

**RECEIVED**  
JUL 21 2015  
San Mateo County  
Planning Division

Outline of Supplemental Oral Statement to Planning Commission By  
Thomas V. Uridel  
(PLN 2015-00072)  
July 22, 2015

**1. Background information – Thomas V. Uridel:**

- Have lived continuously at 1111 Los Trancos Road in Los Trancos Woods since 1977 (photo available upon request).
- Retired Federal employee, having served 30+ years with U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.
- Served 6 years as an elected public official on the board of directors for the Los Trancos County Water District (LTCWD).
- As a LTCWD board member, helped oversee the development of a comprehensive, fully-engineered, master drainage improvement plan for the Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde neighborhoods within that District.
- Have a long-term interest in the history of Los Trancos Woods and surrounding rural areas.

**2. Background information – Los Trancos Woods (LTW) (see attached vintage marketing brochure).**

- LTW development initiated in the 1920's by W.D. Wasson, a local real estate broker/developer.
- Wasson only S.F., CA newspaper editor to publish on day of 1906 quake.
- Wasson served as principal LTW promotor/developer until the early 1950's.
- The name "Los Trancos Woods" chosen to emphasize the dominant presence and beauty of the development's oaks and other heritage and significant trees, an ongoing practice employed by most contemporary real estate agents doing business in the area.
- If polled, I believe that a substantial majority of LTW residents would cite living among LTW's beautiful heritage and other significant trees, as a principal reason for their residency.
- The LTW public and other rights of way (e.g., PG&E) are currently overhung by many heritage and other significant trees.

**3. Background information – 1090 Los Trancos Road (i.e., applicant's residence):**

- Residence built in the early 1930's as a model cabin and office for Mr. Wasson's conduct of promotion and sales activities related to the LTW development.
- Parcel composed of 2 relatively large lots, with the residence on 1 lot, and a very old, beautifully landscaped, park-like area on the other (photos available on request).
- The landscaped, park-like 2<sup>nd</sup> lot contains the disputed Black Oak, and faces the front of my residence at 1111 Los Trancos Road.
- Up into the early 1960's, that second lot was regularly used for both real estate promotion and community gathering purposes.
- The 1090 Black Oak is a visually dominant from the front of my residence; for all sub-area residents and passers-by on Los Trancos Road (photos available upon request).
- During my approximate 38+ year continuous residence across from that Black Oak, I have never observed or otherwise become aware of any maintenance performed on that tree. However during this same period, at least 2 heritage and 2 other significant trees have been removed from the lot on which the Black Oak is co-located.

4. **Concerns Regarding Staff Use of Inaccurate and/or Incomplete Information to Justify Proposed Removal:**

- Staff found that the Black Oak is located “adjacent to the house on that parcel” and could cause “substantial damage” to that house were it to fail.

That conclusion is apparently based on a staff acceptance of the applicant’s inaccurate claim regarding the distance between the tree and applicant’s residence. **The tree is not 30’ from the residence as claimed**, but approximately 55’ to 60” away. It is also inclined uphill, away from the 1090 residence, a likely relevant additional fact unnoted in the various staff reports. Consequently, in the unlikely event that the 45’ high Black Oak somehow fell toward applicant’s residence, it could not reach or damage that residence.

- Staff found that the Black Oak’s location creates a danger to otherwise unidentified “surrounding structures and properties” and should be removed to prevent “further” damage to those structures and properties.

1108 Los Trancos Road is the only “surrounding structure” or “property” within physical reach of the Black Oak were it to fail. However, the fact that the Black Oak is also generally inclined away from the 1108 residence and that its existing branches are many feet away from that residence, are not noted in the various staff reports. Similarly, staff have provided no information on the alleged prior damage to those structures and properties. In fact, I do not believe that such prior claimed damage has ever occurred.

- Staff found that the Black Oak constituted a danger to the public. However, in so doing, staff failed to note and consider:
  - that the utility lines within potential reach of the tree constitute a relatively minor branch off the main line, and are located across Los Trancos Road on its uphill side outside the tree’s current reach;
  - that none of the Black Oak’s branches currently overhang Los Trancos Road;
  - that many other trees along that branch line that overhang it and the road; and
  - that a conservatively estimated 100+ heritage and significant trees currently overhang Los Trancos Woods power lines and roads below.
- Staff found that the Black Oak is currently in such poor health that cost effective remediation strategies other than its complete removal are not available. However, in so doing, I do not believe that staff gave full and fair consideration to either the findings and recommendations of my arborist or other potentially relevant factors such as:
  - loss of a very important long-term habitat for birds and small animals;
  - aesthetic and ecological degradation of a highly visible and historically important parcel (see sections 2. And 3. above);
  - the heightened potential for future erosion of the applicant’s parcel due to removal of the tree and its soils-stabilizing root structure together with the storm drainage sheet flow from Los Trancos Road, and out of the frequently plugged County drainage ditch across the road and uphill from applicant’s parcel; and
  - loss of the environmental benefits to the general neighborhood such as shade and weather protection, noise reduction, oxygen generation and carbon dioxide removal.

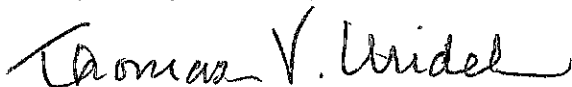
**5. Conclusion and Requested Relief:**

I believe that the Black Oak is an enormously important aesthetic, environmental and historical element within my immediate neighborhood and the larger Los Trancos Woods community. I also believe that my arborist's evaluation of its health does not support the staff conclusion that the only feasible remediation strategy is the tree's removal. My arborist has recommended pruning and cabling of the tree as a logical and cost effective remediation and will likely elaborate on that recommendation as part of his oral remarks to the Commission. In fact, I believe that the remediation suggested by my arborist would be significantly less costly than the tree's complete removal.

Moreover, in arriving at their proposed I do not believe that staff have fully and fairly considered all relevant facts in this matter, and have significantly misinterpreted or exaggerated others. Appropriately considered, I do not believe those facts support the conclusion that the Black Oak poses a significant danger to the applicant's residence, to other nearby residences or to the general public.

For the above-described reasons, I strongly urge the Commission to exercise its equitable powers in favor of the tree's preservation by denying the applicant. request.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas V. Uridel  
1111 Los Trancos Road  
Appellant – PLN 2015-00072  
July 21, 2015

Attachment – Vintage Marketing Brochure



# LOS TRANCOS WOODS

PLAN BOOKLET OF  
COTTAGES  
and  
MOUNTAIN  
CABINS

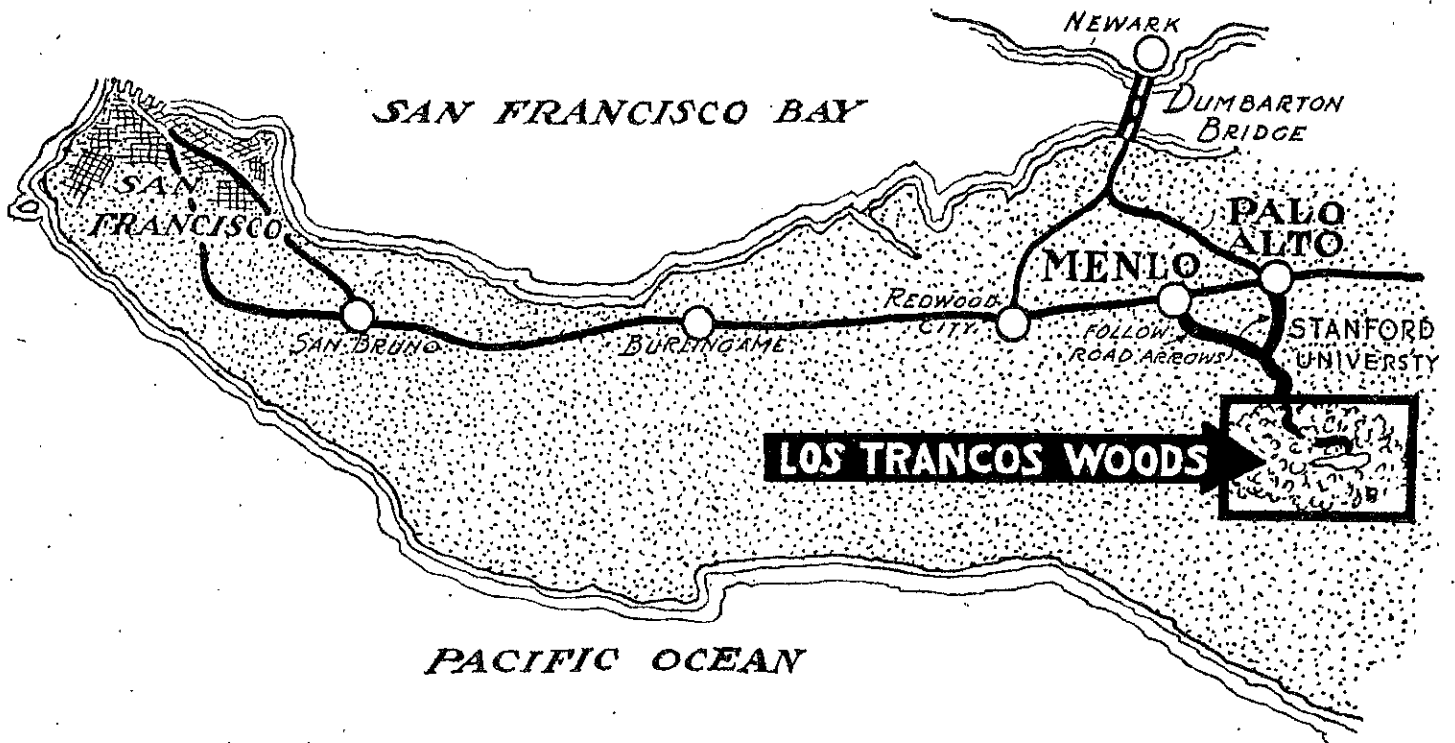


W. D. WASSON

Realtor - Owner

124 UNIVERSITY AVE. :: Phone Palo Alto 3151 :: PALO ALTO, CALIF.  
Office for Homes, Lots and Ranches—Write or Call

# Los Trancos Woods Cottage Plan Booklet



## HOW TO GET THERE

GO TO MENLO PARK; turn south west at the Bank corner out Santa Cruz Ave., along the paved road to the left turn about 1½ miles; then follow the LOS TRANCOS ARROWS along the Stanford University Golf Course to the sign, "Turn Here for Los Trancos Woods," and then turn south and follow the main road into Los Trancos Canyon as indicated by the arrows direct to Los Trancos Woods.

Only 20 minutes' drive from Menlo Park.  
Visit the tract at your earliest opportunity.

*Good Roads and  
Sparkling  
Mountain Water*

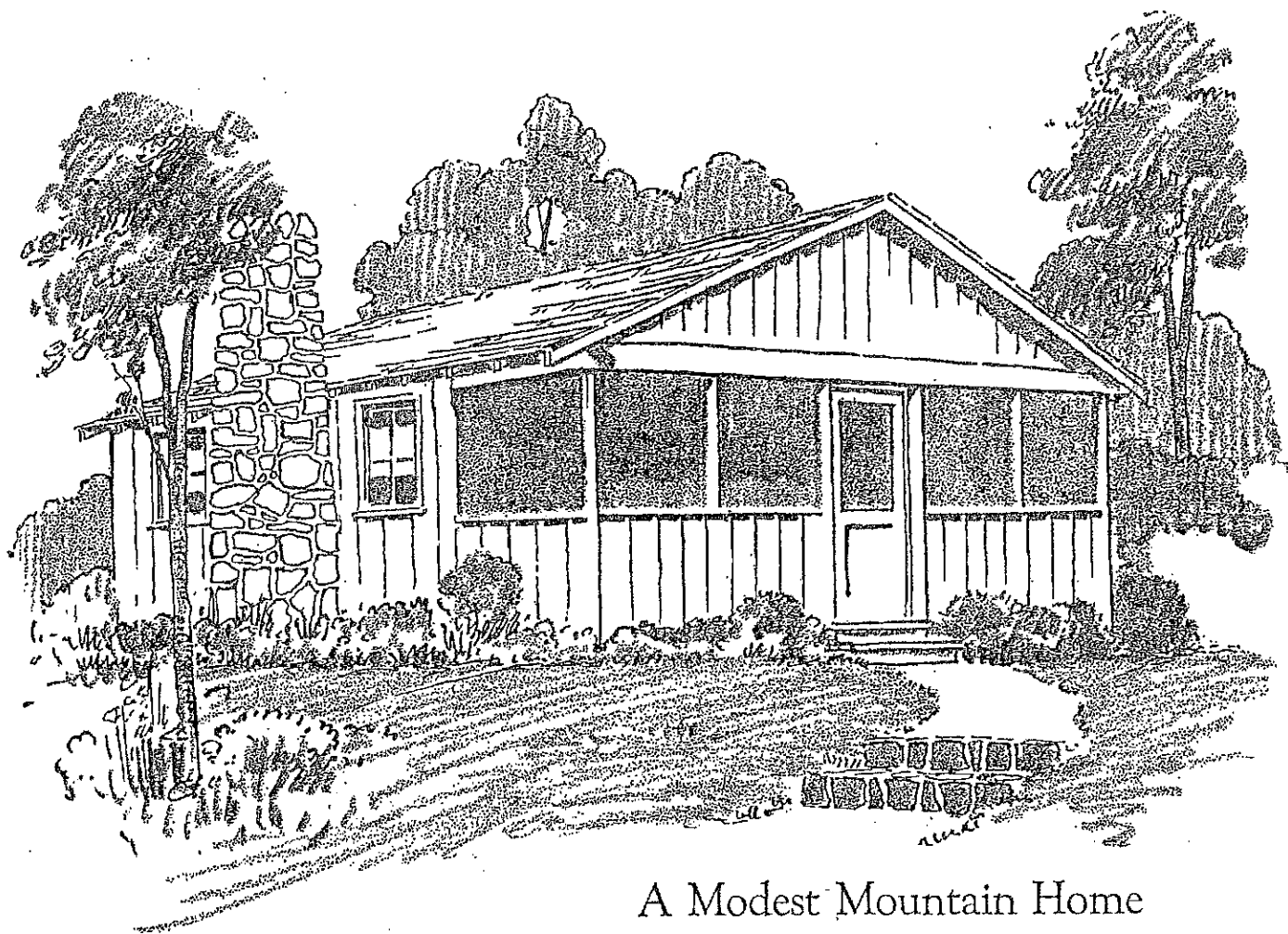
*Elevation is from  
900 to 1400 feet,  
with balmy, sunny  
climate, mountain  
scenery. Sites range  
from \$275 to \$495  
... with very easy  
terms to responsible  
buyers.*



*A Typical Los Trancos Scene*

*See the New  
Log Cabins and  
Redwood Homes*

*Los Trancos Woods  
is the place for your  
summer home or  
week-end cabin  
site. Less than an  
hour and a half easy  
driving from San  
Francisco.*



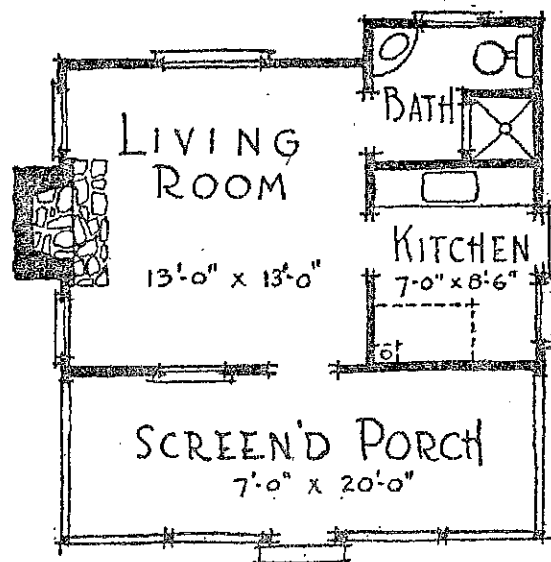
## A Modest Mountain Home

*Plan No. 50*

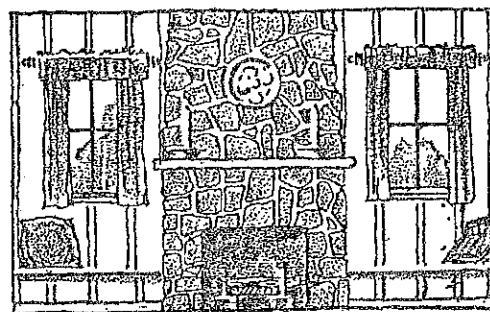
# DOS ROBLES

The arrangement of this plan gives an excellent elevation and may be constructed at a minimum cost. The porch may be divided by awnings, making two very large sleeping rooms. It is an ideal cottage for a couple and gives ample room for guests.

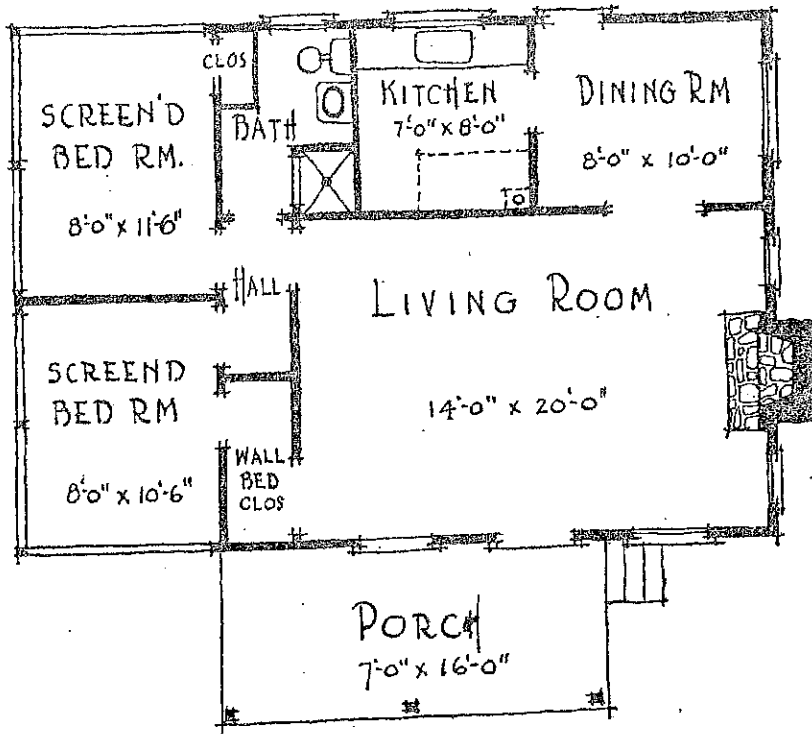
Architect estimate, \$575



PLAN FIFTY



*An attractive Stone  
Fireplace Plan*



## PLAN FIFTY-ONE

This was our model Cabin Plan. See it at the entrance of the tract.

See frontispiece for front elevation with shingled porch and fireplace.

This plan has proved very popular in the tract. The front elevation may be changed to suit.

### Plan of the "Model Cabin"

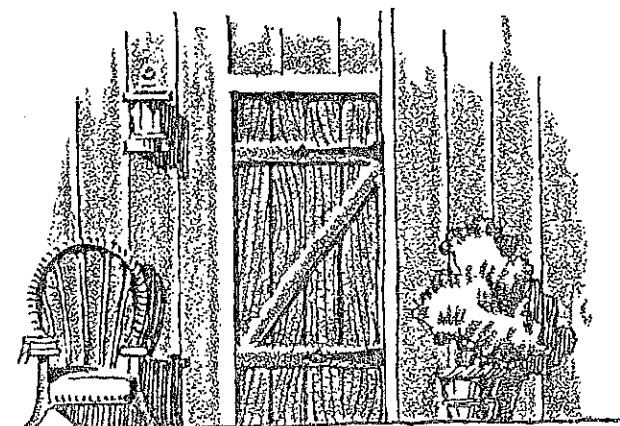
Plan No. 51

## The FERNWOOD

This spacious cottage gives the air of hospitality typical of California. It has two bedrooms, wall-bed closet off from the living room; a cozy day-bed may be used on the rambling porch, making sleeping room for eight people.

Architect estimate, \$1250.00

*A Mountain Cabin Door*



### A SUGGESTION

*Before deciding on a particular plan for your cottage it would be wise to have your contractor figure the cost. Prices and conditions are changeable.*

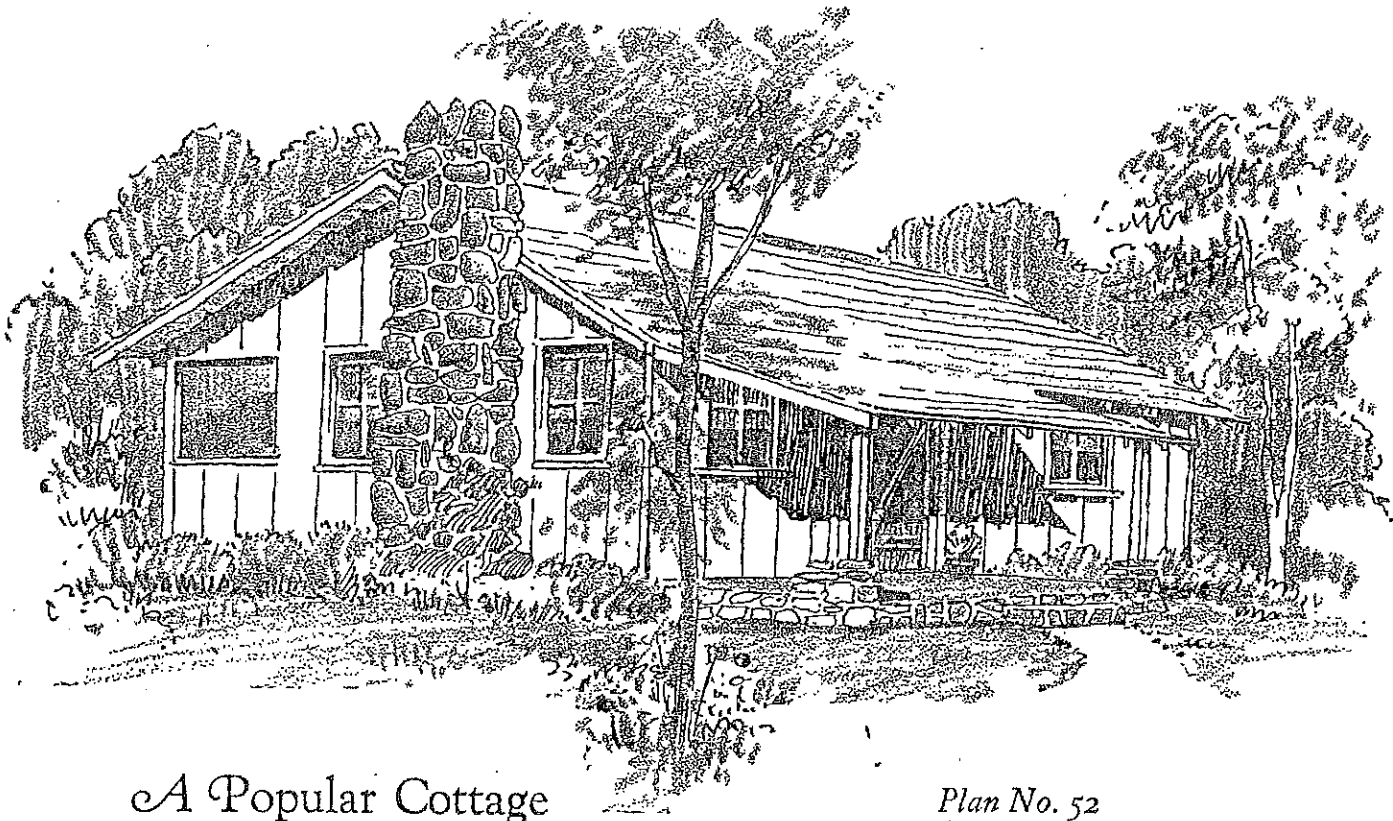
*May we help you figure the plans and the financing of your cabin home? Write us.*

## Buy a Lot Now

—ON EASY TERMS—

and build your little home in the mountains when it is convenient. Phone Palo Alto 3151 and a courteous salesman will call and give you all the facts on Los Trancos, the most reasonably-priced week-end subdivision on the Peninsula. Its beauty lies in its wooded sites, with wonderful views of valley, bay and mountains.





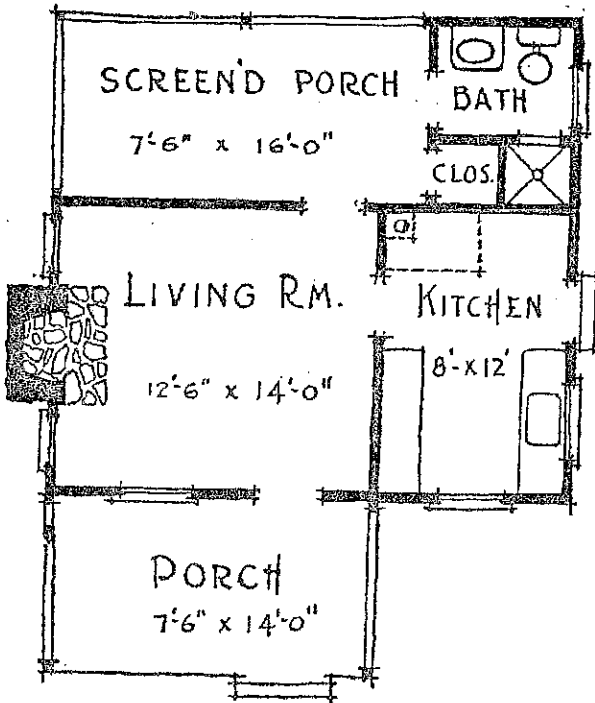
A Popular Cottage

Plan No. 52

## "HIAWATHA"

This cabin is suitable for a small family; can accommodate guests by using both porches. The field stone fireplace and porch pillars add to the rustic appearance. This plan contains both beauty and economy.

Architect estimate, \$800



### PLAN FIFTY-TWO

General specifications for all plans may be had by writing to the Tract owner

W. D. WASSON

124 UNIVERSITY AVE.

PALO ALTO.

## An Invitation

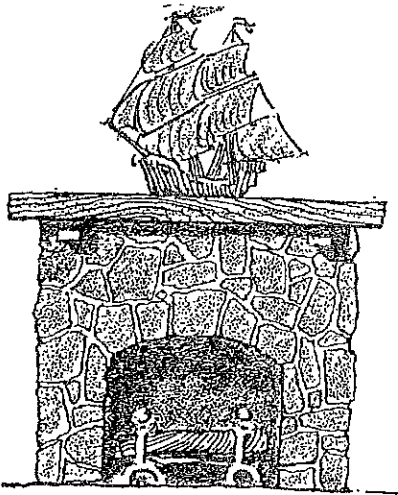
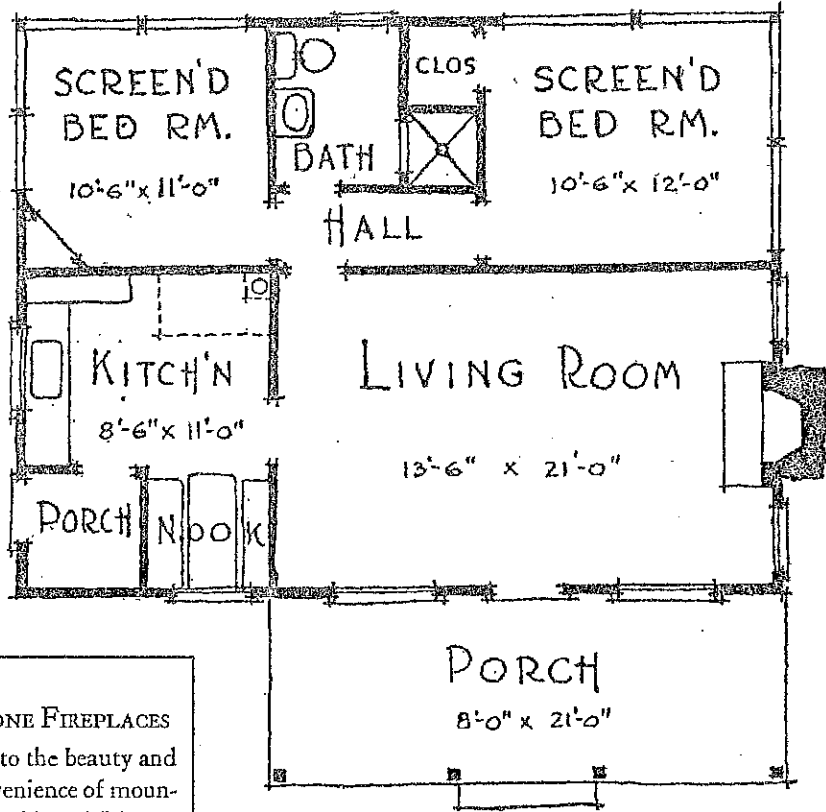
is earnestly extended to you to visit Los Trancos Woods and inspect some of the cabins being constructed. You may get ideas for your own. If you build in Los Trancos Woods you will have agreeable neighbors. Many of the home owners there are professional people lured to the tract by the restful climate and the magnificent scenery.

Plan No. 53

# PLAN FIFTY THREE

## The Carmelita

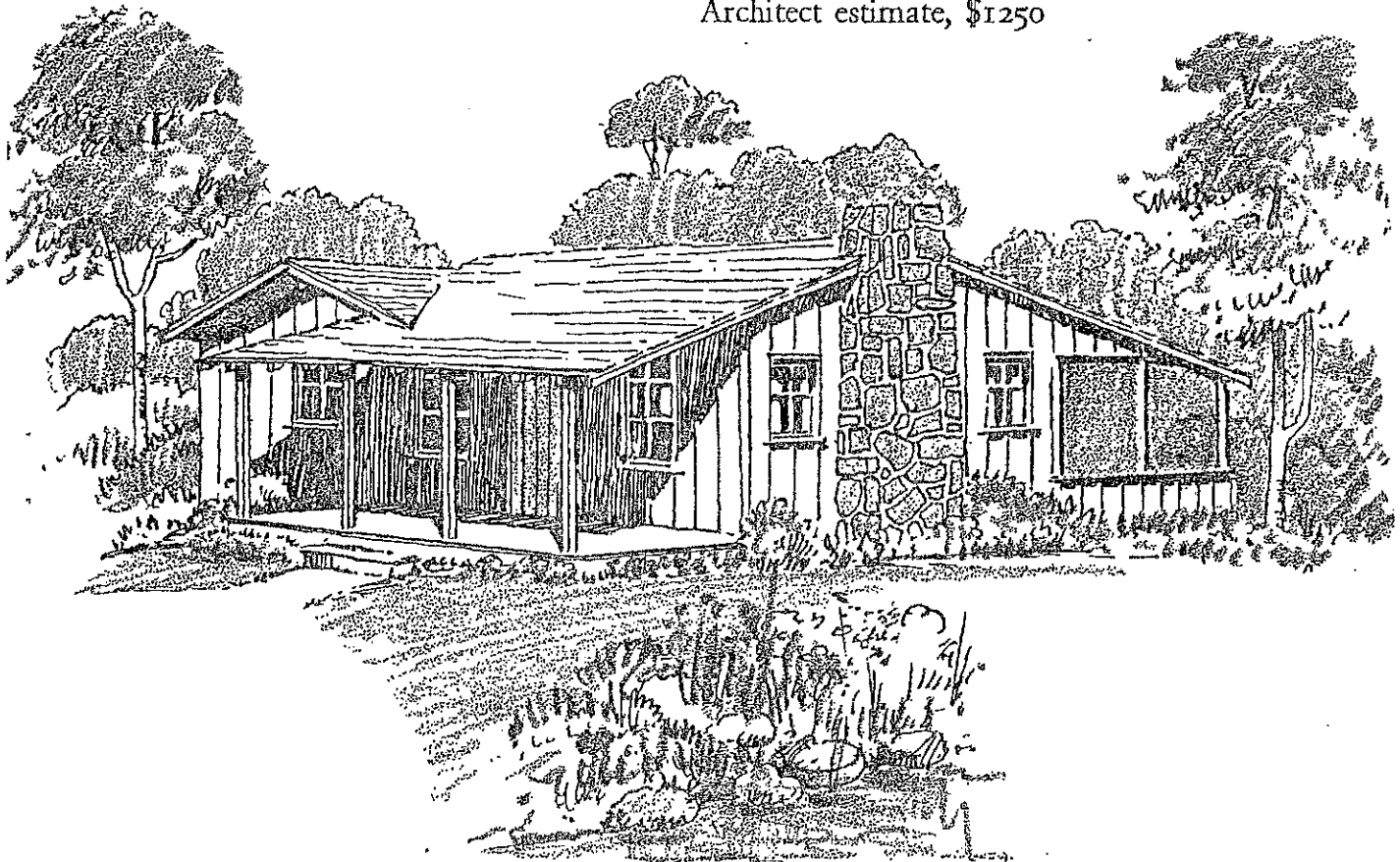
Here is a real one. Large enough to accommodate a good sized family all the year round. Note the built-in features in the breakfast nook adjoining the large kitchen. The spacious living room is truly liveable with its attractive fire-place, four large windows permitting the cheer of the out-of-doors and opening on a rambling front porch.

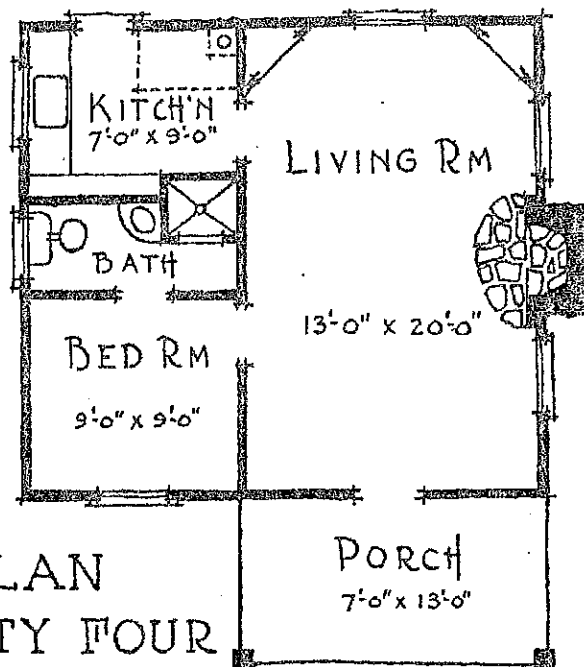


STONE FIREPLACES add to the beauty and convenience of mountain cabins. This one is a cheery example.

*Screen Porches are just the thing for the balmy air in the woods.*

Architect estimate, \$1250





PLAN  
FIFTY FOUR

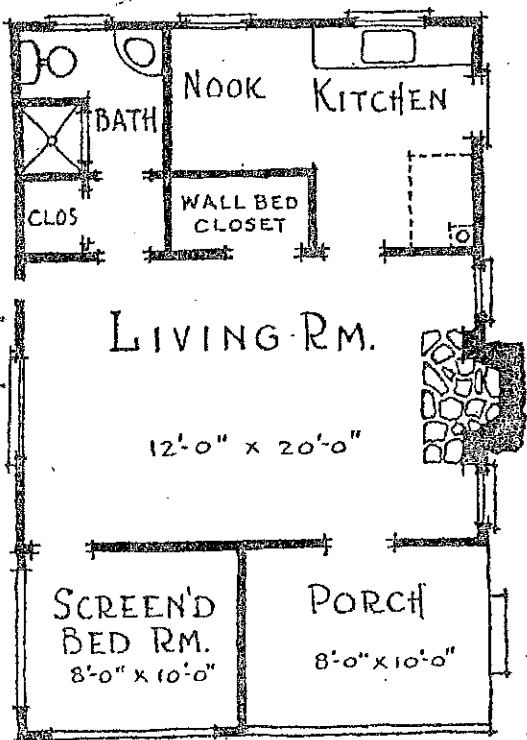
*Plan No. 54*

## EL NIDO

A cozy little nest in a typical California setting. Overhanging trees, a labyrinth of ferns and the "music" of the creek nearby make this cabin a haven of rest.

Architect estimate, \$725

*This Plan is popular for the modest cabin in  
Los Trancos Woods*



PLAN FIFTY FIVE

*Plan No. 55*

## The Los Trancos

The simplicity of this plan makes it very practical and can be built by anyone handy with tools. The plain roof adds to the economy as well as spaciousness and is easily constructed.

Architect estimate, \$800.00

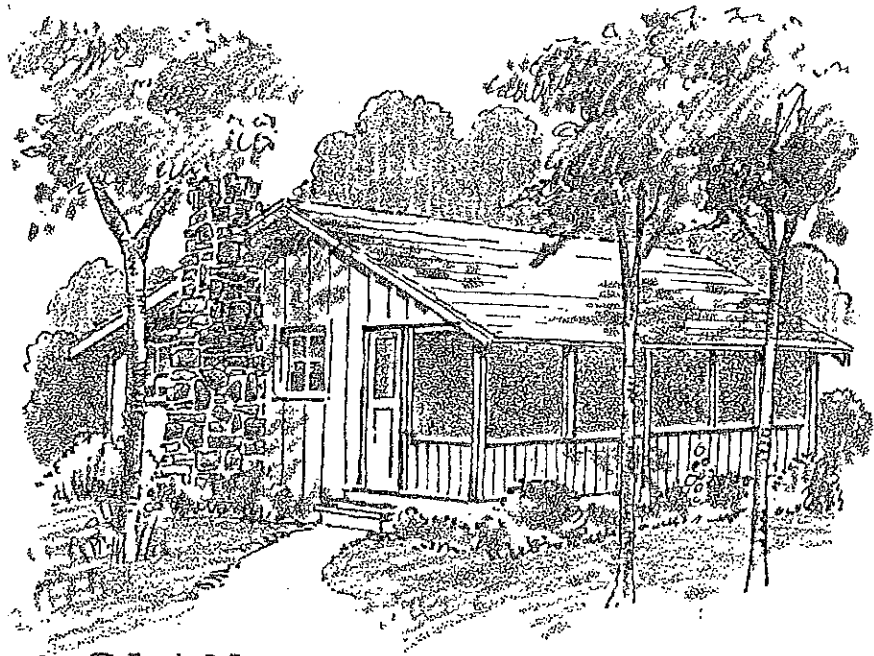


Plan No. 56

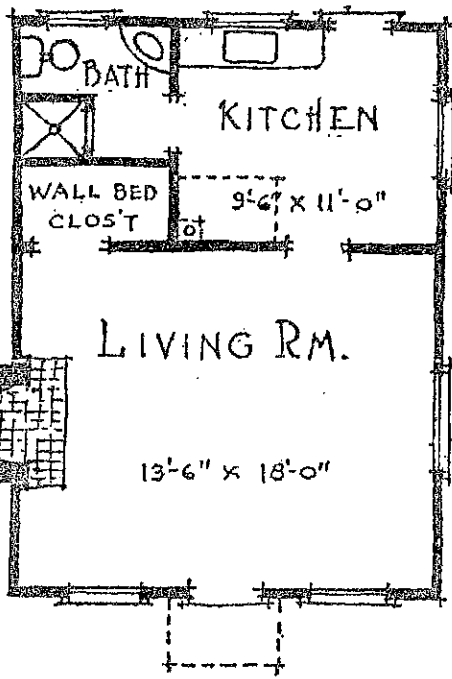
# The Madrone

Another plan that can be built at a minimum cost and that lends itself admirably to the setting of the woods and mountains. The main feature of this small place is that it accommodates six people, having two sleeping porches and a wall-bed closet.

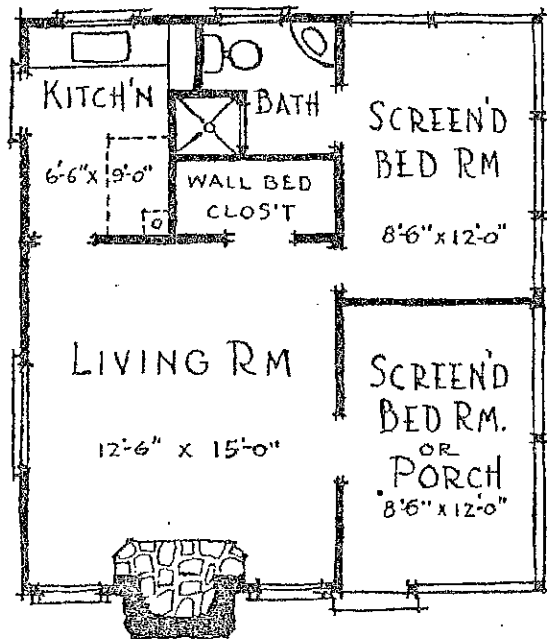
Architect estimate,  
\$750.00



## PLAN FIFTY SEVEN



## PLAN FIFTY SIX



See these houses under construction in Los Trancos Woods. Submit your ideas for plans to us and we will work them out for you.

Plan No. 57

# The Ramona

This cozy little place is ideal for a couple who want a real home for week-ends in LOS TRAN-COS woods. Such a place will bring joy to the tired and weary.

Architect estimate,  
\$625.00

