



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

A Portion of the Palos Verdes Estates, Palos Verdes, Los Angeles County, California . . . 1924

Stock#: 29485
Map Maker: Cheney / Langdon
Date: 1929
Place: Los Angeles
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 50 x 34 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Detailed subdivision plan of a portion of Rancho Palos Verdes Estates, prepared for the Olmsted Brothers and Charles Henry Cheney by J.G. Langdon, revised to December 11, 1929.

The plan identifies the major subdivisions within Rancho Palos Verdes Estates, including Margate, Malagacove, Valmonte, Montemalaga, Miraleste and Lunada. The plan includes lot numbers, streets, proposed school sites coastal access, open space and a host of other details.

The plan includes annotations drawn by Charles Henry Cheney, to whom this copy of the map belonged. Cheney and Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. were the primary players in what would become the first modern planned community. The Olmsted Brothers' project for the development of the Palos Verdes Ranch had its basis in the "harmonious" landscape design philosophy advocated by the firm's founder, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903). The design philosophy was continued in the work of his stepson John C. Olmsted (1852-1920) and son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957).

OCLC locates one example of the 1924 edition of the map (UCLA) and not later editions. Given that development activity slowed after 1929, there is a relatively high probability that this December 11, 1929 edition was the last revision to the map.

Charles Henry Cheney was born in Rome, Italy, on February 11, 1884, of American parents. He graduated in architecture and engineering from the University of California, Berkeley in 1905. From 1907 to 1910 he studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. For two years he traveled extensively in Europe, studying city planning in the major cities of France, Italy, Spain, and England. Upon returning to the United States in



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1912, he worked in New York for Charles A. Platt, who later became President of the American Academy in Rome.

In 1912 Cheney moved to California's Bay Area and immediately became a public advocate for city planning on the West Coast. He organized a statewide planning conference in Monterey in 1914 and invited civic leaders, chambers of commerce, real estate associations, improvement clubs, architects, and engineers from every city in the state. His draft for the first city planning enabling act in California was passed by the legislature in 1915.

Cheney was a founding member of the American City Planning Institute in 1917. Cheney helped to initiate city planning activities in the State of California by the mid-1910s. Cheney was responsible for organizing the state's first professional planning conference, in Monterey, California, in 1914. Cheney also drafted the first city planning enabling legislation passed by the state legislature the following year. He became an in-demand city planning consultant in the 1920s, producing plans for numerous California cities, including Santa Barbara, Berkeley, Alameda, Monterey, Palo Alto, Long Beach, Riverside, and Fresno. He also created the planned communities of Palos Verdes Estates and Rancho Santa Fe. Through his work with the Cities of Palos Verdes Estates, CA, Santa Barbara, CA, and Rancho Santa Fe, CA, Cheney fine-tuned such regulatory planning concepts as homeowner associations, deed covenants and architectural controls. Cheney also produced city plans for the Fresno, CA (1918), Portland, OR (1919), Spokane, WA (1920), and Riverside, CA (1929), among other cities.

In December of 1913, John C. Olmsted was contacted by James Dawson, one of his landscape architects working on the west coast. Dawson related that W. H. Kiernan, a Los Angeles representative of the Palos Verdes Ranch Syndicate, headed by Frank A. Vanderlip Sr. (1864-1937), contacted him about design development for a suburban community on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, land recently purchased by the syndicate. It appears that John C. Olmsted initially took up leadership for developing the project from 1914 until the eve of World War I, when the planning more-or-less ceased. Vanderlip's imagery of Italian hilltop towns with dramatic vistas to the sea and from the surrounding hills was developed by Olmsted Brothers and their involvement in the project continued until 1931, when the Depression slowed land sales and construction. It was the Vanderlip vision and financing, combined with Olmsted Brothers creative, legal, planning, and business talents that saw the project through.

When the Vanderlip Syndicate liquidated the Palos Verdes Ranch holdings after World War I, the property was bought and managed from 1921 to 1923 by Edward G. Lewis, a developer originally from St. Louis. After Lewis' schemes for Trust Indenture Notes met with distrust by the Los Angeles Title Insurance Company, the Palos Verdes project was again under the financial management of Vanderlip who formed a



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new trust. The future community was called Palos Verdes Estates and had decreased in development area by one-fifth, from the original 16,000 acres to 3225 acres. Eight-hundred acres were set aside for conserving natural parks and beaches and for developing country clubs and other outdoor recreational areas. Vanderlip held onto 13,000 acres in the southern portion of the peninsula for future development. Ninety percent of the development was zoned for single-family residential architecture.

The developmental phase of the project began in earnest about 1921 and construction of major streets and buildings began in 1923. A management team for sales and design was assembled for the project and the headquarters for the general manager Jay Lawyer, and the sales manager Donald K. Lawyer, were located in downtown Los Angeles. At this time Olmsted Brothers became Directors of Design, with Charles H. Cheney (1884-1943), consultant in city planning and Myron H. Hunt (1868-1952), architect. Olmsted's staff had offices in nearby Redondo Beach. F

Detailed Condition:

Some pencil annotations in orange. Minor soiling and one area of loss at bottom right corner.