

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 09 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Station KPH - Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America
other names/site number Marconi Property

2. Location

street & number 18500 State Highway #1 not for publication
city, town Marshall vicinity
state California code 06 county Marin code 041 zip code 94940

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		structures
		<u>4</u>	objects
			Total
			<u>2</u>

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Kathryn S. Walker* Date 6/5/89

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. *Amy Schlager* 7/24/89
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling & Hotel
Industry/Communications facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Concrete (tile)

other Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Item 7 Continuation Sheets

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Item 7 Description

The original Station KPH property was 1125 acres of barren coastal land purchased in 1912 by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America for use as a wireless telegraph receiving station. The station became the first dependable communication link between the Continental United States and Hawaii, and by way of Hawaii with Japan. Nominated to the National Register is an irregular seven acre parcel of land which includes four of the five buildings originally constructed in 1913. The four structures consist of a Hotel, a Powerhouse, and two cottages. The fifth structure was the Operating station. The property is located on the east shore of Tomales Bay, approximately 40 miles North of San Francisco on coastal State Highway #1 in Marin County, California.

The four buildings are of steel frame and heavy concrete construction with traditional red tile roofs which remain unchanged and in good condition. Many of the original copper gutters and downspouts are still in place. All of the buildings have basements with thick concrete walls and sufficient ceiling height that would make them servicable as bomb shelters, even today.

The original function of the Hotel was to house station operators and guests. The two story building is 168'5" long and 48' wide. It has a steep pitched roof with gables at each end facing front and rear. In the center is a 5 bay dormer. A distinctive feature is the 8'2" wide veranda along the front and sides of the first floor. The veranda is covered by a gently sloping tile roof that extends from just below the second floor windows and is supported by 35 concrete pillars. Originally, the Hotel consisted of 35 guest rooms, 8 with private baths, a billiard room, a library, dining room, kitchen, and entry lobby. The billiard room and the lobby feature massive stone fireplaces with heavy log mantels which are still intact and functioning. Most of the fine interior redwood trim and doors remain in good condition as do the hardwood floors. The exterior is unchanged in appearance. It remains the largest and most impressive structure on Tomales Bay. The back of the Inn has a 2-story

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elevation that is unadorned with the exception of a 32' continuation of the right veranda and a two window dormer at the center of the building.

Two five-room cottages, to the left of the Inn and in the same style as the Hotel, measure 50'4" by 30'11" each. Their front verandas are 10' wide and each has a hip roof supported by 7 pillars. These buildings housed the station's manager and assistant manager. They are one story buildings that have undergone some minor exterior alterations (enclosing of verandas and additions of aluminum windows).

The Powerhouse, to the right of the Hotel, originally housed the generating plant consisting of a boiler room, a machine shop and battery room. The equipment and interior walls have long since been removed. Also in the same style as the other buildings, the Powerhouse is a one story building, 73'1" long by 41'6" wide with a hip roof. As there was no original veranda, a wooden covered porch has been added to the front of the building.

Over the past 50 years, the property has been developed into a parklike setting with a backdrop of a pine forest and other extensive landscaping. A small pond, date of construction unknown, is located between the Hotel and the Powerhouse. Next to the pond are the broken concrete remains of a tennis court, also built in 1913. These assets, although contributing aesthetically, do not add historically to the site. Entrance to the property is by way of a short, fairly steep "S" shaped road off State Highway #1.

The seven acres nominated are part of a 62 acre parcel currently known as the Marconi Property. The remaining acreage of the original 1125 was sold in 1922. The larger acreage was originally needed to accommodate a mile long receiving antenna, supported by 7 steel towers. Each tower was approximately 270 feet tall and was set in a concrete base. Four heavy concrete anchors surrounded each tower to hold the guy wires. The towers have been dismantled.

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Not included in the nomination, because of its remote location on the property, 3/10 of a mile away, is the original Operating Building, which housed the receiving equipment. It has been converted to a residence. Also on the property, and not included in the nomination, are 12 modern buildings, approximately 20 years old built by Synanon, who operated the property from 1965 to 1980.

Plans of the present owners, the California State Parks Foundation, are to rehabilitate all buildings on the property for use as a non-profit conference center.

The Office of Historic Preservation has received a nomination form for the original Operating Building and it will be processed within the next few months.

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Photo log:

For all photos, following information is the same:

Station KPH
18500 Highway 1
Marshall, Marin County, California

Photographer: Wayne Zion
Date of Photograph: 1988 (except for historic photos, #1 and #2
taken in 1914)

Location of negative: California State Parks Foundation
900 Larkspur Landing Circle, STE 175
Larkspur, California 94939

-
- Photo 1. Facing north, hotel and power house, 1914.
 - Photo 2. Facing north, hotel and cottages, 1914.
 - Photo 3. Facing north, hotel.
 - Photo 4. Facing west, power house, side view.
 - Photo 5. Facing northwest, Pinecrest cottage.
 - Photo 6. Interior, hotel, fireplace in foyer.
 - Photo 7. Facing east, rear and sides of cottages.
 - Photo 8. Facing east, Bayview cottage.
 - Photo 9. Facing west, Pinecrest cottage.
 - Photo 10. Facing west, power house.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Communications

Period of Significance

1914-1931

Significant Dates

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

White, J.C., Engineering Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Item 8 Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Breniman, William A., Personal communication, December 14, 1985. (Secretary of the Society of Wireless Pioneers)
- Dickow, Henry, "The Story of Haraden Pratt," Sparks Journal, vol. 7, no. 3, March 1985.
- Donnelly, "Onetime Voice of Pacific", Independent Journal, August 3, 1957.
- Dunlap, Orrin E., Jr., The Man and His Wireless, New York, 1937.
- Harris, Helen Utman, Personal communication, February 7, 1985. (Daughter of original manager of Marshall Marconi Station)
- Marconi, Degna, My Father Marconi, New York, 1962.
- Radio Corporation of America, Marshall Property Record, 1919-1947.
- Reed, Susan, Interview, March 2, 1986. (Wife of former chief engineer)
- Seidl, Alexander, "The Dawn of Trans-Pacific Wireless Communication," Sparks Journal, Titanic Edition, 1982.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Approximately seven acres

UTM References

A

1	1	0
5	1	1
0	7	5
0		

4	2	2	1	6	1	0

B

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property consists of an irregularly shaped parcel which is delineated on the enclosed scale map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were drawn to encompass the buildings of historical significance to Station KPH and to exclude non-historic buildings constructed in recent times. The "park-like" setting has not been a factor in the determination of boundaries because it was not part of the historic identity of the property which was chosen for its treeless qualities. (See historic photos) Large trees were seen as a problem for good radio communication. See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rickee Raney and Wayne Zion
 organization California State Parks Foundation date July 28, 1988
 street & number 900 Larkspur Landing Circle, STE 175 telephone (415) 461-2773
 city or town Larkspur state CA zip code 94939

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Item 8 Significance

The Marconi Wireless Receiving Station in Marshall, California, along with it's Transmitting counter-part in Bolinas, provided a vital link in a vast plan by the Marconi Wireless Company of America, headquartered in New York City, to establish an around the world wireless communication system. The opening of the Marshall/Bolinas Stations and Kahuku/Koko Head Stations, for the first time in history, made almost instant communication possible, not only between California and Hawaii, but also between Japan and Europe or South America. The Marshall/Bolinas stations also provided Ship to Shore communications covering the Pacific Ocean which made ocean travel much safer. The original structures that contributed to the operation of this station are the Powerhouse, the Operating Building, the Hotel, and the cottages.

Receiving station KPH in Marshall was linked to the San Francisco Central Office, station PH. The Marshall/Bolinas stations were built by the J.G. White Engineering Company of New York City in 1913 and were dedicated September 24, 1914. This inaugurated the service with Hawaii's transmitting station KIE at Kahuku and the sending station at Koko Hea, both on Oahu. These Hawaiian stations were also able to send and receive messages to and from Japan.

In April of 1917 the Marshall/Bolinas stations were taken over by the Navy. The Marshall station KPH became station NWO. After the war the station was returned to the Marconi Company and it again became station KPH. On March 27, 1920, Station KPH was sold to the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). RCA operated the station until 1931, when it was relocated across Tomales Bay on the Point Reyes Peninsula. The reason for the relocation was that the Marshall station was a long wave station. When it became known that short wave signals were more effective for long distance, and the Point Reyes location had superior short wave reception, the station was relocated. RCA records indicate that the Marine (Ship to Shore) service of the Marshall station continued until 1939. (Please note that the buildings were not relocated in 1931, just the radio operation.)

RCA retained title to the property until 1947. The property changed hands three times before it was bought by Synanon in 1965. Synanon was an organization which, at the time, was

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dedicated to the rehabilitation of drug addicts; later it considered itself as an "Alternative Lifestyle", and later yet a religious organization. The Marshall Marconi Property was Synanon's world headquarters form 1965 to 1980.

The San Francisco Foundation bought the property in 1980. After considering many proposals, the Foundation decided that the best use of the property would be a conference center. Consequently, it deeded the property to the California State Parks Foundation in 1984. The California State Parks Foundation is presently rehabilitating the property to be used as a non-profit conference center.

A few words are important about the remarkable pace at which Guglielmo Marconi developed the new technology of wireless communication. Based on the experiments of Heinrich Hertz, the German physicist who first demonstrated the existence of electric and magnetic waves, Marconi began dreaming of a way to send messages from transmitter to receiver, without the aid of wires. In 1894 he succeeded in doing this over a distance of 30 feet in the attic of his family's home, Villa Grifone, near Bologna, Italy and then managed to send signals over a distance of 1 mile. On July 2, 1897, Marconi recorded his first patent No. 12039. Also in 1897 the "Wireless Signal Company" was incorporated in England. In 1899 the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America was incorporated in New Jersey. In 1901 Marconi registered his famous selective tuning patent No. 7777. The same year he managed to send a faint wireless signal across the Atlantic Ocean from Poldhu, England to St. John, Newfoundland. On January 18, 1903, the first two-way wireless transatlantic message was exchanged between President Theodore Roosevelt and King Edward VII. Soon after, transatlantic wireless messages became routine and Ocean going ships were equipped with wireless transmitting and receiving apparatus.

Wireless also has its "Vikings". Dr. Mahlon Loomis, an American, in 1865, showed how to set up what he called "disturbances in the atmosphere" that would cause electric waves to travel through the air and ground, thereby establishing wireless communication between two distant points. Loomis' United States Patent No. 129,971 dated July 30, 1872 covered "aerial telegraphy, employing an 'aerial' used to radiate or to receive the pulsations caused by producing a disturbance in the electrical equilibrium of the atmosphere." ---And when Marconi was but a year old, Thomas

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Alva Edison, in November, 1875, while experimenting in his Newark laboratory, observed new manifestations of electricity through mysterious sparks. It was while experimenting with a vibrator magnet consisting of a bar of Stubb's steel fastened at one end and made to vibrate by means of a magnet, that Edison noticed sparks coming from the cores of the magnet. Curiosity led him to connect the end of the vibrator to a gas-pipe, from which he drew sparks in any part of the room. Edison then built his famous "black box" inside of which two carbon points formed a micrometer gap across which the mysterious sparks could be seen through a "window". He had discovered that under certain conditions electricity would pass through space and through matter entirely unconnected with the point of origin. He was on the threshold of wireless. History might have been different had Edison realized what he had discovered; had he injected more power into the waves and applied a coherer to detect them. But he didn't. Marconi did.

Edison took out only one patent on long-distance telegraphy without wires. It involved the principle of induction, and while not exactly wireless in the sense that Marconi developed it, nevertheless, it was a step toward progress. The application was filed May 23, 1885, but the patent, No. 465,971, was not issued until December 29, 1891. Convinced by the first transatlantic wireless signal that Marconi was the logical man to wear the wireless crown, and to pursue the research, Edison sold his "radio" patent to the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company.----- Professor (Sir) Oliver Lodge, too, contributed to wireless. He took out a patent that showed how undesired waves could be tuned out by adjustments of devices at the transmitter and receiver (in approximately 1894). This patent was later acquired by the Marconi Company.-----In 1891, at Columbia University, Nikola Tesla demonstrated the principle of tuning. He obtained patents on tuned circuits and claimed more than 100 tuning inventions. Nevertheless, it is called Marconi wireless; not Tesla wireless.--Why was Marconi the one immortalized? Marconi had money. He was a master showman. To some extent he frowned upon publicity, but in doing so gained bountifully of its fruits. Marconi could get things done and reach a commercial conclusion, which is where many inventors fail. He wisely realized from the beginning that wireless was no one-man job. With an inflexible will, when headed for a goal, Marconi drove everything and everybody associated with him toward it. No one thought of failure.

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It is envisioned that an interpretive exhibit of the development of this technology will be included in the plans of the proposed Marconi Conference Center.

The property is being nominated at the national level of significance because of the role it played in the initiation of trans-Pacific radio communication, a technological development of international consequence.

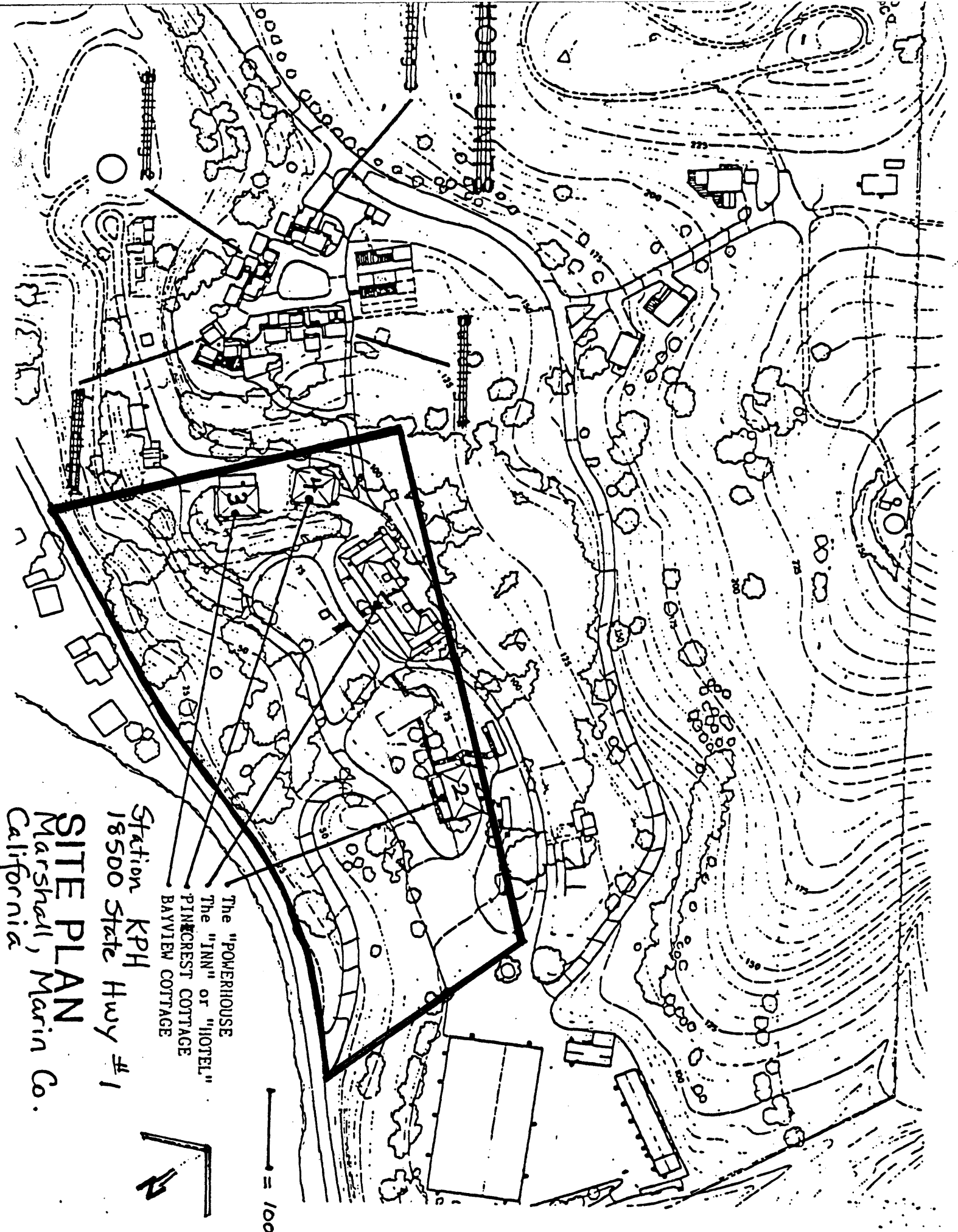
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Glen Kay. Marconi and his South Wellfleet Wireless. Pamphlet National
Park Service, Cape Cod National Seashore.



Station KPH
 18500 State Hwy #1
SITE PLAN
 Marshall, Marin Co.
 California

- The "POWERHOUSE"
- The "INN" or "HOTEL"
- PINECREST COTTAGE
- BAYVIEW COTTAGE

100

