur Stables, central barn, 1900 Riverside Drive



Exhibit N. Plate 1

Shown: USGS 1894 Rancho Providencia map showing the location of 1900 Riverside Drive

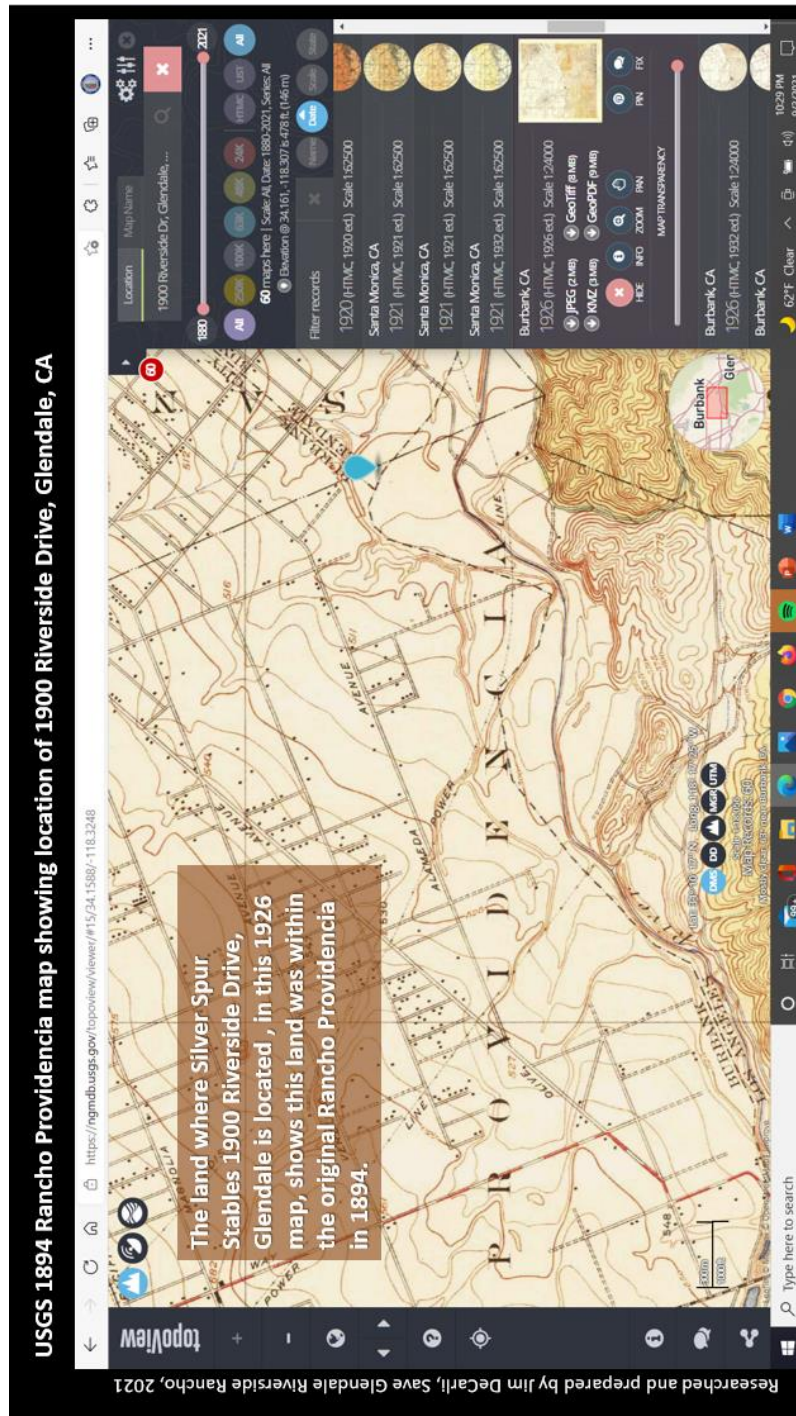


Exhibit N. Plate 2

Shown: USGS 1894 Rancho Providencia map with 1926 overlay of current 1900 Riverside Drive

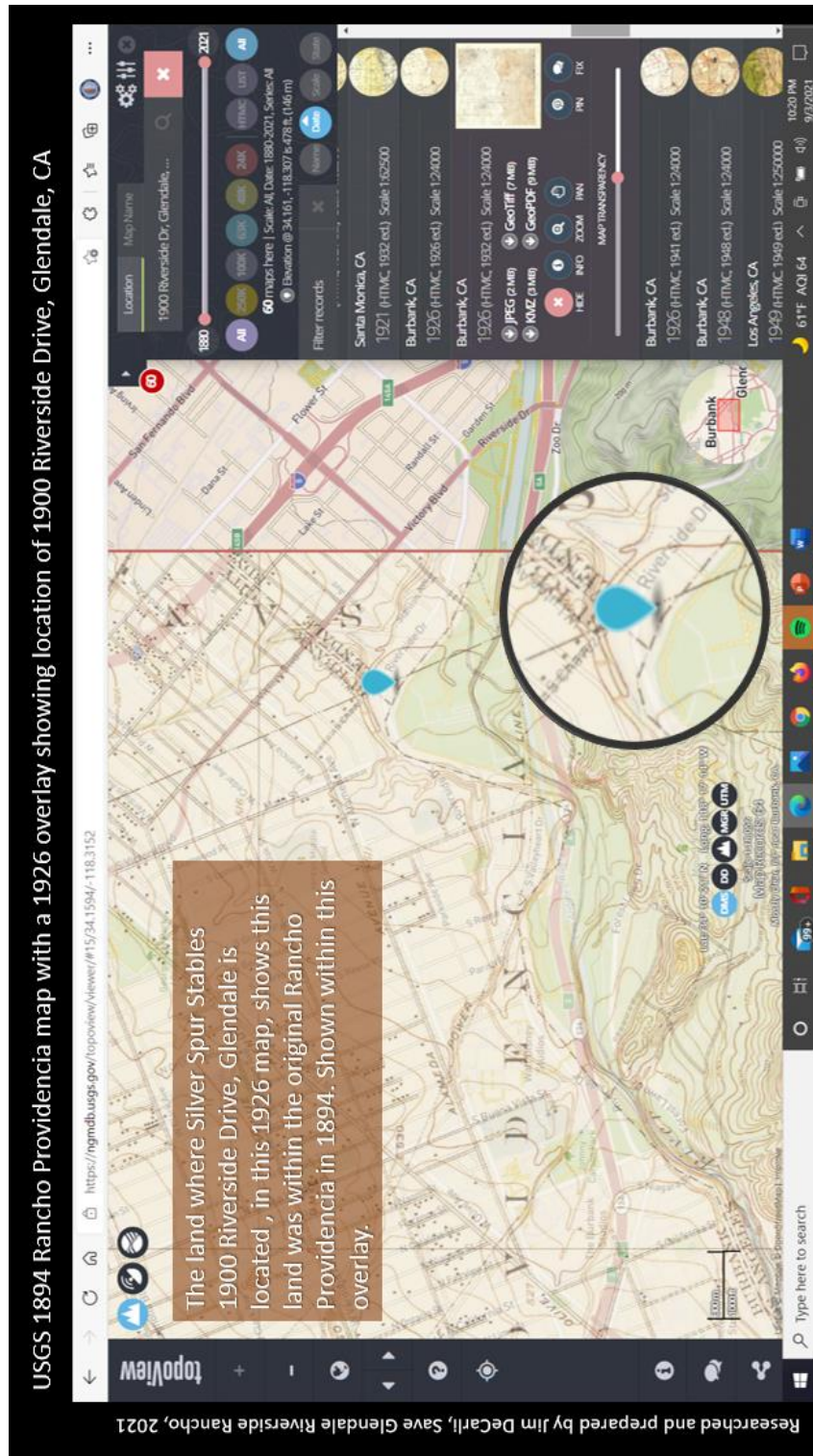
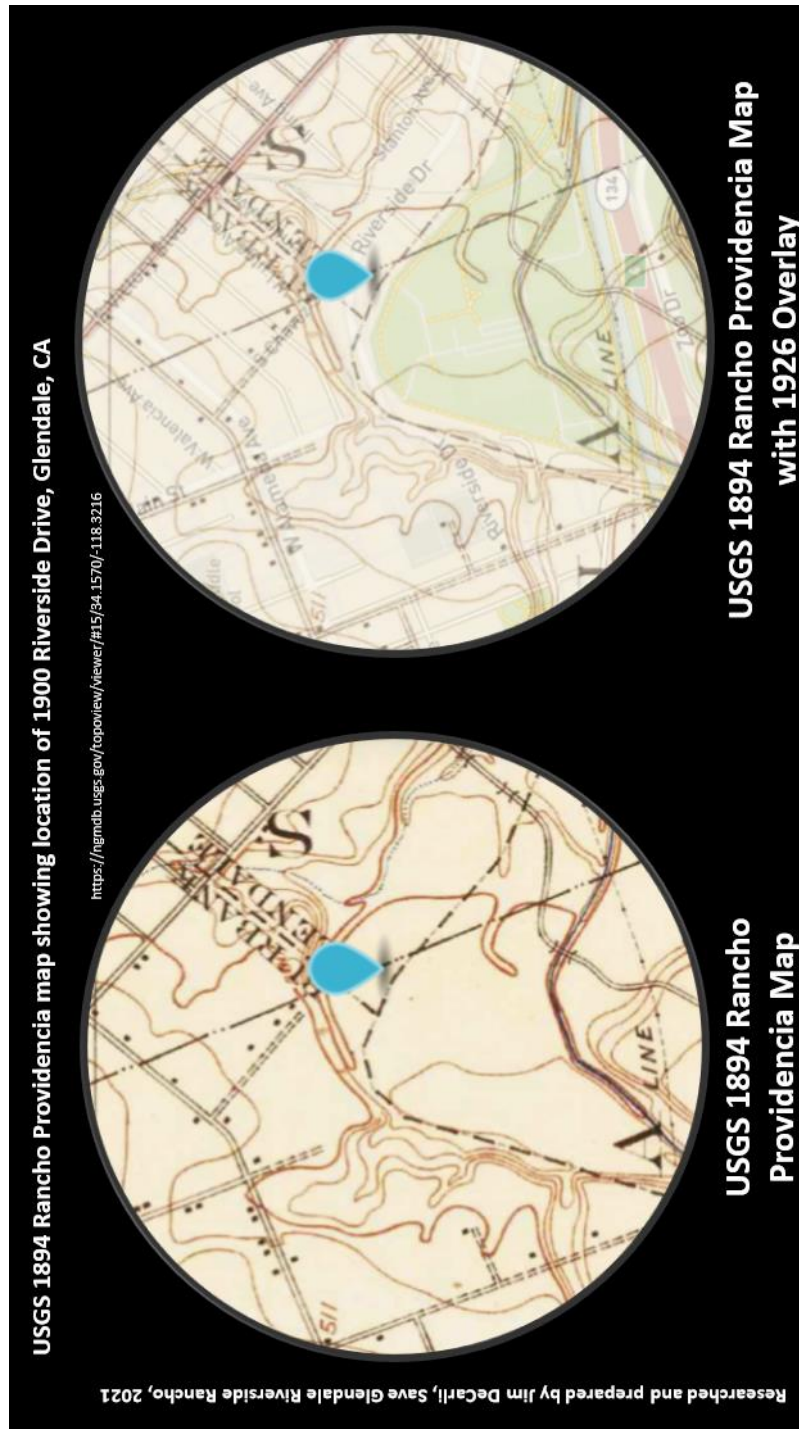


Exhibit N. Plate 3

Shown: USGS 1894 Rancho Providencia map with 1926 overlay of current 1900 Riverside Drive



References

- 35 *Black and White Photos of the 1938 Los Angeles Flood*. (1938). Vintage Everyday. <https://www.vintag.es/2014/12/35-black-and-white-photos-of-1938-los.html>
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