

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

307

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pond Farm Pottery Historic District  
Other names/site number: Pond Farm Workshops, Pond Farm, Walker Ranch, Rancho Del Lago  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 17000 Armstrong Woods Road, Austin Creek State Recreation Area  
City or town: Guerneville State: California County: Sonoma  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national     statewide     local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
X A X B     C     D

[Signature] 4/29/14  
Jenan Saunders, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**  
California State Office of Historic Preservation  
**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.  
**Signature of commenting official:** **Date**  
**Title :** **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

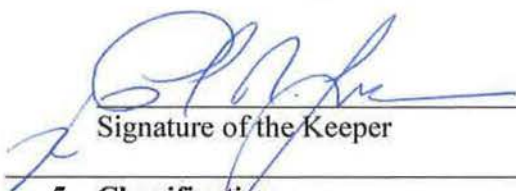
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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper

6/17/2014  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store – art and pottery studios and showrooms

EDUCATION: school

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility – pottery production and firing

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Second Bay Tradition

OTHER: Nineteenth Century Western Barn

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood, concrete, composition shingle, rolled roofing

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Pond Farm Pottery Historic District is a 35 acre rural property in the hills above the Russian River in Austin Creek State Recreation Area, Sonoma County, California. The most prominent building is the barn/studio, a two-story tall vernacular barn to which was added a prow-like entry. The nearby guest house is a one-story building just northwest of the barn. The modest one-story main house is downhill of the barn and is partially obscured by garden plants. Both one-story buildings are in the Second Bay Tradition of architecture. At one corner of the barn is a simple metal and wood structure that contained a kiln. Behind the barn are a handmade seat and a barbecue. In front of the house there is an area of paving embedded with pottery and stones. The barn and main house are vacant, and the guest house is used for State Parks staff housing. The property has a rustic appearance. The group of wooden buildings is surrounded by a rough fence and located just east of a winding, narrow road. A tributary of Fife Creek cuts into the gently rolling meadows behind the buildings. A pond, roughly fish-shaped, for which the site was named, is located east of the tributary in an area of open grass land. Wooded hills rise sharply in the distance, and on the west side of the road, creating a feeling of isolation. The west side of the road is also the location of an old orchard of which a few trees remain. The site of the former Herr complex, north of the extant buildings, is marked by garden plants, a remnant section of concrete paving and wall, and a small water catchment basin. The extant buildings, as well as large portions of the district, have changed little from the period of significance and as such retain a strong level of historic integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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## Narrative Description

The historic district contains three contributing buildings: a barn/studio constructed circa 1870, remodeled in 1942, Marguerite Wildenhain's house constructed in 1942, enlarged in 1948, and remodeled in 1962, and a guest house constructed in 1962. The kiln enclosure is a contributing structure, and the three contributing objects are a barbecue, curved seat, and paving embedded with pottery shards. The landscape is classified as a contributing site with several notable features. Two noncontributing archaeological sites are from a much earlier time and not associated with the period or areas of significance.

### *Setting*

Pond Farm Pottery, often simply referred to as "Pond Farm," is located within Austin Creek State Recreation Area (ACSRA), a state park created in 1963-64 out of lands formerly used for ranch and timber operations. ACSRA is located about 4 miles north of the Russian River resort town of Guerneville in northern California. ACSRA abuts Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve.

Access to the property is through a redwood forest in Armstrong Woods. The road winds through a deeply shaded redwood grove to emerge above the redwoods, at about 650 feet elevation, into an area of softly rolling and grassy hillsides with scattered California native oaks, Douglas fir trees, and some madrone. The property is surrounded by oak and fir covered hills which rise over 1900 feet elevation. The main part of Pond Farm Pottery Historic District is located in a clearing on a gentle rise. No other dwellings are visible. The middle fork of Fife Creek is located behind the barn and house in a ravine. The pond for which the property is named is located a short distance east. Across the road, to the west, rises a hillside with scattered trees; among them are remnants of the Walker/Herr orchard.<sup>1</sup> The location was always a challenge to reach, for visitors and students alike, but they often felt that journey captured part of the experience of the place; that one journeyed through a darkened area, and, with effort, one reached the sunny peak where knowledge and understanding illuminated one's life.<sup>2</sup>

### *Overview*

The fenced area of Pond Farm Pottery retains the same irregular outline it had historically and the current property is described with the Pottery property as the nexus since it is intact. The property is enclosed on three sides by rustic wood and wire fencing. The fourth boundary is the top of the bank of the middle fork of Fife Creek. The main entry is marked by the overhead "pond farm pottery" sign.

The northernmost third of the fenced area comprises what would have been the public area during the time of Pond Farm Pottery. This area was used by visitors and students, and it was originally fenced off from the private residential area. A teardrop-shaped dirt and gravel drive begins under the "pond farm pottery" sign and ends at the barn. The barn, which faces west, dominates the site. Just north of the drive is the guest house which faces onto the drive. A separate kiln structure is tucked into an ell on the southeast corner of the barn. A teaching area was also established behind the barn where a deck, a barbecue and seating is located. These buildings create a simple complex.

The main house and the landscape surrounding it comprise two-thirds of the fenced area and were for Wildenhain's private use. Students and visitors were invited into the space, but otherwise did not enter it. The house is downhill of the barn and plants are grouped at a gateway defining the private garden,

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<sup>1</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>2</sup> (Herger. Interview 1989)

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partially obscuring the house from the driveway and barn. At the front of the house is a rudimentary overhead arbor and outdoor sitting area with a very basic barbecue of stacked bricks. The house and barn share orientation, facing west. Low stone terraces are located between the barn and the main house and are oriented parallel to the buildings. Very low terracing, now difficult to discern, is located west and south of the house. A simple beaten earth path leads to the house from the barn. The proximity of the barn, guest house, and main house express the close relationship between art and life embraced by the teachers and students at Pond Farm over the years.

Pond Farm Workshops predated Pond Farm Pottery and originally contained several buildings, many built during the Walker era for agricultural uses. These were located north of the Pond Farm Pottery buildings. The Workshops buildings were demolished the 1960s and their locations are now an area of grassland with scattered shrubs and trees. A few garden plants are left from the Walker and Herr eras.

### ***Appearance of the District during the Period of Significance, and Changes Since***

During the period of significance, the property was, in significant ways, much as it is now. The important rustic character and rural setting remains the same. During the early days of the Workshop, there were farm animals and other agricultural pursuits. The grazing animals and numbers of people traversing the property kept grasses and forest trees in check. There were fruit trees, and a vegetable growing area was established near the pond. In the earliest days, according to a diary entry by Wildenhain, the Herr property contained an old vineyard, an orange grove and lemon trees.<sup>3</sup> The most dramatic change to the property was the demolition of the Herr buildings north of the Pond Farm Pottery property in the 1960s. Otherwise, little has changed on the property or to its surroundings. Changes to the Pond Farm Pottery property include the change of skylight type on the barn, roofing materials, and broken or missing windows. The house roof is currently covered with a plastic tarp, and inside some ceiling tiles and floor tiles are broken or missing. The barn and house are in a state of deterioration and the interior of the house has been modernized, but the buildings retain nearly all their original materials.

The property continues to reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the founders of Pond Farm Workshops and of Wildenhain and Pond Farm Pottery; all believed that a quiet and natural setting was essential to creative work. Access to the road and to the water sources would have been a factor in the location of the original buildings and these major elements are retained. Pond Farm Pottery and Pond Farm Workshops were often identified with the barn as well as the setting and both remain a powerful reminder of the two endeavors. Extant rustic buildings, their spatial arrangement, their setting, and other landscape features and characteristics, and distant views were always a strong characteristic of the property, and these are also prominent characteristics today.

### ***Contributing Resources – Three Buildings***

All three buildings retain integrity and are contributing resources.<sup>4</sup> The barn retains nearly all its materials from the period of significance, with the exception of the roofing, skylights, and some minor interior modifications to the storage areas on the north side. The main house has been in a state of arrested decay, and there is some loss of original materials to the interior, such as ceiling and floor tiles; in spite of this, integrity is quite strong. The guest house has been regularly maintained and the exterior appears to have had no identifiable changes; however, the interior received drywall and contemporary fixtures and

<sup>3</sup> (Wildenhain, Marguerite, A Diary to Franz Wildenhain 2004)

<sup>4</sup>The buildings, structures and objects are also documented in two Page & Turnbull reports: the HABS-Format Report and the Pond Farm Studio HSR. Both largely informed building descriptions and are available from the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

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appliances in 1985, modifying the cottage for caretaker use. The interior was originally unfinished; it is possible that the original appearance would be substantially restored with the removal of the drywall finishes. This building retains integrity. No historic preservation master plan is currently in place and the changes to the barn and guest house would fall under the category of Rehabilitation, as defined by the National Park Service. None of the changes substantially detract from the tangible historic character and quality of the property.

All extant buildings date to the period of significance and comprise the total number of buildings for Pond Farm Pottery. The barn dates to the 1870s and was remodeled in 1942, using salvage materials. Wildenhain's original house was built in 1942 as a one-room cabin, also, apparently, mostly of salvage materials. The house was enlarged in 1948. The guest house and Wildenhain house remodel, accomplished during the 1960s, used materials in common use at the time. The essential combination of the three buildings remains strong. All of the buildings are closely associated with Wildenhain, Pond Farm Workshops, and Pond Farm Pottery.

### **BARN/STUDIO**

The barn was the nexus of the earlier Pond Farm Workshops, as well as of Pond Farm Pottery. The tall, prow-front barn, originally used for livestock, combines the local, rural vernacular with a modernistic expression. The barn served as the pottery studio and showroom during Wildenhain's ownership and retains several key elements, including most of the kick wheels, a kiln, and showroom shelves. The building has an irregular footprint. Additions were made to the east and west in 1942. Some of them were made by enclosing open areas that had been attached to the livestock barn. The prow-front addition, also from 1942, holds the central vestibule and a small second story showroom. The main central space is one-story and twenty feet tall. The main volume is 41' - 6" north to south and 44' - 6" east to west. This area comprises the main area of the original barn. A mezzanine level surrounds three sides of the main studio space. The barn has a compound roof composed of several distinct sections. The main studio space has a gable roof. There are several shed-roofed additions and the flat-roofed packing shed. There are four acrylic bubble skylights on the northern roof. According to Parks Maintenance Worker Laura Parent, the skylights were changed to acrylic in 1996 when the buildings were re-roofed.<sup>5</sup> Prior to that time they had been glass with wire. The roofing is composition shingle and replaced a rolled roof covering in the 1990s. A small arbor at the back of barn was removed at this time. These minor changes were performed for stabilization and protection of the resource but did introduce new materials, thus would be considered rehabilitation. The interior of the barn is very much as it was when the pottery was closed. The exterior is in a state of deterioration. Both the interior and exterior retain a high level of integrity. Changes that occurred in the 1990s were not part of a master plan.

#### *Barn - West Elevation*

At the front, or western side, of the building is the symmetrical bow-front vestibule, facing west, which is centered on the main studio. The vestibule is two stories high and projects forward of the barn, perpendicular, and then at about a 45 degree angle, to the rest of the façade. The angled sides of the vestibule are symmetrical and are divided into two sections of vertical boards; these sections are framed in vertical redwood boards, creating a strong vertical appearance. A band, created by the second story floor, creates a horizontal accent. Between these vertical forms are suspended horizontal wood slats that are strung on wire. Access to the interior is through one of two openings, each opening is created by the absence of slats below the band on each side.

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<sup>5</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

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In elevation, the north and south sides of the barn are one-story wings. These contain studio and storage spaces. The wings were created by enclosing sections of the historic barn. The south wing has a plank door at the front (on the western side). Under the western door and extending to the eastern edge of the building is a simple wood stoop. This stoop was used as an extension of the interior teaching space and was often used for lectures and class discussion. The north wing has a small vestibule, a small guest room, and a toilet room. The toilet room is located in a shed-roofed lean-to that was added in the 1940s. The packing shed is a flat-topped addition that extends north beyond the main north studio.

A memorial to Wildenhain, a metal plaque on a large stone, was located near the southwest corner of the barn in 1985, the year of Wildenhain's death.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Barn - South Elevation*

The south elevation is in two parts, a four-bay wide section to the west dating from the original barn, and a one-bay shed-roofed addition to the east. The foundation is 4" x 8" wood on rock footings, partially exposed at grade. Part of the foundation has deteriorated, producing a sway in the sill and wall. The wall is covered in three parallel courses of redwood shingles nailed to the sheathing. Four pairs of three-light windows are located in the main section, and one pair of three-light windows is located in the addition.

#### *Barn - East Elevation*

Additions occupy most of the east elevation. The second floor level of the main studio space is in the gable. It is covered in vertical 1" x 12" boards and contained a slatted window with a triangular slatted vent above. Plexiglas shields were placed over the openings at a date unknown. Below this area is the 1942 easterly extension, one and a half bays deep and wide. Its foundation is 4" x 4" wood posts on concrete footings. The exterior wall is board and batten. In the left bay is a tripartite fixed sash window. A door, also covered in board and batten, occupies the right bay. Four wood steps with open risers provide access. The rafter ends are exposed.

South of the extension is the east wall of the kiln room, different from the kiln structure. It is 14' wide, of vertical redwood sheathing with shingles over it. A 3' wide plank door is in the south bay. The rafter ends are exposed.

North of the extension is the rear, or east wall, of the packing shed. It is five-and-a-half bays wide. Vertical 2" x 12" and 2" x 6" boards cover the lower wall. The upper section is open to the elements with six openings. The openings are framed by 2" x 4" posts which support the overhanging roof. A 1" x 6" fascia board covers the rafter ends.

#### *Barn - North Elevation*

Two major sections make up the north elevation. The packing shed is to the rear, or east, of the north studio. The small north vestibule occupies most of the remaining elevation, with the main vestibule visible at the west end. 2" x 6" and 2" x 12" boards cover the walls, with a prominent horizontal seam half way up the wall. A pair of horizontal, single-light, fixed sash windows is located under the overhanging eave; a 1" x 6" fascia covers the partially exposed rafters.

The north studio was constructed in 1942. Gordon Herr and Marguerite Wildenhain poured the concrete floor and foundations. They added eight windows of varying width; each has four panes divided by narrow muntins. Cladding is board and batten. The north vestibule addition projects forward of the north

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<sup>6</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)



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studio wall. It is clad in 2" x 6" and 2" x 12" vertical boards, again with a horizontal seam about half-way up the wall. A single boarded-up window is located on this wall.

The main vestibule along this elevation consists of the two-story wall; the eastern portion is covered in board and batten and the angled, slatted front, as described in the west elevation, extends from that.

#### *Barn - Interior*

The main interior studio space is the heart of the school and is iconic as a representation of Pond Farm. Most of the main studio is a two-story space. It is striking, with the northern skylights and east windows creating diffuse and soft light. The quality of light and the simplicity of the space, with the potter's wheels and benches arrayed on each side, is very much as depicted in historic photographs.<sup>7</sup> Remarkably, all of the potter's wheels are still in place. The interior wall materials are wood. The floor is wood and was added by Herr and Wildenhain in 1942 when they covered the previously sloping earth floors<sup>8</sup>.

The main studio is flanked on the north and south sides by smaller studios. These basic partitions date from the original barn. West of the north studio are three small rooms; one is the toilet room (north), center is the north vestibule, next is a room that was often used for guest accommodations. During the Pond Farm Pottery years the guest room was referred to as the Pullman room or the priest's room. Currently it is used for storage. The northeast area is the packing shed. The southern side has three rooms in a row; west is the drying room, center is the south studio, and east is the kiln room.

#### *Vestibule*

The interior of the vestibule is a one-story space located below the showroom. As noted in the HABS-format report<sup>9</sup>, the vestibule follows the tenets of California Modernism, allowing the outside to penetrate the inside space. The floor is uneven and is partially paved in concrete with exposed smooth river cobbles. Two planting beds are located at the juncture of the two angled walls, a Modernist feature. These are delineated with large stones. An angled wood porch leads to the main entry. The slatted façade creates a shaded and cool area. Materials in the vestibule include redwood sheathing, board and batten and wood screens. The ceiling is the exposed 2" x 6" floor joists and flooring of the showroom above.

#### *Main Studio*

The studio is reached via the 1942 main vestibule, through the back door, or through a door from the south studio. The main studio is rectangular with an exposed structural frame. 4" x 4" lumber and paired 2" x 4" lumber was used to create the posts, plates and beams. Two-thirds of the studio space is two-stories tall. The rear, or east section of the studio, is one-story tall and is located in the extension addition. The walls are made of the exposed studs with vertical boards. Some walls, near the potting benches, are covered in burlap. Some boards retain the whitewash that may have been applied prior to the studio conversion when the barn was used for livestock.

There are stairs at the western end leading to the mezzanine and showroom. The stair abutment is covered in rustic channel siding. A deep wood drying rack stands against the abutment. A wall separates the second story showroom from the studio; it contains a large opening for views between the spaces.

The ceiling is unfinished and has exposed 2" x 4" rafters on top of plates. Four large skylights along the north roof provide plentiful light. Additional light is provided by three hanging, round steel lights and two

<sup>7</sup> Several such images exist, including Figure 3.

<sup>8</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>9</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

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fluorescent lights are located against the wall in the extended part of the studio. The steel lights appear in historic photographs.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Kick Wheels and Footrests*

In the central studio space kick wheels are arranged along the north and south sides, six on the south side and four on the north side and are attached at points to the barn. There are a total of thirteen wheels in the barn, including the three in the south studio. Simple low, wooden footrests would have been placed in each side of the kick wheel. In the main studio there are 23 footrests.

Wildenhain based these wheels on those used by Max Krehan. Krehan was Wildenhain's Bauhaus pottery teacher and used a wheel design that was centuries old. As the noted Wildenhain scholar Dr. Billie Sessions notes, Wildenhain's kick wheels at Pond Farm are "the closest thing to the real Bauhaus wheels on our continent"<sup>11</sup> and they may be unique in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Each wheel is located within a sort of wood enclosure measuring 9' x 4' x 32" high. A 24" wide plank creates a seat at each end of the back-to-back working areas. Slight depressions were worn into the benches by the students working at the wheels.

The bench not used by the potter would typically hold a moveable plank where students would place finished work for easy transport. The movable planks, used to transport work from the potting area to a drying area, are missing. The wheels have a wooden flywheel or foot wheel, measuring 30-1/2" wide, near the ground. A metal shaft connects the flywheel with the upper working surface. The shaft was clamped to the wood frame, and the frame also helped support the potter's seat. The kick wheel head is a thick round of oak measuring 9-1/2" diameter by 2-3/4" high. This style of wheel, with the bench about three inches lower than the potting head, influenced potter's kick wheel design throughout the United States.<sup>13</sup> Sketches showing the dimensions of these wheels and footrests, presumably created by Wildenhain, are in the Archives of American Art.

Each working space occupies approximately 4' x 9'. The work areas are joined in a row. The work area is delineated by a double row of long planks along the outside edge and a single board on the inside edge. Wildenhain preferred to work at the wheel in the southwest corner of the south studio. In later years she used an electric wheel that was installed in the adjoining work area. The work spaces are laid out efficiently and also reflect the influence of the centuries' old pottery where Wildenhain learned her craft.

#### *North Vestibule*

The north vestibule leads to the toilet room and the guest room. The north vestibule has a concrete floor and redwood board siding. There is a narrow and steep stair accessing the mezzanine.

#### *Toilet Room*

This 3' x 8' space is located at the northwest corner of the barn. It has a concrete floor with whitewashed redwood walls. It retains the porcelain sink and toilet and a rustic, wood-walled shower.

#### *Guest Room*

What had been a guest room is now used for storage. It is approximately 8' x 8'. The wood floor is covered with linoleum-style flooring. The walls are whitewashed 1" x 12" redwood and the ceiling is open-frame redwood. The west wall window has been boarded over.

<sup>10</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>11</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>12</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>13</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

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### *North Studio*

The north studio is reached via the north vestibule or the packing shed. It has a concrete floor and the walls are board and batten siding or redwood sheathing. According to Dorothy Herger, this space had several uses.<sup>14</sup> Students learning hand-building or coil techniques to make pottery used this room as studio space. It was also used to prepare clay. Three kinds of clay were combined and mixed, with water, in a pug mill that was located in the room. After the clay was mixed, it was laid on plaster bats, on shelves, to dry for later use. The room also contained a small refrigerator, a sink, and hot plate for student use. The refrigerator remains in the room.

### *Packing Shed*

The packing shed wraps the northeast corner of the barn. There is a low wall partially enclosing the east and north sides; the upper section is open to the elements. The floors are dirt and asphalt, and shelves line the north, east and south walls.

### *Mezzanine and Showroom*

Wildenhain's upstairs showroom is intact, as are the mezzanines on the north and south sides of the studio space; the three spaces are connected along the north, west, and south sides. The showroom space is located above the vestibule, within the prow-front addition. The windows extend the full height of the west wall and the slatted front allows light without excessive sun. The wide wood shelving, arrayed around the center of the space, had displayed some of Wildenhain's wares. The flooring is redwood; the paneling is tongue and groove, and the ceiling has an open frame. There are no extant lights, but there is abundant natural light and there may not have been another light source.

The mezzanines along the south and north walls have sloping ceilings. Against the north wall in the short space are built-in display cases of wood, glass, and aluminum. These were also used to display Wildenhain's wares or collection of pots. The south mezzanine currently contains a simple wood table, but its date is not known. Dorothy Herger recalls the students going to the mezzanine to study the pots displayed there.<sup>15</sup> The mezzanine is currently edged with a wood handrail. Wood screens of vertical, parallel slats had been used along the edge of the second story of the mezzanine.<sup>16</sup> Some of the second story wood screens shown in early photographs have been removed, but it is not clear if this occurred after Wildenhain's death or during her life. The floors are redwood and the perimeter walls are tongue and groove paneling.

The original Pond Farm Pottery sign that once spanned the automobile gate is on display in the barn. The sign is a solid plank carved with "pond farm pottery" in lower case letters painted white. It is in fair condition. A replica sign was placed over the automobile gate in 1990.<sup>17</sup> It was replaced in 2011.<sup>18</sup>

### *South Studio*

The south studio retains the most characteristics of the original livestock barn. Parts of the sloping floor are the original 4" wide boards with gaps intended to make cleaning the barn easier. Some 2" x 12" planks also occur. The room is nearly 22' by 13'. It was used as an instruction area and contains four

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<sup>14</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>15</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>16</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, *An Eyewitness Anthology: Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus* 2007)

<sup>17</sup> One replica was created in 1990 by volunteers and was paid for by Annie Laughlin King. (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>18</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2013)

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work areas. Three kick wheels, constructed the same as those in the main studio, are located in the south studio along the south wall. There is one work area that is now without a kick wheel. It held an electric wheel which is no longer at the property. Wildenhain used this area for her own work space and used the same wheel style as others in the studio until late in life when she changed this work space to an electric wheel.

The south studio is accessed through an opening in the main studio or through rough plank doors with a handcrafted latch that leads to the kiln room. It may also be reached via the drying room, which has an exterior door. The east and north walls are covered in vertical whitewashed wood planks and the north wall contains deep shelves. Near the door to the main studio are two large sinks, with a spigot on the west wall over one sink. The south and east walls have 1" x 4" wainscoting below and are open framing above. Three pair of three-light windows provide abundant light. Because of the mezzanine, the open frame ceiling has a variable pitch. The southern half follows the roof line and the northern half has an acute angle to accommodate the mezzanine. Two 1940s-era hanging metal incandescent fixtures and a kerosene heater with a galvanized metal chimney pipe are still in place, and there are remnants of simple muslin curtains over the windows.

#### *Drying Room*

The drying room is approximately 13' x 10'. Wildenhain used this room to dry pieces prior to firing them, and to apply glazes.<sup>19</sup> Prior to Wildenhain's acquisition of the barn, she used the space as a showroom.<sup>20</sup> The flooring is 1" x 4" boards and the whitewashed walls are open frame. The west wall has a door that leads to the front of the building, and all walls have shelves. The south wall has a sliding wood window and whitewashed wainscoting. At one time the room also contained a small electric kiln that may have been used as a test kiln.<sup>21</sup> Three paper bags of dry clay remain in the room.

#### *Kiln Room*

The kiln room is in the southeast corner of the barn in the shed-roofed addition. It is 10' wide and about 13' – 6" wide. Three wood steps with open risers lead down into the room from the south studio. The floor is dirt with a thin layer of small, smooth stones and small, smooth pieces of clay. The whitewashed walls are unfinished and contain several metal coat hooks. The east wall, also whitewashed, has gray-painted images of tools to indicate where each should be hung, but there are no tools extant. The ceiling is sloped and open rafter. This roof was added in the 1990s by the roofing contractor. Previously it had been metal.

The wall between the studio and room is single plank with light showing between the planks and through the knotholes. The south wall is also gapped planks with a pair of three-light windows. The space is largely occupied by a large metal kiln which is on concrete footings. The kiln was manufactured by the Denver Kiln Company and was installed in 1942. Shallow wood shelves on the south wall still hold several dozen pieces of "kiln furniture." They are square and round posts, and pieces of them. Plaster bats have been stacked against the west wall. Most are whole, but some are broken into two pieces. A porcelain fixture for a light bulb is attached to the wall above the window. On the east wall a plank door with a handcrafted latch opens onto an area paved with concrete. This paving leads to the back yard and the kiln structure.

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<sup>19</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>20</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)

<sup>21</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)

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### **WILDENHAIN HOUSE**

The original building, designed by Gordon Herr and built by Herr and Wildenhain in 1942, was a single room cabin measuring 12' x 20'. In 1948 Herr and Wildenhain added a bathroom and two rooms. San Francisco Architect Albert Lanier designed the remodel of 1962.<sup>22</sup> The house entry is located directly downhill from the entry to the barn, an important relationship that speaks to the close character of life and work that Wildenhain advocated. The house is exceedingly simple, and still speaks of the spartan and disciplined life Wildenhain led. Wildenhain lived in the house from 1942 until her death in 1985. It is a four room, one-story building with the ground sloping away to the south. The house is supported by 2" x 4" posts on concrete footings. The form is roughly t-shaped with intersecting rectangular volumes, covered with intersecting shed rolled-composition roofs. The construction is 2" x 4" studs and the exterior walls are rustic channel redwood siding with redwood shingles applied on top. Windows are from the 1962 remodel and are aluminum sliders and casement. The redwood shingles were also added at that time. The building is in a state of decay, but retains many original elements, both inside and out, thus retaining a high level of integrity. The roof is currently covered in a plastic tarp and some ceiling tiles in the house have fallen off. The linoleum-style floor tiles are badly decayed and some are now missing, having broken off.

#### *Wildenhain House - West Elevation*

The west elevation is also the front of the house. The façade has two sections; north is the vestibule and kitchen, and south is a bedroom wall. The roof over the vestibule and kitchen is sloped, starting about six feet off grade at the north end and about eleven feet at the south end. The hollow core front door is chamfered at the top to match the roofline. The north portion represents the original building and contains the main entry and a wide aluminum sliding window over the kitchen sink.

In front of the kitchen window, on the west side of the house and next to the entry door, is the arbor. It is centered on the kitchen window. 4" x 4" posts are located to each side of the window, about 8 feet apart. A second set of posts is set about thirteen feet away with a third set, 2" x 8", an additional eight feet away. 2" x 4" beams connect the posts. Some 1" x 2" wood cross ties remain, but many are missing. According to several accounts by students and visitors, Wildenhain often sat and entertained under the arbor at a wood table.<sup>23</sup> The table is not extant.<sup>24</sup> The arbor is in poor condition.

The bedroom portion is set back from the kitchen about sixteen feet. Its roof is angled in the opposite direction of the kitchen, but at a gentler incline. A wide aluminum frame clerestory window is located near the roofline. The land slopes away from the house along this portion and south of the bedroom is appended a low greenhouse with stud frames and several four-light sash windows. The greenhouse roof slopes gently away from the house. Due to the change in grade, the greenhouse roof is roughly at floor level for the house. The greenhouse is badly deteriorated.

#### *Wildenhain House - South Elevation*

The south elevation is comprised of the kitchen wall and the bedroom wall, with the exterior greenhouse below the bedroom wall. The mass is rectangular and the kitchen section is two bays wide. An aluminum slider occupies the west corner. A tripartite aluminum slider is in the right bay with a second clerestory tripartite aluminum slider above it. The roof overhangs this wall, supported by 2" x 3" rafters. The bedroom section is one bay wide and is forward of the kitchen wall by about thirteen feet. The roof of this

<sup>22</sup> Lanier and his wife, sculptor Ruth Asawa, were friends of Wildenhain's.

<sup>23</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>24</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

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section slopes away from the kitchen section. A single fixed window occupies the east corner below the level of the floor. The sun on the southern side of the house has accelerated the decay of the materials.

#### *Wildenhain House - East Elevation*

The east elevation is a rectangular mass. The land slopes at the south end up to the north, making the southeast corner of the building nearly two stories tall. At the southeast corner there is a wide opening for access to the crawlspace. Two aluminum slider windows are located in each bay.

#### *Wildenhain House - North Elevation*

The three bay wide façade has a recessed central section with an aluminum slider on the kitchen wall. The vestibule wall projects forward of the central bay at the west end, and to the east the bathroom and mud porch project forward an equal distance. The bathroom has a small aluminum slider. The back door is a historic wood door with five lights. At the back door two steps lead to a simple wood porch with 2" x 4" railings.

#### *Wildenhain House - Interior*

The main house retains built-in elements and finishes from the 1962 remodel. Resilient flooring materials remain in many areas but are now cracked and peeling. Artificial wood paneling and wood walls occur in the house. The acoustic tile ceilings are falling down throughout the house. Doors are hollow core and framed in wood.

#### *Vestibule*

The vestibule is a small space of 4' x 6'. The concrete floor, which extends out into the garden, is embedded with smooth stones and pottery shards. Some shards bear the Pond Farm Pottery mark. The walls are laminate wood paneling.

#### *Kitchen*

The kitchen is a sunny and bright space where Wildenhain often entertained. It constitutes the original house and measures about 11' x 20' with laminate wood paneling. The ceiling is sloped and many of the acoustic tiles have fallen out and are stacked on a shelf. There is a window seat on the south wall which is surrounded by cupboards and drawers. The sink and stove are at the west end, with many cupboards and drawers. There is a shallow set of drawers; according to Dr. Billie Sessions, these were used for her extensive rock collection.<sup>25</sup> Additional cabinets occupy the north wall with wood front cupboards below and glass front cupboards above. 1960s era sconce lights and round drawer pulls remain in place.

#### *Sitting Room*

The sitting room is reached through a large opening from the kitchen and has a large window looking east. Almost 9' x 9', it is a simple space giving access to the bedroom, bathroom and mud porch. The wood laminate walls also feature a shallow shelf on the south wall.

#### *Bedroom*

The bedroom is approximately 12' x 13'. Windows are on the south and east walls. The door is on the north wall and is flanked by closets, one to the west and two to the east. The ceiling is angled. Laminate wood paneling covers the walls. It appears that water is entering the ceiling since many of the acoustic tiles are failing and some are covered in mold.

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<sup>25</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Communication 2013)

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### *Bathroom*

The bathroom is small, measuring only 6' – 6" x 6' – 6". It appears that it was not remodeled in the 1960s, with the exception of the acoustic tile ceiling. It has white painted wood walls. The floor is 1940s-era resilient tile. The sink, toilet and shower are from the 1940s. The shower floor is concrete with embedded smooth stones. The window has traditional wood casings, unique to the house. Fixtures, including the lamp and towel rack, also predate the 1960s. A water heater also occupies the space.

### *Mudroom*

The small mudroom is about 4' x 5'. It also has 1940s era resilient flooring and white painted wood walls with an acoustic tile ceiling. There is a large laundry sink on the west wall and shallow shelves on the opposite wall. The five-light door allows natural light and a single bare bulb illuminates the space.

### *Crawlspace*

The crawlspace under the house is accessed on the eastern side of the house where the topography allows access through an opening. Inside are a few narrow wood shelves between posts. One mason jar remains in place near a floor joist.

## **GUEST HOUSE**

The guest house replaced the shepherd's cottage that dated from the Walker era. Albert Lanier designed the guest house in 1962. It is located in close proximity to the barn and is a one-story building with a squat t-shaped form; the building is strongly symmetrical. The foundation is poured concrete foundation and the exterior of the building is plywood and battens. The low-pitch gable roof is built-up materials and gravel. A windowed shed-roofed monitor on the front of the house provides additional light. The windows are all aluminum sliders or fixed glass. The exterior appears as it did historically, therefore the building retains a sufficient degree of integrity.

### *Guest House - South Elevation*

The south elevation is the front of the building. The central bay projects forward and the two side wings are recessed almost 4'. The width of the central bay is almost entirely taken up with a pair of aluminum frame sliding windows. A pair of aluminum frame sliders is located over these windows in the projecting monitor. Wood steps are located in the east bay, giving access to the front door. The roof overhangs the main windows and provides deep shelter to the recessed bays.

### *Guest House - East Elevation*

The east elevation is three bays wide. The first bay is the recessed entry with a modern paneled door. Two aluminum sliding windows are symmetrically placed in the central bay. A small shed roofed addition, capped with a vent, encloses the water heater and is located at the northeast corner. According to Parks Maintenance Worker Laura Parent, State Parks added this enclosure during its tenure.<sup>26</sup>

### *Guest House - North Elevation*

The north elevation is like the south elevation in form but it does not have the projecting monitor. A small aluminum sliding window is centered on the wall, and larger aluminum sliding windows are symmetrically located at each end.

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<sup>26</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

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### *Guest House - West Elevation*

The west elevation mimics the east elevation in massing. Aluminum sliders are symmetrically placed on the two main bays. In the forward recessed bay is an aluminum frame sliding window.

### *Guest House - Interior*

The interior is utilitarian, with inexpensive and mass-produced materials. Linoleum and carpet cover the floors and walls, and the ceilings are plaster-covered gypsum board. Casings are thin wood and the doors are hollow core. According to the HABS-format report, the interior was unfinished during Wildenhain's time.<sup>27</sup> Interior finishes, including gypsum wall coverings and carpeting, were installed in 1985 for park employee use.<sup>28</sup> These interior changes did introduce new materials, thus would be considered rehabilitation. The work was not part of a master plan.

### *Living Room and Kitchen*

The living room and kitchen combine to occupy the front half of the house. The kitchen has built-in cabinets and a sink. Some of the wood cabinets, on the east wall, are basic wood, painted, and may date to the 1962 remodel. Unpainted rafters span the space above the monitor.

### *Bathroom*

The bathroom, a small closet, and two bedrooms are accessed via a small hallway off the living room. The bathroom is roughly centered in the back half of the building. It has a linoleum floor and modern fixtures, including a bathtub, sink and toilet.

### *Bedrooms*

A pair of small bedrooms flanks the bathroom. They have carpeted floors, plastered gypsum walls and ceiling, with thin wood moldings around the doors and windows.

## ***Contributing Resource – One Site***

### **LANDSCAPE**

#### *Natural Systems and Features*

The natural systems and features that influenced the development and resulting form of the landscape include local sources of water, solar orientation, topography and soil. The Walker family ranch established the initial locations of many of the original Pond Farm Workshops buildings, presumably due to access to water, forage, and to solar orientation. Fruiting trees and vegetable gardens were established by the Walkers, Herrs, and Wildenhain where sun, water, and topography permitted. Fife Creek, the pond, and natural springs in the area supplied water to the site. The pond is bisected by a ridge of land that creates a small western pond and a larger eastern pond; Gordon did make modifications to the shape of the pond.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Topography*

With very minor exceptions, the natural topography may have been little altered from what occurred naturally. The original homesteaders may have made topographical changes that are now difficult to detect. The teardrop parking area, guest house, and barn/studio occupy a prominent rise off the road; the ground slopes abruptly from the east side of the land, behind the house and studio, towards the creek. North of the fenced area the land dips a few feet; this is where many of the Herr buildings had been located. East of the location of the Herr complex the land drops to the creek that exits from the pond, and

<sup>27</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>28</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>29</sup> (J. G. Herr, Love, Because Nothing Else Matters 2007)



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the pond rests in a slight depression in a meadow. The fall of land towards the south is gentle and steady. West of the roadway the land rises, rather steeply in parts. Tall hills to the west, north and south surround the property and are also visible in the distance.

Much of the ground is somewhat bumpy and uneven. Low stacked stone walls create somewhat level planting beds, and near the southern end of the main house there are a few low earth and stone terraces.

#### *Views and Vistas*

The views and vistas remain essentially the same as they had been during the Herr and Wildenhain tenure and are composed of grassy hillsides surrounded by forested hills. No other habitations are visible.

#### *Circulation and Spatial Organization*

Spatial organization established during the period of significance is no longer intact for the demolished area of Herr buildings that were part of Pond Farm Workshops; however, the extant buildings for Pond Farm Pottery, which were part of the original Workshops, and closely associated with them, do retain their original spatial organization. The overall organization of the site to the road and to the pond and creek are maintained. The strength of the overall, extant, spatial organization qualifies this feature as contributing.

A section of Armstrong Woods Road bisects the property, as it did historically. The road provided the means of access to town of Guerneville, to the satellite campus of the Hexagon House site, and to the greater Bay Area.

The land itself comprised one circulation system, over which people freely traveled; however, defined passageways were also established. These paths and drives are generally typical of a rural environment and are simply dirt or gravel, except where Wildenhain created mosaic-style pathways. Given the change in current use and deterioration, some paths can be difficult to discern, but they are present. The gravel drive is prominent and has been in place at least from the early days of Pond Farm Workshops; the drive is visible in early photographs.<sup>30</sup> The vehicle parking area associated with the Herr buildings also remains. In the larger landscape, a road just north of the pond, described by Gordon Herr's son as the "Road to the Back Forty," remains in use as a hiking path.<sup>31</sup>

A beaten earth path connects the pedestrian gate near the road to the pottery-embedded path that leads to the house. Near a low concrete bridge that crosses a shallow drainage swale, the path transitions to the mosaic-style paving created by Wildenhain. This path extends to the house, passing under the arbor, and towards the gate to the barn. The rest of the pathway from the main house to the barn/studio is beaten earth. It is not often used now and is narrower than it appears in historic photographs. This pathway is a direct and straight line from the entry of the main house to the entry of the barn. Timothy Steele, Gordon and Jane Herr's grandson, wrote; "There is a subtle but definite axis connecting the arbor / entrance area at the main house with the prow of the barn and the entrance to the guest house. The siting of each building's entrance and their unmistakable visual and circulatory linkage is an expression of architects and artist making a statement of the bond between life and work."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology 2007)

<sup>31</sup> (J. G. Herr, The Geography of Pond Farm 2000)

<sup>32</sup> (T. T. Steele 2009)

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### Vegetation

Historically the property contained areas of naturally-occurring seasonal grasses, areas of mixed oak and fir forest, areas of fruit trees, and smaller areas of cultivated landscape plants near the buildings. The grasslands and forest trees remain. Some fruit trees remain at the site and some ornamental plants remain around the Herr building site as well as around the Wildenhain site. The continuing presence of surrounding trees and a prominent ground plane of grasses, as well as the presence of remaining fruit trees and ornamental plants, are sufficient to make the determination that vegetation is a contributing resource.

Historically, there were not many large native trees near and between the buildings; it appears that native trees were at the edges of the property, to the east near the creek and possibly to the south. This organization remains generally true today. A black and white photo showing the Herr buildings, pond, and barn/studio shows there had been a scattering of fruit trees around those buildings and some of these remain, as does an old fan palm (*Washingtonia fillifera*), an old date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), and a camellia (*Camellia japonica*). Other plants include *Agave*, (*Gelsemium sempervirens*).

There are several remnants of the Wildenhain landscape, such as the *Agave* (century plants) that are located near the entry drive. Large century plants were always in existence throughout Pond Farm Pottery landscape, and many are on site today, making them a powerful visual tie to the prior landscape. According to Dorothy Herger, Wildenhain planted them along the entry to the barn.<sup>33</sup> Some descendents of these plants persist. Pampas grass was prominent in Wildenhain's time, but was removed after her death due to fire danger. Other invasive exotics, such as bamboo and cape plumbago were also removed by State Parks due to their invasive character.<sup>34</sup> There is a failing peach tree near the barn, and there had been a second one nearby. This area was once a favorite location for outdoor lectures. Closer to the main house are some figs (*Ficus spp*), flowering quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), a crape myrtle tree (*Lagerstroemia spp*), abelia (*Abelia spp*), watsonia, (*Watsonia borbonica*) fruit trees, and Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*). Visitors often remarked on the numerous and various bulbs and succulents, some of these plants persist.<sup>35</sup> In the spring many of the bulbs return. Some of these are Amaryllis, small grape hyacinths and larger wild hyacinths or bluebells. Clumps of daffodils line the path to the pedestrian gate. In letters to the sculptor and her friend Gerhard Marcks, she often mentioned her mimosa trees (*Acacia baileyana*); there are several of these trees on the property.<sup>36</sup> A chinquapin tree (*Castanea dentate*), growing near the fence line east of the guest house, was a subject of Wildenhain's sketches; it is still in existence.<sup>37</sup> A Japanese plum that Wildenhain often wrote about once grew outside the south window of the main house, but is now gone.<sup>38</sup> Wildenhain was proud of the eucalyptus trees she had planted behind the barn; these were removed by State Parks due to concerns about fire danger.<sup>39</sup> A fig tree remains along the path between the house and the barn.

Wildenhain was an enthusiastic gardener and preferred tough, low water-using plants.<sup>40</sup> The gardens were generally casual in character; however, she did grow roses and vegetables.<sup>41</sup> She called her vegetable garden her "jardin potager."<sup>42</sup> Her vegetable garden was located south of the arbor in the terraced area

<sup>33</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>34</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>35</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>36</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>37</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>38</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)

<sup>39</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)

<sup>40</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>41</sup> (Haskins 1996)

<sup>42</sup> (Herr 2007)

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and she kept a compost pile west of that. She established a climbing rose and grapevine on the arbor outside the door to her house; only the rose remains.<sup>43</sup> Near the house was a vegetable garden that Wildenhain kept from her earliest days on the property; nearby she kept compost and mulch piles. At one time there was a variety of bulbs and succulents; some of these are visible in a 1950s photograph (**Figure 7**). The area had been covered with gravel and ornamental plants. Most of these plants are gone. Naturally occurring, non-native grasses covered much of the surrounding land and interstitial spaces during the Herr and Wildenhain tenure on the land; this continues to be the case today.

#### *Fences and Gates*

Fences associated with the Herr property outside the Pottery boundary are no longer extant. Wildenhain established rustic fencing around and within a portion of her property. Here, perimeter fencing exists in the same location today, and remnants of original fencing are scattered around the Wildenhain property. The perimeter fencing has been continuously repaired by California State Parks during their ownership of the property. These repairs have been strongly based on historic precedence and may be considered reconstruction, without a master plan.

A visitor approaching the property from Armstrong Woods would first see the wood fences along the road. These line the edge of property along the road. The wood fence was built of rough square wood posts, generally 4" x 4", often with horizontal wire to which vertical wood palings (grapestakes) or wood lath was attached. The palings and lath have inconsistent lengths. The fence also has some metal t-stake supports that may act as additional support as the posts decay. According to the Parks Maintenance Worker Laura Parent, during Wildenhain's period as a tenant of State Parks, she often asked for assistance mending the fences, and salvage materials were often used; materials for the fences and gates were, historically, changeable, with a greater number of grapestakes possibly occurring in the later years. The fence has been maintained in the much the same manner by Parks' workers and by volunteers since Wildenhain's death.<sup>44</sup>

Remnants of wire fencing are located within and at the perimeter of the property. During Wildenhain's life there was a section of fence that went from the barn and the main house, east of the stone terraces; it is no longer in existence.<sup>45</sup> Dorothy Herger recalls that there had once been a wire fence south of the barn, and parallel to it, with a gate at the path to the main house. This fence extended toward the wood fence along the western fence line. There are remnants of fences behind the barn, and some are below the top of the bank.

The wire fencing Wildenhain installed around her house and gardens to keep out deer and livestock is mostly gone, but remnants of this fence remain.<sup>46</sup> There are remnants of fencing east of the main house that are wood, wire, and metal t-stakes. West of the arbor there are remnants of wood and wire fencing. There remain sections of fencing at the northern edge of Wildenhain's private garden area, with an opening where there had been a gate. This gate would have been used by Wildenhain when she went back and forth to the barn.

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<sup>43</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>44</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>45</sup> (Herger. Interview with author 2009)

<sup>46</sup> According to former student Dorothy Herger, in the early days of Wildenhain's pottery studio, there were parallel wood fences north of the main entry to allow Gordon Herr access to his land. It is not clear when this changed; the location of the "pond farm pottery" sign is, by all accounts, in the same location as the original sign. (Herger. Interview 2012)

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When State Parks acquired the property, the auto gate was wood and matched the fencing materials. At some point during State Parks ownership, a new metal stock gate was installed.<sup>47</sup> According to Dorothy Herger, at one time a pedestrian gate was located next to the auto gate; it is no longer in existence. There remains a wood pedestrian gate leading from the road to Wildenhain's house; it is different from one that appears in a historic photograph, but it is not known if the current gate post-dates Wildenhain's tenure.<sup>48</sup> Given the changeable character of the fencing, this is difficult to ascertain.

The wood fence that edges the western edge of the property curls away from the road at the southern end and transitions to wire, then ends. A section of wire fencing with a wide wire gate remains due south of the house, about 120 feet away from the house.

At the northeast corner of the barn there had been a sort of wood screen made of wood posts, wire and tree branches. In an undated photo, it was decorated with pieces of gourd-like pots; it is now of vertical pickets.<sup>49</sup>

#### *Stone Retaining Walls*

Between the barn and the house is a series of roughly parallel low stone retaining walls. The purpose of so many walls is unknown; according to a former student from very early days, the area between the barn and the fence closest to the main house, where most of the walls occur, was always covered in naturally occurring grasses.<sup>50</sup> They are simply single rows or stones or stacked stone.

#### *Stones and Rocks at Wildenhain House*

Wildenhain was an avid collector of rocks, and stated that these inspired some of her textures and glazes. Some of these rocks are displayed along the path near her house. She also maintained a collection of rocks in her house which is now in the collection of Luther College. In addition, the arbor seating area is defined by a low stacked-stone wall on the north and on the west side, under the arbor. There are rough terraces south of the arbor and scattered stones that may be remnants of former low terraces. The stones are quite various, reflecting Wildenhain's interest in geology.

#### *Water Tanks*

Beyond the wood screen were two wood water tanks that had, at one time, been a water source for the site.<sup>51</sup> Both tanks had collapsed but one was reconstructed by a California State Parks employee in the last couple of years. This work did not occur as part of a preservation plan, and it may be considered a reconstruction.

#### *Wood Deck*

A simple wood deck is located next to the back wall of the barn. It is made of boards and plywood and is in poor condition. A 1950s era photograph shows the lattice and a picnic bench, gravel paving, an area of lush plants near the door,<sup>52</sup> and no wood deck. It is assumed that Wildenhain added the deck sometime after the photograph was taken but the date is not known. This area was used for breaks and sometimes for drawing lessons.<sup>53</sup> Formerly there was a simple lattice cover over the area, it is no longer extant.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>47</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>48</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>49</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>50</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>51</sup> (Potthast 1982)

<sup>52</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>53</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

<sup>54</sup> (Herger. Interview 2012)

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According to Parks worker Laura Parent, the lattice cover was removed when the building was reroofed in the 1990s.<sup>55</sup>

#### *L-shaped Wood Bench*

Nearby, at the edge of the slope to the creek, is a simple L-shaped wood bench which hugs the trunk of a large bay tree. The bench has partially slipped down the bank and is in poor condition.

#### *Bridge*

A small, slightly curved, 33" x 56" exposed concrete bridge crosses over a shallow drainage swale. This is located west of the main house, between the house and the pedestrian gate Wildenhain used for personal visitors. The bridge is in good condition.

#### *Barbecue at Wildenhain House*

A very small brick and stone barbecue is near the entry to the main house and the arbor. It is simple construction of stacked bricks, six rows tall. The barbecue is in fair condition.

#### ***Contributing Resource – One Structure***

##### **KILN ENCLOSURE**

This separate structure located east of the kiln room addition housed the second kiln at the Pottery. The structure was installed by Wildenhain in the 1970s.<sup>56</sup> The roofed enclosure is 7' x 7' square and it sits on a concrete pad that has a wood sill. The east, north, and west sides are galvanized steel with raised vertical seams. The south wall is covered in stained plywood with battens, and the two doors, opening out, are of the same materials. A small shed roof cover over the door is supported by 4" x 4" wood posts. There is an apron of exposed aggregate outside the door, also providing a connection to the back door of the barn near the kiln room. The very shallow hip roof is surmounted by a covered chimney. The roof material was originally metal but a contractor changed it to composition shingle, probably in the 1990s.<sup>57</sup> The kiln was removed from the structure following Wildenhain's death.<sup>58</sup>

#### ***Contributing Resources – Three Objects***

##### **BARBCUE**

The barbecue and nearby curved bench are on axis with the back doorway of the main studio. The barbecue is rectangular. The corners are anchored by stacked red bricks four courses tall. The sections between the brick corners are composed of concrete and stones in which are embedded glazed and fired ceramic pieces with bas-relief patterns. A couple of them are a few inches across. Two have abstract patterns (of which one piece is broken) and one has an abstracted face. There are also broken bits of pottery and small stones. The barbecue is in fair condition.

##### **SEMICIRCULAR BENCH**

The bench appears to have been made of concrete embedded with stones of various sizes. It also contains several pieces of glazed and fired ceramic pieces. Several large and complete pieces, a few inches across, face the front and top. These pieces have been incised with texture creating abstract images. Additional pieces of glazed ceramics are also embedded in the bench, including parts of vases and pots. Several

<sup>55</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2013)

<sup>56</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>57</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>58</sup> Wildenhain's outdoor kiln was passed on as an inheritance to potter and former student Caryn Fried.

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pieces have been identified as the work of students who attended the summer sessions in 1954 and 1955.<sup>59</sup> The bench is in fair condition.

### **PAVING EMBEDDED WITH POTTERY SHARDS**

Paving made of concrete, bits of brick, stone, and pottery shards is in place around the entrance to Wildenhain's house, as well as the garden and arbor areas. The paving is exposed concrete with various-sized, glazed and fired pottery pieces. Flat stones were also used, and there are a few seashells. Some ceramic pieces are incised with pattern, and portions of pots or vases also appear. A couple of pieces bear the stamp of Pond Farm Pottery. The paving extends from the front door into the garden near the barbecue and a short distance towards the gate opening that faces the barn. It extends under the arbor. To the west, it extends to a small bridge crossing a drainage swale, then extends past it a short distance in the direction of the private pedestrian gate.

### ***Noncontributing Resources – Two Sites***

Within the Pond Farm Pottery Historic District boundary are two prehistoric archaeological sites. Neither of these prehistoric sites is a contributor to the nomination. Both sites are prehistoric lithic scatters, designated CA-SON-1852 and CA-SON-1855.

### ***Integrity***

Even though the barn and main house are not well maintained, integrity is high. The extant buildings, site, structure, and objects have not changed substantially. They strongly convey the time period of Pond Farm Pottery. The extant buildings also continue to convey part of the history of the preceding Pond Farm Workshops era. Location, setting, feeling, and association remain.

### ***Location***

Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery activities took place at various points on the property. This location has not changed.

### ***Design***

Both Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery were designed to utilize existing agricultural buildings, and also contained a few contemporary wooden buildings and structures. Handcraft and truth to materials, combined with thoughtful design, were important lessons of both the Workshops and the Pottery. The extant buildings retain these design characteristics. The barn/studio reflects the effort to utilize and transform existing agricultural buildings, and the main house and guest house reflect the interest in contemporary architectural design. The important site plan is intact for extant buildings, and the buildings continue to speak of living in close proximity to nature, considered important to the design expression. The inside of the barn continues to reflect the original design of the pottery studio with all of the kick wheels in place in the main space, and all but one in place in the south studio. The interior of the main house continues to reflect the straightforward design qualities Wildenhain valued.

### ***Setting***

The setting changed over the course of the existence of the Workshops and Pottery, and now is largely unchanged from the mid-1960s setting. The setting also includes Armstrong Woods Road, the Middle Fork of Fife Creek, the pond for which Pond Farm was named, and the quiet expanse of hills, valleys, and trees. These are intact. The natural scenery surrounding the property was consistently remarked upon by students and visitors and is the most compelling and important aspect of the setting.

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<sup>59</sup> Research performed by Christopher Corey shows some pieces are incised with names of students (Corey, 2013)

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### ***Materials***

Extant materials maintain integrity. Few changes occurred during Marguerite Wildenhain's life, and few changes to materials have occurred since Marguerite Wildenhain's death, with the greatest exceptions to the roofing materials and skylights, and to the addition of gypsum board to the interior of the guest house.

### ***Workmanship***

Workmanship retains integrity; the extant buildings, structures, and objects are notable for their hand-crafted qualities. The barn/studio was originally built in a simple and rough manner. The two houses and the fences were constructed in a utilitarian manner.

### ***Feeling***

Feeling is retained. Pond Farm was always noted for providing a sense of peaceful isolation, a feeling that continues to exist, both outside and inside the buildings. This is particularly notable in the barn/studio, which retains its potent and iconic landmark qualities, both inside and out. On the exterior, the simple additions made by Herr created a readily identifiable symbol for Pond Farm Workshops and are emblematic of the Pond Farm Pottery ideal of handcraft and of blending the modern with tradition. On the interior, the quality of light and the contemplative character of Pond Farm Pottery, captured in historic photographs, remain as strong features. The simple and rural character of the place is strongly retained in all the buildings. Feeling is also strongly retained in the Wildenhain house. Wildenhain advocated a life lived close to nature, devotion to one's art, and one of simplicity and restraint. All these qualities are represented in the house, which retains its spartan and well-designed character. The house is very near the work area, and it is surrounded by views and countryside.

### ***Association***

Association is strong. The rural landscape, the barn/studio, main house, and, later, the guest house, were at the very center of Pond Farm Pottery, where Marguerite Wildenhain lived, worked, and taught. The interior of the studio is intact, creating a strong association with both the school and Wildenhain's work. Association with Pond Farm Workshops is also retained, due to the presence of the barn/studio and Wildenhain's house, and in large part to the important landscape features and setting that are retained.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1980

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942, 1949

1952, 1953, 1956

1962, 1963, 1964

1970

1980, 1985

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Wildenhain, Marguerite

née Friedlander or Friedlaender

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Herr, Gordon

Lanier, Albert

Wildenhain, Marguerite

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Pond Farm Pottery is significant under Criteria A and B at the national level of significance in the areas of Art, Education, and Social History for its association with the Studio Pottery Movement and ceramist and teacher Marguerite Wildenhain who lived, worked, and taught at Pond Farm. American ceramists of the 1940s and 1950s were in the early stages of a ceramics revolution that resulted in several developments in ceramics in the United States, including the emergence of the Studio Pottery Movement. During the first half of the twentieth century, European immigrant ceramists such as Marguerite Wildenhain introduced new arts and crafts skills, methods, and philosophies across the country. Her school, Pond Farm Pottery, played an important role in the emergence of ceramics as an important art form. Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm in 1942 and concluded her active working life in 1980 with the last summer session, publication of her third book, and a retrospective exhibit of her work. She remained at Pond Farm until her death in 1985. The property meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for its strong association with the Studio Pottery Movement of the mid-twentieth century and the internationally significant contributions of Wildenhain, an exemplary ceramist who was an important female pioneer in ceramics and ceramics education.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### **Chronology of the Property**

- 1942 Gordon and Jane Herr began purchasing lands that would become part of Pond Farm Workshops. Herr began converting his agricultural building into living and working spaces for the artists. Marguerite Wildenhain arrived at the property and her house was constructed.
- 1949 Pond Farm Workshops began.
- 1952 Jane Brandenstein Herr died.
- 1952 Wildenhain spoke at Dartington Hall in England, gaining international attention.
- 1952 Wildenhain began teaching workshops at schools around the country.
- 1953 Pond Farm Workshops ended.
- 1953 Wildenhain started Pond Farm Pottery.
- 1956 Wildenhain purchased the property that contained Pond Farm Pottery. Herr sold the property containing the Hexagon House, as well as various other parcels. He retained ownership of some land, including that for his house and the pond.
- 1962 The guesthouse was constructed and the Wildenhain residence remodeled.
- 1963 California State Parks began the process of acquiring property in the area, including that of Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery.
- 1964 Pond Farm Workshops buildings, not part of the Pottery property, were demolished.
- 1970 Gordon Herr (Albert Gordon Herr, Jr.) died.
- 1980 Traveling retrospective exhibition of Wildenhain's work, initiated by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art in Cornell.
- 1980 Last summer session taught at Pond Farm Pottery, and the last year the kiln was fired.
- 1985 Marguerite Wildenhain died.

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### Terminology

*Art pottery:* Art pottery is a decorative art. In many cases, a standard shape, such as a vase, was produced through the use of a form and then decorated with painting and glazes. Teams of people work on these products.

*Factory produced ceramics:* China and other earthenware produced with machines. Also includes clay pipes and architectural ceramics, such as mass produced tile and terra-cotta. Also includes twentieth-century decorative pottery designed by a ceramic artist and produced with factory methods. Heath Ceramics, Russell Wright, and Van Briggie are examples.

*Folk pottery:* Hand-crafted utilitarian ceramics, which may also be decorated, using self-taught or locally taught methods, using local materials.

*Funk ceramics:* A movement begun around 1960 encouraging aggressive experimentation with clay and abstract forms.

*Production pottery:* Ceramics created by hand, but with several copies of one form. In many cases, each step of the process is performed by a different person.

*Studio pottery:* Personally expressive, hand-crafted and typically wheel-thrown ceramics, often vessels, with an emphasis on the process of creation. Pieces are usually one-of-a-kind and have a practical use.

Note that sources cited in this document use the terms *ceramic artist*, *ceramist*, *ceramicist*, *potter*, *artisan*, and *artist* to describe a person who makes pots, and the terms are used interchangeably.

### Criterion A: Association with the Studio Pottery Movement

Pond Farm Workshops, the predecessor to Pond Farm Pottery, was an experimental art colony and school, one of many across the country occurring between 1930 and 1960. European immigrant artists were often featured instructors at these schools, altering the course of arts and crafts in the United States. Wildenhain initially came to California to be a part of Pond Farm Workshops, creating her own school, Pond Farm Pottery, after the Workshops ended in 1953.

#### *Pond Farm Pottery and the Studio Pottery Movement*

Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm Pottery were closely associated with the emergence of the Studio Pottery Movement, an important development in ceramics in the United States. The Studio Pottery Movement had its first stirrings in the 1930s in the United States. When Wildenhain arrived in 1940, few American artists were showing strong development in pottery. It was not until the techniques and design standards at a few teaching institutions and the efforts of a few immigrants came together in the 1940s that studio pottery became widespread in the United States. As Elaine Levin states, “Marguerite Wildenhain was part of that group of European immigrant ceramists (Maija Grotell, Gertrud and Otto Natzler, Thomas Samuel Haile, Susi Singer and Paul Bonifas) who brought a higher level of technical expertise to the U.S. prior to or during the war years.”<sup>60</sup> Wildenhain was an influence in the early part of the 1940s in the United States, as she “introduced an aesthetic and ideology for the modern functional potter [and] provided a welcome alternative to the often self-indulgent and arbitrary form of purely decorative pottery.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> (Levin, *The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain* 1997)

<sup>61</sup> (Clark 1979)

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In addition, the British potter and author Bernard Leach, and the Japanese potters he introduced, all brought improved techniques, standards and philosophy towards pottery. This combination of factors resulted in a vital and expressive studio pottery tradition in the United States that thrives today.

The Ceramic National annual competition was opened to potters in 1933, which is considered to be a turning point in the history of studio pottery in the United States. A few ceramists, such as Charles Harder, Arthur Baggs, Glen Lukens, and Maija Grotell were exploring methods for the creation of simple pots with beautiful forms and innovative glazes and glazing methods that spoke of the character of the materials. A confluence of schools and practitioners in Southern California, beginning in the 1930s, was also a critical factor in exploring improved technical skills. European potters Marguerite Wildenhain and Gertrud Natzler introduced kick wheels and throwing methods that revolutionized the field.

It was a Bauhaus tenet that there was no division between artists and craftspeople, but the idea was not widely accepted in the United States in the 1940s. It later became more common for art museums to display the work of potters and other artisans. This philosophical shift, advanced by Wildenhain, among others, was an important factor in the Studio Potter movement. Marguerite Wildenhain was an outspoken and very active advocate for the relevance of studio pottery and was one of the strongest voices of the era insisting that functional craft had a place as art.

The Metropolitan Museum recognized the emergence of a new art movement in 1947 featuring influential post-war ceramists. Wildenhain's work was featured in the show. In the show's catalog, author Dauterman remarked:

In both Europe and America the studio ceramist, as distinguished from the industrial artist and craftsman, personifies a youthful movement in age-old art... [Unlike a traditional artisan] the studio ceramist is an artist-intellectual who may be an art director, teacher, or any other person who finds creative stimulation in working in clay. His output is wide in scope, ranging from stoneware cups to gigantic pottery jars, and from wall plaques to sculpture in the full round.<sup>62</sup>

The British potter Bernard Leach was a key proponent for the Studio Pottery Movement in England, and began to have an influence in the United States in the early 1950s.<sup>63</sup> He was one of the organizers of the 1952 *International Conference of Potters and Weavers* at Dartington Hall, England. Wildenhain was invited as a speaker. Leach disparaged pottery in the United States, claiming it had no tap root. Wildenhain fiercely and eloquently rejected Leach's notion. Wildenhain believed America's strength lay in its multiculturalism and grandeur. She and Leach carried on a long public disagreement on the subject. As Brent Johnson stated, Wildenhain "emerged from Dartington Hall as the most important potter in America."<sup>64</sup> By the end of the 1950s, studio pottery had developed into a full-fledged movement, and Marguerite Wildenhain was one of the foremost teachers and practitioners, inspiring her students and those who studied under them. The ceramics historian Paul Donhauser wrote: "Marguerite Wildenhain

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<sup>62</sup> (Miller 1990)

<sup>63</sup> The Studio Pottery Movement was well under way in Britain in the 1950s, mostly due to the influence of Leach. He traveled to the United States in 1950 with his mentor, the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada, and the Japanese philosopher Soetsu Yanagi. They promoted and demonstrated a centuries-old Japanese pottery technique and also advanced the idea that strong philosophical underpinnings were necessary for strong results.

<sup>64</sup> (B. Johnson 2007)

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served as one of the most articulate spokesmen for American studio-pottery during the 1940s and 1950s.”<sup>65</sup>

Marguerite Wildenhain worked in the intersection of streamlined modernism and craft pottery, forging new ground and a “modern American aesthetic”.<sup>66</sup> Part of the challenge of the Studio Pottery Movement was synthesizing Modernism with handcraft and Wildenhain was an influential example. As Pat Kirkham wrote:

“A number of ‘modernisms’ helped shape ceramic design in the United States in the twentieth century. Bauhaus-style modernism became prevalent after the arrival of former Bauhaus staff and students from Germany in the 1930s. Its most direct influence on ceramics came via Marguerite Wildenhain, who had trained with Max Krehan and Gerhard Marcks at the Bauhaus before emigrating to the United States and settling in California where she worked as a designer, maker, and teacher of ceramics... The synthesis of studio pottery and modernism was a central concern for American potters in the 1940s and 1950s, and Wildenhain was one of the foremost thinkers and writers on the subject.”<sup>67</sup>

Marguerite Wildenhain taught and inspired several generations of potters and gave them the skills and desire to become artists in their own rights. In 1997, author and ceramic historian Elaine Levin wrote “If you were a beginning potter in the 1940s and 1950s, and your goal was to make pottery your life’s work, the person you would have been advised to study with would have been Marguerite Wildenhain. Of course, there were a number of other potters teaching in art schools and universities around the country, but Wildenhain took her students beyond technique and the mechanics of the craft to a philosophical inquiry of the nature of work and the individual’s relationship to a creative activity”.<sup>68</sup> Wildenhain did visit schools around the country, but Pond Farm Pottery was the location where students studied with her over weeks, and sometimes years, at a time. In the foreword to a catalog for a major museum retrospective in 1980, this statement was made:

Once in a while an artist reaches the undisputed stature of master. Just how or when one arrives at such a level is impossible to determine, yet recognition of it is usually unanimous and undisputed. Marguerite Wildenhain has achieved that eminence in the field of pottery. By now generations of American potters owe their attitudes and techniques to the teacher at Pond Farm in northern California.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Pond Farm Workshops as a representative rural, experimental art school and colony***

Gordon Herr is often cited as the visionary for the Workshops, and Jane also provided substantial support for the effort. Jane helped obtain financial support for the enterprise and functioned as an organizer and diplomat for the group. Letters indicate she was an active participant in the planning of the school, including investigating the philosophical underpinnings for a new school. According to Geraldine Schwarz, Jane carefully studied important thinkers and writers of the day.<sup>70</sup> Alexander Meiklejohn, an

<sup>65</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>66</sup> (Kirkham 2000)

<sup>67</sup> (Kirkham 2000)

<sup>68</sup> (Levin, The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain 1997)

<sup>69</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>70</sup> Herr, Jane Brandenstein. "Letters from Pond Farm, 1941-1952" In Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007)

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author, educator, dean of Brown University, and president of Amherst College, is among the writers she studied. He wrote a thought-provoking book on his experience at an experimental college at the University of Wisconsin in which he made a compelling case for creating a “new education for a new society” in which small and relatively independent groups of teachers would work closely with students to share in the creation of the curriculum.<sup>71</sup> Meiklejohn was not advocating exactly the kind of school that Pond Farm Workshops became, but it is easy to see how his provocative writing was a source of inspiration to the Herrs.

The Herrs hoped to find teachers in Europe, clearly feeling these craftspeople would bring a fresh approach to the American system. Jane and Gordon Herr traveled to Europe in 1938 to learn about possible European examples of integrative and creative teaching environments<sup>72</sup> as well as to search for potential teachers for the school.<sup>73</sup>

A “back to the land” movement was spurred by President Roosevelt’s Resettlement Administration in 1935. The movement held appeal for many in the art community and the desire to establish a rural school occurred elsewhere in the county during this period: “In the United States the Great Depression caused both urban squalor and the need to resettle displaced rural people, inspiring a pervasive ‘back-to-the-land’ sentiment. Exemplified at the highest levels by Franklin Roosevelt’s Resettlement Administration, the government sought to locate workers on the land. In the arts community the inclination was particularly strong and spurred the creation of several well-known art schools located in rural settings, including Black Mountain College in North Carolina and Cranbrook Academy in Michigan.”<sup>74</sup> Herr spoke of creating a “Wrightesque” school, further evidence of the ambitions of the Herrs. Tim Tivoli Steele also makes a strong case for the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright and of Taliesin West where students lived and worked together with Wright, designing land-appropriate projects.<sup>75</sup> Dartington Hall, in South Devon, England, was also of great interest to the Herrs as a possible model; it was a place that supported artists while they worked and was a “well-known center for social innovation.”<sup>76</sup>

In 1939, Gordon Herr sent letters to his wife indicating that he was interesting in a self-sustaining living system, and he lists several subjects that it seemed he hoped to incorporate, including wood, metals, ceramics, weaving, bookbinding, and blockprinting.<sup>77</sup> Gordon and Jane believed that the Workshops should be located in a rural location where the artisans could live off the land, and wanted the Workshops located near a large city, presumably as an aid to marketing the goods the artisans would create. They also believed that a rural setting was essential for a creative life. The European method of teaching arts and crafts was important to the endeavor. Gordon Herr expressed interest in a guild system, and the resulting school offered apprenticeships, a system quite unlike a typical American college or university. Pond Farm Workshops was not fully a guild system, lacking a number of Craft Masters and the intensive training and

<sup>71</sup> Meiklejohn, Alexander. *The Experimental College* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UW.MeikExpColl>

<sup>72</sup> Wildenhain, Marguerite. *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1973)

<sup>73</sup> Herr, Jane Brandenstein. “Letters from Pond Farm, 1941-1952.” In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007)

<sup>74</sup> Sonoma County Museum. *Marguerite Wildenhain: Bauhaus to Pond Farm. January 20 – April 15, 2007*. Santa Rosa, CA: Marguerite Wildenhain: Bauhaus to Pond Farm January 20 – April 15, 2007, 2007

<sup>75</sup> Steele, Tim Tivoli. “Hexagon House: Home to the Pond Farm Workshops.” In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007)

<sup>76</sup> Johnson, Brent. A Matter of Tradition to *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007

<sup>77</sup> Herr, Gordon. “Letters from Europe, 1939.” In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*. Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007)

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education of a true guild system. He imagined that the students would work in an integrated manner across disciplines, together solving “problems related to architecture, industrial design and production” as noted in the 1950 school brochure. This statement could have come from the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus strove to unify all disciplines into a unified art, educating students to be artists-craftsmen serving all crafts and industries.<sup>78</sup> Gordon Herr imagined that the residents of Pond Farm Workshops would teach an intensive summer session, and would spend the rest of the year in the creation of arts and crafts, either individually or cooperatively.

The “School of the Pond Farm Workshops” was instituted in 1949. In that first year the *Christian Science Monitor* compared the school to Tanglewood, and interest in the school was widespread. The new school was in *Arts and Architecture* magazine in 1949: “At Pond Farm, beyond Guerneville and the Russian River, a group of artist-craftsmen are working and teaching together. All are in the process of putting into practice a significant concept in teaching and learning.”<sup>79</sup> The rural environment, constant contact between students and teachers, and a democratic spirit of cooperation and organization were promoted.

### ***Importance of the landscape and a rural setting***

Rural settings have been common to artists’ communities throughout the United States due to beliefs that aesthetics are rooted in the natural world, that strength and independence would be garnered from agrarian self-sufficiency, and that a quiet environment was essential to forging new ideas, without the distractions and the conformity that they expected to occur in a city.<sup>80</sup> The setting of the school was intended to benefit both the students and the teachers. Gordon Herr was passionate about the idea that life ought to be lived in close communion with the natural world.<sup>81</sup> The beauty of the property was promoted and students were advised that some class work would take place out of doors. Some students camped on the property during the Workshops days, a practice that continued into the Pottery era.<sup>82</sup>

Marguerite Wildenhain used the immediate and distant landscape as a source of inspiration and sent her students out into the landscape to sketch from nature. She wrote often about the immediate landscape, and she believed that natural materials provided essential information about form, color, and texture that informed her work. In a 1958 interview, it was noted that she compared the “surface textures of her pottery with those of nature. She has collected examples of hundreds of richly textured minerals, such as quartz, marble, jasper and jade and ranged them along the shelves of her studio next to the pieces of pottery.”<sup>83</sup> Trude Guermonprez also used the local and distant landscape as a source of inspiration.<sup>84</sup> A 1950s article about a show in Los Angeles that featured Pond Farm artists noted the use of natural materials: “In the deep-toned black and brown ceramics of Marguerite Wildenhain, sparingly touched with brighter colors, and the jewelry of Viktor Ries, whose necklace of redwood burl and silver is a beautiful thing, one feels artists working with natural materials in a spirit akin to that of Northern California’s contemporary architects.”<sup>85</sup>

### ***A lasting effect on the California art scene***

Several European artists eventually taught at the school. Marguerite Wildenhain was the first to arrive; others arrived following World War II. A brochure for the school from 1950 lists Gordon Herr

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<sup>78</sup> (Anderson 2007)

<sup>79</sup> (Arts & Architecture 1949)

<sup>80</sup> (Aldrich 2008)

<sup>81</sup> (T. T. Steele, *Hexagon House: Home to Pond Farm Workshops* n.d.)

<sup>82</sup> (Fried 1956)

<sup>83</sup> (Decker 1958)

<sup>84</sup> (Tigerman 2011)

<sup>85</sup> (Los Angeles Times 1950)

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(architecture), Frans Wildenhain (ceramic sculpture), Trude Guermonprez (weaving), Viktor Ries (metalwork), and Marguerite Wildenhain (pottery)<sup>86</sup>. Other teachers included Claire Falkenstein (painting and sculpture), and Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Pope Dimitroff (fresco technique). The innovative composer Harry Partch, considered by some to be one of the most significant composers of the twentieth century, often constructed his instruments at Pond Farm.<sup>87</sup> Jean Varda (collage) participated. As Lucienne Bloch stated in an oral history in 1984, they were wonderful people who “knew their stuff” and in her estimation, had Jane Herr lived, the school would have been successful.<sup>88</sup>

Additional artisans and artists associated with Pond Farm Workshops include the photographers Otto Hagel and Hansel Mieth, architect Albert Lanier and his wife, sculptor Ruth Asawa, and painter Forrest Bailey. All are important artists in their own rights. Victor Ries was at the core of the resurgence of the Bay Area as a center for religious art. Ries went on to teach at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland and his work has been shown in major museums across the country.<sup>89</sup> Bloch and Dimitroff were assistants to Diego Rivera and were important frescoists. The great metalworker, Harry Dixon, became a “summer artist.”<sup>90</sup>

Wildenhain invited Ruth Asawa to leave Black Mountain College and visit Pond Farm.<sup>91</sup> Asawa did not teach at Pond Farm, but did establish a home in San Francisco, and a vacation home in Guerneville. She and her husband, architect Albert Lanier, were close friends of Wildenhain’s. Asawa was a groundbreaking modernist sculptor.<sup>92</sup> Lanier designed several buildings in the Bay Area, and both Lanier and Asawa worked to establish the San Francisco School of the Arts, a public high school devoted to the arts that is now called the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts.

Otto Hagel and Hansel Mieth “made notable contributions to the development of social documentary practice and photojournalism in the United States” starting in the 1930s and ending around the 1980s.<sup>93</sup> Mieth became a staff photographer for *LIFE* magazine in the 1930s and Hagel documented Franklin Roosevelt’s campaign.<sup>94</sup> Otto went on to freelance for *LIFE* and *Time* magazines, among others. Hagel and Mieth maintained a friendship with Wildenhain and visited Pond Farm often, producing several photographs of Pond Farm and of Wildenhain.

Wildenhain invited Trude Guermonprez to join her at Pond Farm, and Trude began teaching weaving in 1949. Guermonprez had been taught by Bauhaus-trained artists, and she became a prominent weaver and teacher. She taught at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland for several years, where she also chaired the crafts department, and she completed many private commissions. In 1970 she received the Craftsmanship Medal from the American Institute of Architects.<sup>95</sup> She was considered an important leader in the creation of the Bay Area textile art scene. Guermonprez’s work is held at the Chicago Art Institute, the Oakland Museum, and the Cooper Hewitt, among others.

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<sup>86</sup> (Ries is generally known as Victor Ries, but the “Viktor” spelling occurs in this brochure.)

<sup>87</sup> Dimitroff, Lucienne Bloch. “A Pond Farm Portfolio.” In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, by Schwarz Dean and Schwarz Geraldine (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007)

<sup>88</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology* 2007)

<sup>89</sup> (The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life n.d.)

<sup>90</sup> (LeBaron, Untitled article 1979)

<sup>91</sup> (Sonoma County Museum 2007)

<sup>92</sup> (de Young Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco 2013)

<sup>93</sup> (Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona n.d.)

<sup>94</sup> (Arizona Archives Online n.d.)

<sup>95</sup> (OAC: Online Archive of California n.d.)



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### ***Comparison to Associated Properties***

Art colonies in the United States rarely occurred in conjunction with apprenticeship-style schools. Most art colonies were informal or planned gatherings of artists, typically painters, seeking inspiring views and the company of other artists. Some offered residency programs for established or emerging artists. The four experimental art schools or planned colonies that have some similarity to Pond Farm Workshops were begun in the 1930s and their period of activity continues to this day for two of the schools.

Pond Farm Workshops was planned as a permanent colony of artists who would also teach students in an intensive program, melding everyday life with the pursuit of art while providing hands-on experience. In the early twentieth century, other examples are few, but they provided important new models. Similar to the Workshops, although not the same, were Black Mountain College in North Carolina, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin Fellowship. As with Pond Farm Workshops, all emphasized apprenticeship and hands-on learning, and promoted the importance of mastering craft. Black Mountain and Cranbrook had several European immigrant instructors.

Black Mountain College began in 1933 and closed in 1957. The school was owned and administered by faculty who believed in the "integration of learning with work, community and recreation" in a creative and unstructured environment.<sup>96</sup> Similar to Pond Farm Workshops, the rural setting and informal lifestyle was combined with an emphasis on self-reliance and hands-on apprenticeship. European immigrant artists became faculty members, bringing European skills and philosophies to bear. Joseph Albers, an artist who had been on the faculty of the Bauhaus, was an instructor. Another instructor was the German textile artist Trude Guermonprez, who left Black Mountain in 1949 to teach at Pond Farm Workshops. Marguerite Wildenhain was invited to teach at Black Mountain in 1952, and had already decided to dedicate her efforts to Pond Farm Pottery.<sup>97</sup>

Cranbrook Academy of Art became a leading graduate program. The first Cranbrook school was founded in 1904 by Detroit philanthropists George and Ellen Booth. The art academy opened in 1932, and the school blended the philosophies of the Arts and Crafts movement with contemporary modernist ideas about design. Eliel Saarinen, a Finnish architect, and Maija Grotell, and influential ceramist, were both European immigrants who taught at the school. The founders, who died in the 1950s, wanted to create an American version of the Bauhaus.<sup>98</sup> The school remains in operation today.

The Taliesin Fellowship was begun in 1932.<sup>99</sup> It primarily served as a training ground for architecture students who worked for Frank Lloyd Wright, and other arts instruction was also included. Students were exposed to the tasks of design as well as construction, going so far as to quarry stone for projects. Students also performed tasks associated with running a school, such as cleaning and gardening. The founder died in the 1950s, and the Fellowship remains in operation today.

Pond Farm Workshops attracted artists who continued, past the short life of the Workshops, to make an impact across the state, part of a continuum of activity by artists that established California as an important center for the arts.

Pond Farm Pottery was unique as a school in that other influential ceramics instructors were associated with universities or colleges. Gertrud and Otto Natzler taught pottery at their studio when they first

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<sup>96</sup> (Harris 2010)

<sup>97</sup> (Benfey 2012)

<sup>98</sup> (Schweinberg 2012)

<sup>99</sup> (Taliesen: Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture n.d.)

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arrived in 1938 for a period of about three years.<sup>100</sup> Pond Farm Pottery is a rare instance of a privately operated pottery school. Students came to the school to participate in summer workshops, spreading the Pond Farm Pottery methods and philosophies across the country.

The presence of the original kick wheels, based on Bauhaus designs, is remarkable, and appears to be unique in the United States.

### **Criterion B: Association with Marguerite Wildenhain**

Wildenhain was one of the few nationally prominent ceramists of her time, and one of the few successful female ceramists in a field that was dominated by men during that time. She was a nationally significant ceramics teacher and spokeswoman, influencing generations of potters. Prominent among a group of highly influential immigrant ceramists, these immigrants introduced methods and philosophies that helped to elevate both the position of the craft and the quality of the work. Her teaching, philosophy, and artistry had national influence in the development of the Studio Pottery Movement. The movement initiated a trend in ceramics that remains prominent today.

Wildenhain produced a large and impressive body of work, from dinner and tea services for mass production to very personal and individual pieces. Before WWII, Marguerite Wildenhain established a strong and enduring reputation in Germany as a young woman designing modern dinnerware. She was the first woman to receive Master Potter status in Germany, having mastered both technique and aesthetics. According to Dr. Katja Schneider, Wildenhain's work remains very well known in Germany; Schneider wrote: "The best documented examples are her designs for the Staatliche Porzellan Manufaktur in Berlin which made her the most successful female designer of the twenties, under her maiden name of Friedlander."<sup>101</sup> Her *Hallesche* designs of 1930 for Royal Berlin Porcelain Manufacture were elegant, simple, and mostly plain white. They were considered a remarkable and highly influential development at the time.<sup>102</sup> Wildenhain developed between fifty and sixty models for manufacture.<sup>103</sup> Her designs have remained influential some eighty years after they were created.<sup>104</sup> She is listed in the *North American Women Artists of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical Dictionary* as a major influence in studio pottery.<sup>105</sup>

Wildenhain arrived in the United States as a very successful ceramist trained at the famous Bauhaus. She was renowned for her functional ware designed for mass production, but she continued to explore and develop other methods of expression. Initially she was interpreted as a strict functionalist who was limited to early Bauhaus methods.<sup>106</sup> In reality, she was already stepping out of the Bauhaus box before arriving in the United States, and she was steadily moving to more plastic, personal, and abstract expressions.

As early as 1940, she was noted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a notable designer whose activity "... animates the modern spirit and makes it a vital and progressive force. It does not even seem ridiculous to say that one might build a home around a Wildenhain dinner- or coffee-set which would inevitably conform to their perfect proportion and balance."<sup>107</sup> In 1941,

<sup>100</sup> (Levin, *A Critical Community for Clay: Millard Sheets and the Impetus of 2012*)

<sup>101</sup> (Schneider 1998)

<sup>102</sup> (Kittel 2007)

<sup>103</sup> (Levin, *The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain* 1997)

<sup>104</sup> (Winnicke 2007)

<sup>105</sup> (Heller and Heller 1995)

<sup>106</sup> (Clark 1979)

<sup>107</sup> (University of Utah Extension Division 1955)

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Wildenhain's work was described by Dr. V.A. Middeldorf, Chairman of the Art Department at the University of Chicago this way, "This is the first showing of modern pottery which is as good as the best of Chinese and Japanese. I say this without the slightest exaggeration."<sup>108</sup>

In 1947, Wildenhain published an article about pottery in the prestigious *Arts & Architecture* magazine, already establishing herself as a spokesperson for ceramic arts.<sup>109</sup> She maintained an international presence, even as she shifted from her Bauhaus factory-forms, and was featured in a 1948 article in the British *Pottery and Glass* magazine as one of the "outstanding exponents of hand-made pottery today."<sup>110</sup> Wildenhain also worked to educate the public about ceramics, speaking at schools and universities, as noted elsewhere, but she also spoke and demonstrated her techniques at various venues around the county, including clubs, art centers, museums, fairs and festivals. Her clippings collection in the Archives of American Art show she was a guest on television shows (in Salt Lake City in 1953, and Great Falls in 1954), and she was interviewed by newspaper columnists in several states. These interviews were sometimes featured in the "Ladies" sections of the newspaper, and her clippings collection shows several images of Wildenhain explaining how to create, or appreciate, a pot to groups of potter hobbyists. She was also featured in popular magazines, such as the 1954 *House Beautiful* magazine and the 1957 *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. In 1954, she was named "Outstanding West Coast Potter of the Year" at the Scripps Ceramic Exhibition.<sup>111</sup> That same year she visited the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana, then went on to give talks in Duluth and Lawrence, Kansas.

Wildenhain's reputation as an artist was widely known and respected, even during the 1960s boom in Funk ceramics. As many observers of ceramics write, the Funk movement in ceramics would not have taken place without the Studio Pottery Movement and the acceptance of ceramics as a fine art.<sup>112</sup> Dr. Billie Sessions wrote: "Marguerite was awarded the Charles F. Binns Medal in 1958. This is not only Alfred University's highest honor but a national honor as well. She was one of seven women honored in the 37 year history (1926-1962) of the award. In 1982 Marguerite Wildenhain was selected by the readership of *Ceramics Monthly* as one of the twelve foremost living ceramists in the country."<sup>113</sup> Her work has been shown in approximately fifty museums in the United States as well as internationally.<sup>114</sup>

Trained to design for mass production, she moved into individually-crafted functional wares, and then moved further away from function to create strictly sculptural pieces. She developed a distinctive and original style, using glazes that spoke of natural elements. Wildenhain's pioneering work was unusual for a woman. During her European career she was in a small minority of female ceramists, and this remained the case when she came to the United States. The surprise some felt at Wildenhain's success was sometimes expressed as Wildenhain being bossy, or having male qualities.<sup>115</sup> These attitudes reinforced the unusual idea at the time that a woman could be a strong, outspoken, and independent artist. The trend of men dominating the field

<sup>108</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology 2007)

<sup>109</sup> (Wildenhain, Pottery 1947)

<sup>110</sup> (Pottery and Glass 1948)

<sup>111</sup> (Guerneville Potter Wins Top Award as "Outstanding Ceramist" 1954)

<sup>112</sup> In 1954, Marguerite was invited to the famous Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana. She was alarmed by the "anything goes" aesthetic prevalent there, but important Funk ceramists Peter Voulkus and Charlie Counts recognized her influence. (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>113</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>114</sup> (Schwarz & Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology, 2007)

<sup>115</sup> (Sorkin 2012)

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continued in the United States after WWII due, in part, to the effect of the GI Bill. Charles Talley wrote:

Together with Herbert Sanders of San Jose State Teachers College (now San Jose State University) and Anthony Prieto of California College of Arts and Crafts, Wildenhain formed a trio of teacher-mentors whose pioneer work laid the aesthetic, technical and instructional ground for the explosion of creative vitality in the Bay Area that followed the enactment of the GI Bill. But Wildenhain was of an altogether different breed from the post-World War II generation. She had come to the United States as a mature adult, steeped in European culture and ceramics tradition. She was also one of the few women to attain an international reputation in the midst of the dominant soldiers-turned-artists. Still, she avoided the flourishing post-war academic and artistic scene in order to create her own self-sustaining world at Pond Farm.<sup>116</sup>

Pat Kirkham, author of *Women Designers in the USA, 1900-2000: Diversity and Difference* included Wildenhain as an influential artist/ceramist thus:

The history of women ceramics designers in twentieth-century America is a complex and varied one. It encompasses the "roots," which Marguerite Wildenhain identified in her spirited riposte to Bernard Leach, and it has been enriched by the "thousand parts" which she claimed as a characteristic of America. Wildenhain and other women of her generation, such as Mary Scheier, Gertrud Natzler, and Maija Grotell, established a number of powerful precedents for how women could engage with the art, design, and craft of ceramics. They, along with numerous other women, including those working in industrial ceramics, such as Eva Zeisel, Belle Kogan, and Edith Heath, worked to challenge the gender divisions that had existed in American ceramics by integrating form and decoration in the different contexts of the Arts and Crafts movement, studio pottery, and modernism. Subsequent generations... have benefited from their example, and they in turn have questioned the nature of the clay, the function of the pot, and the meaning of decoration.<sup>117</sup>

Wildenhain's achievements were nationally and internationally recognized in her time and her work remains highly collectible today. In 1980 her work was the subject of a retrospective exhibition initiated by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art in Cornell. The show was also exhibited at the Oakland Museum in California and the Mint Museum of Art in North Carolina. In the exhibition catalog, ceramist Richard B. Petterson was quoted:

In variety, in freshness and vitality, Marguerite's ideas showed how ample the horizons of ceramic art really were. Her forms were western, in the very best sense: some classic, others almost peasant in form, still others purely sculptural. The ones with decoration pointed to ways of achieving surface pattern with intriguing textures and stylized forms from nature, completely unlike the... brushwork of the Japanese. And to me the best all, everything she did was an object lesson in the integration of pottery with Nature: her clay bodies interfused with her glazes to become one; her colors, textures and decorations were object lessons in the beauties to be found also in Nature, delights to eye and hand

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<sup>116</sup> (Talley 1991)

<sup>117</sup> (Kirkham 2000)

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alike. Looking back, I feel now, as I did then, that Marguerite Wildenhain was one of the best influences that has happened to American Ceramic Art.<sup>118</sup>

### ***A nationally significant teacher***

According to ceramics author and educator Dr. Billie Sessions, Wildenhain was “a paramount ceramic educator in the United States” whom few have equaled.<sup>119</sup> Wildenhain’s reach as an educator was not limited to her summer classes at Pond Farm Pottery. She visited colleges and universities around the United States to lead workshops and seminars. She published books and articles. She spoke at symposia and conferences, and gave workshops at exhibits and clubs across the country. She was articulate, and held a depth of knowledge that was considered notable at that time.<sup>120</sup> Her education was extensive and wide-ranging; she was intimately familiar with the depth and breadth of European art, both ancient and modern, which enabled her to work and to speak to her students with the panorama of European art and history behind her. This was unusual in the United States at this time, and was a revelation and inspiration to her American students. Wildenhain was also deeply passionate about her subject and this made an impact many former students still emphasize today. A lasting influence stems from her insistence on complete dedication to the craft and her determination that truth to materials and form could result in pottery that was rightfully considered a fine art.

Pond Farm Pottery quickly emerged as an important school in the 1940s, and remained a prominent center for studio pottery through the 1970s. In 1980, the Wildenhain retrospective exhibition catalog stated: “The internationally known Pond Farm Pottery School has attracted students from as far away as China, India, Lebanon, and Nigeria. No other craft school in the United States has had greater cultural significance, or has done more to elevate standards in the field of pottery.”<sup>121</sup>

Pond Farm Pottery summer workshops were legendary. Many years Wildenhain heard from hundreds of applicants, some with advanced degrees from universities in ceramics. Many students returned for several sessions, and others who achieved proficiency visited regularly for a critique.<sup>122</sup> Wildenhain usually taught around twenty students each summer. Beginning students gradually worked through a set repertoire of forms and were required to master each form before moving on to the next form. Most students studied throwing and some produced coil-built or sculptural pieces. In the early years of the school Wildenhain taught some glazing and fired a few student pieces. Eventually student work was not fired, with most broken up and returned to be recycled.<sup>123</sup> Pots were cut while they were still soft to analyze form and wall thickness. Wildenhain believed students should not become too attached to their early efforts, and to become even a competent potter, thousands of pots had to be created. Wildenhain advised her students to learn glazing elsewhere, even though she was very knowledgeable about glazes.

In 1952, Richard Petterson, ceramics instructor at Scripps College, invited Wildenhain to be a guest teacher at a seminar.<sup>124</sup> This began a long tradition of traveling around the country where she gave one or two week intensive workshops and demonstrations, influencing untold numbers of students throughout the United States. She averaged a month of workshops every year, visiting most states.<sup>125</sup> Schools included the most prestigious ceramics programs in the United States, including Alfred University,

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<sup>118</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>119</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>120</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>121</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>122</sup> (D. Schwarz, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>123</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>124</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>125</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

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Scripps College, and many well-known state universities with strong ceramics programs. "...Wildenhain made numerous workshop appearances throughout the United States (in all but two states), demonstrating her remarkable skill at the potter's wheel and voicing her philosophy of art and life as one."<sup>126</sup> She spoke at symposiums for teachers, hoping to persuade them to teach pottery with the same degree of devotion and demand that she employed. Wildenhain also authored several articles and spoke at conferences. She was a key figure as a speaker at Dartington Hall in England in 1952, and in 1963 she was the keynote speaker for the National Art Education Association conference.<sup>127</sup>

Wildenhain made an impression when she arrived at a school to give a demonstration. Val Cushing, a prominent and noteworthy ceramist and professor at Alfred University, described the effect Wildenhain had on many of the students:

"Marguerite came into town in faded blue jeans with a handful of pottery tools wrapped up in a cloth and stuck in her back pocket. Right from the start I was enchanted by her... She was such an incredible inspiration. She was the embodiment of strength, conviction, skill, talent, discipline and leadership... She worked with us, ate with us, drank with us, danced with us and dreamed idealistic dreams with us; and became a model for me of what one could do in live with talent, energy, motivation and a resolve to dedicate oneself. Her skills as a potter were overwhelming. I had not seen anyone who could handle idea, process, and material, and their relationship to the creative process in the way that she could. In 1952 no one could touch Marguerite as the 'total' potter."<sup>128</sup>

### ***Influential Immigrant Ceramist – Methods, Techniques, and Philosophies*** ***Immigrant Ceramist***

Wildenhain was among the few highly influential ceramists who arrived in the United States in the middle part of the twentieth century, bringing more sophisticated techniques and aesthetic theory at a time when American ceramists were reaching the limits of their technical and theoretical skills.

#### ***Methods and Techniques***

Among Wildenhain's national contributions to the development of ceramics in the United States was the design and use of her kick wheels, as well as her throwing techniques. According to historian Elaine Levin, Wildenhain "had entered a time warp in California, where hand building preoccupied American potters because potter's wheels were not widely available. Word of her throwing skills spread quickly, bringing many aspiring potters... to learn how to throw and to build kick wheels similar to Marguerite's."<sup>129</sup> Wildenhain's reputation for throwing pots on a wheel was widespread, and many aspiring potters, as well as experienced artists, made the journey to learn her technique. Other ceramists, such as the important ceramist and teacher Laura Andreson of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), learned some of this technique from Wildenhain indirectly by sending students to learn the technique from Wildenhain.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> (Johnson and Sessions 2005)

<sup>127</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>128</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>129</sup> (Levin, The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain 1997)

<sup>130</sup> (Levin, The History of American Ceramics: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms, 1607 to the present 1988)

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The prominent American potter, Carlton Ball, taught throwing, but claimed to have improved his throwing technique after watching Wildenhain at work at a San Francisco event.<sup>131</sup> Gertrud Natzler was an Austrian immigrant teaching and practicing in Southern California during this time. She also used, and sometimes taught, European throwing techniques. Gertrud and her husband, Otto, produced an impressive body of work and they were widely respected for their teaching and mentoring. However, it was often stated that anyone who wanted to master the potter's wheel needed to make the journey to Pond Farm Pottery to study with Wildenhain; it was considered a rite of passage for studio potters and for ceramics instructors. The ceramics artist and educator Daniel Rhodes wrote: "Her approach to the potter's wheel... was a revelation to American potters, most of whom were clumsy and inept at throwing."<sup>132</sup> According to ceramics historian Elaine Levin, Wildenhain's and Natzler's influences are directly tied to a major switch from the use of hand-building and molds to the use of kick wheels.<sup>133</sup>

Kick wheels in general use in the United States in the 1940s were very clumsy devices that used a treadle. According to ceramist and teacher Dorothy Herger, traditional American wheels required one to stand and operate a heavy flywheel at an awkward angle.<sup>134</sup> Wildenhain introduced to the United States both the specific wheel she used, as well as sitting to throw. According to scholar Billie Sessions, the method of sitting with the wooden seat slightly higher than the wheel came from the ancient German technique she learned from Max Krehan.<sup>135</sup> This technique was a tremendous improvement over American methods. Wildenhain's kick wheel was unusual. She insisted on specific materials and dimensions. The wooden wheel head is 10" wide and nearly 3" thick- unusual in both dimensions and material. The design came from the Bauhaus, but Wildenhain made some minor modifications to it, using a smaller wheel head.<sup>136</sup>

Wildenhain also introduced methods of centering, throwing, raising, and finishing pots that captured people's attention. She used very simple tools; when she traveled to other schools to teach, students were always struck to see her stride in with a few basic tools in her back pocket. As Val Cushing described her methods, there was the simplicity of her tools, her method of centering the clay on the wheel, and her method of creating pots with very thin walls. She used a tool called a rib both on the inside and outside of the pot as she pulled up the form, which was not common. This helped her achieve exceptionally thin walls. She also used slip (slip provides color and finish) and texture in a way that seemed inevitable to the piece; it did not simply sit on the surface as a decoration.<sup>137</sup> She encouraged experimentation, but within the long tradition of pot making.

Textures, colors, and forms found in nature were constant sources of inspiration for Wildenhain. "The ambience of Pond Farm contributed to Wildenhain's interest in textures. She was attracted not to glazes, as was Otto Natzler, but to abstract, tactile patterns often inspired by pine cones and tree bark."<sup>138</sup> A newspaper interview described her process this way:

From nature I have learned my best lessons in firing," she told us. Nature with her many unwritten laws has turned fire loose on rocks and minerals and produced wondrous colors. She studies these phenomena and through her knowledge of chemistry, minerals and firing processes she reproduces

<sup>131</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>132</sup> (D. B. Sessions, "Ripples", Marguerite Wildenhain and her Pond Farm Students 2002)

<sup>133</sup> (Levin, A Critical Community for Clay: Millard Sheets and the Impetus of 2012)

<sup>134</sup> (Herger, Interview with author 2009)

<sup>135</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>136</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>137</sup> (Cushing 2007)

<sup>138</sup> (Levin, The History of American Ceramics: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms, 1607 to the present 1988)

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time after time a onetime act conjured up by nature either in delight or fury. Hence the reason the Wildenhain pottery possesses a glaze that looks not like something applied to the surface of a pot but as if it and its base had forever been 'one.'<sup>139</sup>

#### *Ethos, Expression and Craft as Art*

True to her Bauhaus education, Wildenhain taught mastery of the craft as the essential first step to creative artistic expression. She also strongly believed in the necessity of an ethos. These ideas were quite at odds with the teaching of the era, throughout the United States. Through her workshops, writing, and personal example she maintained the Bauhaus ideals of truth to materials and attention to form; these were ideals that had far-reaching effects in the American Studio Pottery Movement. She was noted for her insistence on making the human expression visible in the work.<sup>140</sup> To this end, she also taught her students to produce work without trimming it, believing that the direct form thrown on the pot was more expressive.<sup>141</sup> She explained that technique alone was insufficient; that beautiful pots spoke of the potter's inner qualities; that life and work were indivisible and therefore each must be undertaken with utmost dedication and integrity. Her philosophy, and the evidence of it in her life and work, inspired passion among her students; some spoke of Pond Farm as a way of life.<sup>142</sup>

Wildenhain published several articles and she wrote three books about many aspects of her craft, including inspiration, education, and her travels throughout the world: *Pottery: Form and Expression*; *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts*; and *That We Look and See: An Admirer Looks at the Indians*. Her books were also important touchstones for potters. According to the ceramic artist Judy Weedon, "We stumbled upon the name Marguerite Wildenhain from her books *Pottery: Form and Expression* and *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts*. There were not many books about pottery in those days, other than a few 'how- to' books. For people wanting to make pottery their life, Marguerite's books were rain on thirsty ground. The Marguerite mystique was born in our souls from reading these books."<sup>143</sup>

#### *Comparison to Fellow Ceramists of the Studio Pottery Movement*

**Figure 8** charts information on country of origin, teaching location, and synopsis of skills.

#### *Comparison to Associated Properties*

Influential immigrant studio potters and teachers of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s include Paul Bonifas, Maija Grotell, Gertrud and Otto Natzler.

Bonifas was from Switzerland and settled in Seattle in the 1930s. He taught at Washington University until 1959. His influence in the United States would not be considered extensive. Available literature does not state if Bonifas kept a studio separate from the workspace at the university.

Grotell emigrated from Finland in 1927 and taught at Cranbrook. She was noted for her skill on a treadle-style wheel, the beauty of her forms, and her experimentation in glazes and textures. She worked in the studio at Cranbrook.

<sup>139</sup> (Gregg 1946)

<sup>140</sup> (Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* 1973)

<sup>141</sup> (McIntosh 2007)

<sup>142</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>143</sup> (Weedon n.d.)



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The Natzlers emigrated from Vienna in 1938. They taught pottery in their studio space for a short time until they could establish themselves as studio potters. Of these ceramists, the Natzlers may be considered as significant as Wildenhain since Gertrud Natzler also introduced a kick wheel and had a major influence the development of technique and philosophy, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s. The Natzlers purchased a home in the Hollywood Hills in 1949 that is extant. Gertrud died in 1971, and Otto remarried and remained at the house. Otto passed away in 2007 and his wife, Gail, remains at the house. The house has been remodeled over the years and it is not known at this time if that property retains integrity. Due to the circumstance of Pond Farm Pottery remaining in place following Wildenhain's death with so few changes, similar examples may not exist.

Pond Farm Pottery is the only property in the United States that is closely associated with Marguerite Wildenhain. Wildenhain arrived in the United States in 1940 and stayed for a short time in New York, San Francisco, and North Carolina before settling at Pond Farm in 1942. She remained on the property until her death in 1985.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information

#### *Wildenhain Biography*

Marguerite Friedlaender was born near Lyon, France, in 1896. Her father, Theodor Friedlaender, was born in Berlin. He was a silk merchant who traveled extensively. Marguerite was raised in a well-educated and influential family.<sup>144</sup> Wildenhain's mother, Rose Calman, was English and was raised in Germany. The family heritage was Jewish, but they were secular.<sup>145</sup> As a child, Friedlaender attended schools in Lyon, Berlin, and Yorkshire. When she was 17, she attended the Berlin School of Applied Arts and later studied sculpture, porcelain decoration, and pot-throwing.<sup>146</sup> In 1919 she was one of the first students to join the Bauhaus, and she was the first female to join the Bauhaus ceramics school in Weimar.<sup>147</sup> Bauhaus students at this time began by taking preparatory classes at the Weimar school before apprenticing in pottery. The pottery school was established in Dornburg at the Krehan Pottery works, a centuries' old family workshop.<sup>148</sup> There Friedlaender experienced the Bauhaus method of intensive instruction from two instructors, one versed in craft (the *Werkmeister*) and one versed in art, or form (a *Formmeister*).<sup>149</sup> Her instructors were a Master Potter, Max Krehan, and a Master Sculptor, Gerhard Marcks.<sup>150</sup> Her intensive education included technical, mechanical, and business aspects of producing and marketing pottery, both for individual, hand-thrown work and for machine production. Students were expected to master their craft and to completely incorporate that knowledge in order to create original work that was thoughtful and modern.

Friedlaender was the first woman in Germany to achieve Master Potter status; she was awarded the title in 1926.<sup>151</sup> She was made the head of the German State Arts and Crafts School in Burg Giebichenstein where she established an excellent reputation for her work and that of the school. Friedlaender re-

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<sup>144</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology 2007)

<sup>145</sup> (Rosen 2007)

<sup>146</sup> (Winnicke 2007)

<sup>147</sup> (Minnesota 1988)

<sup>148</sup> (G. Schwarz 2007)

<sup>149</sup> (Anderson, Bauhaus and the Crisis of Modernism, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007) 2007)

<sup>150</sup> Both men exerted tremendous influence on Wildenhain. Krehan died in 1925. Wildenhain retained a close relationship with Marcks until his death in 1981

<sup>151</sup> (Wildenhain, Archives of American Art Interview, Transcript 63 1982)

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organized and then ran the ceramics workshop at Burg Giebichenstein between 1926 and 1933.<sup>152</sup> She recalled, “Halle had become the first place in which the principles of the Bauhaus had been put to the test... Soon Burg Giebichenstein was to be known all over Europe for the high quality of its craft work.”<sup>153</sup> In January of 1929 the work exhibited under and by Friedlaender received very high praise, and it is notable that even at this stage Friedlaender’s work and that of those learning from her showed the qualities of artistic integrity and beauty that she became known for in the United States, even though her American work has a very different character.

During this time, Burg Giebichenstein entered into an agreement with Royal Berlin Porcelain. Friedlaender oversaw the designs of several production lines for Royal Berlin. The results were highly regarded.<sup>154</sup> The Royal Berlin porcelain designs from this era were also significant in the United States. Dr. Billie Sessions pointed out that they made a “big splash” due to Friedlaender’s use of modern and streamlined forms that were quite different from current popular styles. She was noted then as an important and influential ceramist.<sup>155</sup>

Friedlaender’s work in Holland began to reflect forms, textures, and materials in nature. She received *Grand Prix* for a porcelain tea and dinner service at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937.<sup>156</sup> She received a second place prize for a pottery piece in the same exhibition.<sup>157</sup>

Marguerite Friedlaender married fellow potter Frans Rudolf Wildenhain in 1930 and they worked together at Burg Giebichenstein.<sup>158</sup> Because of her Jewish ancestry, Nazis forced her to leave her teaching job. She moved to Holland in 1933 and set up a new pottery; Frans followed a short time later. It wasn’t long before they established an international reputation for the quality and beauty of their work. In 1940, Marguerite Wildenhain made the difficult decision to emigrate from Holland after the Nazis invaded the country.<sup>159</sup> Having been born in France, she could get a visa, but Frans could not.<sup>160</sup> She left Holland on one of the last Dutch ships to depart the war-time harbor March 3, 1940.<sup>161</sup> She was 43 years old that spring and had established an excellent reputation as a potter and as a ceramics designer in Europe. She would lose contact with her husband for three years; it would be seven years before they were reunited.

Upon arrival in the United States, Wildenhain stayed with her brother in a small apartment in New York City, and tried to find work for herself and for Frans, but was not successful.<sup>162</sup> She traveled by bus across the United States to California to join American acquaintances she had met in Holland in 1939, Gordon and Jane Herr. Wildenhain was distantly related to Jane Herr.<sup>163</sup> The Herrs had made the trip to Europe to network with artists and craftspeople. They hoped they might persuade some to come to the United States and join them in an effort to establish a school where craftspeople could live, work, and teach and they invited the Wildenhains to join them. According Gordon’s son, Jonathon Herr, “Gordon’s

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<sup>152</sup> (Wildenhain, Archives of American Art Interview, Transcript 63 1982)

<sup>153</sup> (Kittel 2007)

<sup>154</sup> (Kittel 2007)

<sup>155</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>156</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>157</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Personal Correspondence 2008)

<sup>158</sup> (Levin, *The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain* 1997)

<sup>159</sup> Any reference to “Wildenhain” refers to Marguerite Wildenhain and Frans Wildenhain is referred to by his first and last name.

<sup>160</sup> (Levin, *The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain* 1997)

<sup>161</sup> (Steele T. T., *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge*, 1992)

<sup>162</sup> At that time, had Wildenhain secured work for Frans, he would have been allowed to emigrate.

<sup>163</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology* 2007)

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vision for Pond Farm was a sustainable sanctuary for artists away from a world gone amuck.”<sup>164</sup> The Bauhaus was one model that inspired the Herrs, and the Wildenhains’ approach to work and life was very appealing to Gordon and Jane. At the time of Gordon’s visit, the Wildenhains were not interested in emigrating, but they had kept in contact and the Herrs reiterated their invitation for Wildenhain to join them when they learned of her plight.

Meanwhile, the Herrs had purchased land above the town of Guerneville, approximately seventy miles north of San Francisco. The Herrs moved to the land and began serious preparations to implement their vision. Wildenhain was interested in this vision, and her interest in private education increased after she had the experience of teaching pottery classes at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.<sup>165</sup> She had taken the job “in absentia” on behalf of her husband, Frans, seeking to gain his admission to United States. It was a distressing experience for her, and she rejected the typical American school approach to teaching the craft of pottery.<sup>166</sup>

Wildenhain made several visits to Pond Farm and relocated there, joining Gordon and Jane Herr, in 1942.<sup>167</sup> When Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm, there was no place for her to live. For a time Wildenhain camped on the property, then she moved into a small room in the barn.<sup>168</sup> She and Gordon, who was an architect, modified the old livestock barn the Walkers had built by tearing out interior partitions and stalls. Wildenhain recorded that they “put in a new floor, cut in new windows, put up new partitions and doors, re-roofed the old broken roof, and leveled a place for the kiln-room.”<sup>169</sup> They added a flat-roofed packing area to the side of the barn to store materials. Gordon added a two-story prow-shaped addition to the front of the barn. He and Wildenhain added the wood floor that retains the original slope.<sup>170</sup> He used part of the new addition for a studio, and Wildenhain used part of the barn as a studio/workshop and installed kick wheels and a kiln. Wildenhain’s kick wheels became the first examples of the modified Bauhaus wheels that became closely associated with Wildenhain and Pond Farm.<sup>171</sup> Wildenhain helped Herr construct her small cabin on the property and began producing pottery.

In 1946, she won first prize for a tea set in the 11<sup>th</sup> Ceramic National competition.<sup>172</sup> She sold her work at galleries in San Francisco, Chicago and Dallas.<sup>173</sup> In 1947, after only a few years in the United States, her work was featured in a show at the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>174</sup>

Wildenhain had lost touch with her husband, Frans, for much of WWII. After the war ended, Marguerite earned her citizenship and brought Frans to the United States.<sup>175</sup> In 1947, Frans Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm to join the colony as a teacher. Gordon Herr remodeled Marguerite’s cottage, enlarging it. Other artists also arrived to teach at the site, many to live at the site, and the school was underway.

<sup>164</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology 2007)

<sup>165</sup> (Levin, The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain 1997)

<sup>166</sup> (D. B. Sessions, Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance 1997)

<sup>167</sup> Wildenhain also traveled to North Carolina during this period on the promise of a job that did not materialize (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>168</sup> (Kath 1991)

<sup>169</sup> (T. T. Steele, School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge 1992)

<sup>170</sup> (Potthast 1982)

<sup>171</sup> (D. B. Sessions 2000)

<sup>172</sup> (Tigerman 2011)

<sup>173</sup> (Levin, The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain 1997)

<sup>174</sup> (Miller 1990)

<sup>175</sup> (Levin, The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain 1997)

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Between 1949 and 1953, Wildenhain was one of several artists and artisans who taught summer classes as part of Jane and Gordon Herrs' Pond Farm Workshops. Pond Farm Workshops were widely acclaimed. Unfortunately, temperamental personalities doomed the school. Frans Wildenhain did not stay long, and by 1950 he had moved to the East Coast. They divorced in 1951. After the death of Jane Herr in 1952, Gordon lost interest in the enterprise and drifted away, and others also left. By the spring of 1953, only Marguerite was left.<sup>176</sup> She traveled to Europe for four months, and decided to return to Pond Farm to resume her life and career. Wildenhain began Pond Farm Pottery, advertising six-week summer pottery courses, and she continued to produce wares, as she had done since 1943.

While in Holland, Wildenhain began to explore surface decoration abstracted from nature, incising, hatching and carving into the surface of the pots. This exploration increased at Pond Farm. She developed subtle glazes, preferring colors found in nature.<sup>177</sup> In the 1950s, she began to incise figures on her pots. After a trip to Peru in the 1960s, she began to create pots that contained sculptural representations of people she saw on her travels, creating highly personal, expressionistic figures. Her explorations produced innovative and influential results. The style of her work fell somewhat out of fashion in the 1970s as funk and abstract expressionism movements in ceramics took center stage, yet she remained a well-respected ceramist.

Throughout her tenure at Pond Farm Pottery, Wildenhain taught intensive summer workshops and traveled to teach her technique throughout the country as a guest teacher. She was an active member of the American Craft Council for several years and was named, with sixteen others, as a Fellow of ACC in their initial induction.<sup>178</sup> During the 1950s she received several accolades and became known as a strong advocate of American ceramics. In a much-publicized exchange with the influential British ceramist Bernard Leach, she persuasively defended the emerging American tradition that resulted from its multi-ethnic society.<sup>179</sup> After she had established herself in the United States, she again received international recognition and acclaim. Wildenhain published three books: *Pottery: Form and Expression* (1962), *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* (1973) and *That We Look and See* (1980). In 1981, *Ceramics Monthly* readers selected Wildenhain as one of the "world's greatest living potters or ceramic artists."<sup>180</sup> Wildenhain exhibited her work throughout the country, and her work continues to be collected and displayed.

In 1963 the State of California forced the purchase of several hundred acres of land to expand the recreation area; the Herr and Wildenhain properties were part of the purchase. Wildenhain was allowed to remain, as a tenant, until her death on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1985.<sup>181</sup> The barn/studio, Wildenhain's house, and her guest cottage remain as potent reminders of Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery.

### ***Property History – Overview***

Prior to homesteaders settling this land, Pond Farm and environs are believed to have been within the territory of the Kashaya Southwestern Pomo. The Kashaya were small in number. According to Russian accounts there were about 1,200 in the early 1800s. They lived in semi-permanent villages and camped on

<sup>176</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>177</sup> (D. B. Sessions, "Ripples", Marguerite Wildenhain and her Pond Farm Students 2002)

<sup>178</sup> (Shaykett 2012)

<sup>179</sup> (Levin, *The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain* 1997)

<sup>180</sup> (Morphis 1999)

<sup>181</sup> (Petterson 1977)

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the ridges surrounding Pond Farm when travelling on trading expeditions. Large, prehistoric occupation areas are located throughout the vicinity, and lithic scatters are located on the Pond Farm Pottery site.<sup>182</sup>

Settled by Leonidas Walker, and later inherited by John and Eva Walker, Walker Ranch was purchased by Jane and Gordon Herr for development as Pond Farm Workshops. In 1956, Marguerite Wildenhain purchased several acres from Gordon Herr for use as Pond Farm Pottery. Gordon retained title to his remaining land until it was purchased by California State Parks in 1963.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Also Known As</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Area</b>
1875	Rancho Del Lago	Walker Ranch	Leonidas Walker, inherited by John and Eva Walker	160 acres received as land patent
1939 1942, 1947- 1948	Initial land purchase, family home built and agricultural buildings remodeled for Pond Farm Workshops; additional land purchased up to 1948.	Pond Farm	Gordon Herr and Jane Brandenstein Herr	160 acres, plus additional lands adjacent and elsewhere
1955 and 1956	Pond Farm Pottery land purchased. Herr sold additional land.	Pond Farm	Marguerite Wildenhain	7.83 acres total, a section of what had been the Pond Farm Workshops <sup>183</sup>
1963- 1965	Austin Creek State Recreation Area (ACSRA)	Pond Farm – MW leased what had been her land from State until her death in 1985	State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation	5, 683 acres, includes Herr and Wildenhain land; extant barn/studio spans all three uses

***Walker Era History***

The property was acquired by land patent in 1875 by Leonidas Walker. The family lived on the land prior to that date. The Walkers initially owned 160 acres, and added to the land in 1876. They called their land Rancho Del Lago.<sup>184</sup> John and Eva Walker eventually inherited the ranch from Leonidas Walker. Over the years, the generations of Walkers raised cows and sheep, but seem to have maintained a small operation. They had two orchards. Sometime in the 1870s, they constructed the barn that later became the Pond Farm Pottery studio space. They constructed a house and small sheepherder’s cabin, along with a hay barn, chicken coop, ice house, wells, cisterns, and various outbuildings.<sup>185</sup> Many of these buildings were converted into housing or studio spaces for Pond Farm Workshops.

***Herr Era – Pond Farm Workshops***

In 1939 John and Eva Walker sold most of their property to Gordon and Jane Herr. The Herrs bought the land with the intention of creating an experimental art colony; it was not until after WWII that they succeeded in this goal. The Walkers originally retained a one-acre portion of land that contained their house, just north of the Pond Farm Pottery property. Water was supplied by cisterns on the hill just west

<sup>182</sup> (Parkman, Senior State Archaeologist, 2012)

<sup>183</sup> (Resources Agency of California 1968)

<sup>184</sup> (Herr 2007)

<sup>185</sup> (Parkman 2007))

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of the road, across from the farm property.<sup>186</sup> In 1940 Gordon designed and built a small house for his family. This house was finished in 1942 and was located a short distance northwest of the Walkers' farmhouse.<sup>187</sup> In that same year, with the assistance of Marguerite Wildenhain, Herr remodeled the barn into a studio. He also designed Wildenhain's one-room cottage which Wildenhain helped construct. John Walker died in 1944 and a year later Eva sold her remaining portion of land to the Herrs. The Herrs named the main property for a fish-shaped pond created by the Walkers.

During WWII, the Herrs practiced farming. After the war they and Wildenhain persuaded some European artisans to relocate to Pond Farm to participate in the Pond Farm Workshops. In 1947 and 1948, the Herrs acquired additional property, including two adjoining parcels near the southern entrance to Armstrong Woods State Natural Reserve.<sup>188</sup> This became the location of the Hexagon House and student cottages. According to the Herrs' son, Jonathan Guthrie Herr, Jane and Gordon eventually owned 400 acres.<sup>189</sup> In the late 1940s, Gordon designed and assisted in the construction of the Hexagon House to accommodate meetings, classrooms, and visiting faculty, and it had a gallery to sell work produced at the Workshops. He added eleven cottages, known as the butterfly cabins for the shape of the roofline, as student accommodations.

Gordon continued to remodel the agricultural buildings on his property for use as school workshop spaces, art studios, and living spaces. Wildenhain and Gordon enlarged Wildenhain's house, per Gordon's design, adding a bedroom, sitting room, bathroom, and mud porch. Potter Frans Wildenhain, metalworker Victor Ries, and weaver Trude (Jalowetz) Guermonprez arrived in 1949 to begin teaching.<sup>190</sup>

Pond Farm Workshops was active between 1949 and 1953. Jane Herr died in 1952.<sup>191</sup> She had provided funds and organizational skills for the school. The school's functions collapsed due to Jane's death, but also due to disagreements about the management of the school. By the time the school had closed, everyone but Marguerite Wildenhain had left the property. In 1956, Gordon sold Wildenhain the property containing the barn, shepherd's cottage, and the Wildenhain house. He also sold the land containing the Hexagon House and cottage, as well as other parcels. He continued to own the land containing his house and the Walker house, as well as that around the pond, until the property was acquired as part of the creation of Austin Creek State Recreation Area, beginning in 1963.<sup>192</sup> Buildings north of the Pond Farm Pottery property, including the Walker farmhouse, a chicken barn that had been converted to a pottery and weaving studio, the Herrs' house, and various other small buildings and agricultural outbuildings, were demolished by State Parks, beginning in 1964.<sup>193</sup>

### ***Wildenhain Era – Chronology of the Property***

Wildenhain visited Pond Farm several times before moving to the property. In her book *The Invisible Core*, she described it thus:

One had to go through a redwood state park to get there, and then in sharp hairpin turns 600 feet up to a plateau that lay open to the south and had a backdrop of higher hills behind it. There was an old farmhouse with palm trees and a dilapidated, old, traditional

<sup>186</sup> (J. G. Herr, *Love, Because Nothing Else Matters* 2007)

<sup>187</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>188</sup> (T. T. Steele, *Hexagon House: Home to Pond Farm Workshops* n.d.)

<sup>189</sup> (Herr 2007)

<sup>190</sup> (D. B. Sessions, *Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance* 1997)

<sup>191</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>192</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>193</sup> (Parent, Personal Communication 2012)

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western barn, nothing more, at first sight. But when I climbed the hills, I could see the elongated pond in form of a fish and yet higher hills all around. It was wild, steep country, just one generation away from the Indians who used to bathe their horses in the pond, on their way from the volcanic area of Lake County to the Coast, there to exchange obsidian arrowheads for fish, etc. For me as a European, as I was then, this was fantastic coming from Lyon, a town that had had a 2,000-years jubilee as a Greek settlement! Here everything was new, fresh, and nearly untouched by human hands, virgin land and uncharted mountains. Here one could make history!<sup>194</sup>

In 1942 when Marguerite Wildenhain moved to Pond Farm there was not a suitable dwelling for her, so she camped outdoors for much of the summer. After Wildenhain assisted Gordon Herr in remodeling the barn and constructing her one-room cabin, she immediately began improving the property, building a series of low rock retaining walls, hauling manure and planting vegetables, fruit trees and shrubs.<sup>195</sup> The constant pressure of livestock and deer required that Wildenhain install a wire fence around her studio and her garden. Water for the house and garden was pumped from Fife Creek and stored in wooden tanks.<sup>196</sup> Later, a well was dug and water piped to the studio and cabin.

Wildenhain was an active member of the Pond Farm Workshops for its short duration, 1949 to 1952. Following the failure of the Workshops, Wildenhain continued producing wares and teaching summer sessions at the property. In 1956, after Wildenhain purchased land from Gordon Herr, she added a section of wood fence around the northern end of the property and installed the Pond Farm Pottery sign over the auto entry.<sup>197</sup> She had been using the converted chicken house as a studio and she moved the potter's wheels from the chicken house, on Herrs' property, to the larger studio in the barn and added additional kick wheels.<sup>198</sup>

Wildenhain made it a point to use the land around the barn as an extended classroom. Class discussions often took place on the low stoop/bench at the southwest corner of the barn. Behind the barn, a barbecue, curved seat bench, wood L-shaped bench, and arbor-covered area were used by Wildenhain and her students. She sent the students out into the wider landscape, within and beyond the Pottery enclosure, to sketch from nature and observe natural forms, colors and textures. As noted by Elaine Levin, "Wildenhain was an avid hiker. The trail walks in the local mountains and the farm that housed her studio inspired her surface designs, which reflected the textures and patterns of plants as abstractions of a form or as a rhythmic pattern of leaves."<sup>199</sup>

In 1962, Wildenhain hired architect Albert Lanier to remodel her house and to design the guest house. This building took the place of the shepherd's cottage. The following year the State of California forced the purchase of several hundred acres of land to create Austin Creek State Recreation Area, and the Herr and Wildenhain properties were part of the purchase. The purchase of Wildenhain's property was completed in 1966. By that time the Herr buildings had been demolished. Wildenhain was allowed to remain, as a tenant, until her death.<sup>200</sup> Wildenhain continued to teach and work at the property. She

<sup>194</sup> (Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* 1973)

<sup>195</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>196</sup> (G. H. Steele 2007)

<sup>197</sup> Wildenhain also authored several articles and spoke at symposia and conferences. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, she was invited to speak at Dartington Hall in England in 1952, and in 1963 she was the keynote speaker for the National Art Education Association conference

<sup>198</sup> (Herger. Interview 1989)

<sup>199</sup> (Levin, *A Critical Community for Clay: Millard Sheets and the Impetus of 2012*)

<sup>200</sup> (Pettersen 1977)

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installed a second kiln in a separate structure in the 1970s. Wildenhain taught her final summer workshop in 1980. The barn/studio, Wildenhain's house, and her guest cottage remain as potent reminders of Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery.



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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # HALS CA-95

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: California Department of Parks & Recreation; Archives of American Art

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** California, 5446-5 (1982)

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 35 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.552171 N | Longitude: -122.999991 W |
| 2. Latitude: 38.548901 N | Longitude: -122.999991 W |
| 3. Latitude: 38.548901 N | Longitude: -123.003547 W |
| 4. Latitude: 38.549568 N | Longitude: -123.004647 W |
| 5. Latitude: 38.552171 N | Longitude: -123.004539 W |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The northern and eastern boundaries are those of one of the forty-acre sections owned by the Herra, that included the pond for which the property is named, and their buildings, no longer extant. The southern boundary is the southern edge of the Wildenhain property as surveyed in 1955. The western boundary follows a 690' elevation contour to meet the northern boundary.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Historic District boundaries encompass all of the Wildenhain-owned property, as well as the surroundings that were critical to her work and philosophy. She believed nature was the source of everything one needed to learn about form, and encouraged her students to study and draw landscape features regularly. Wildenhain found inspiration in pattern, color, and texture in this environment. The natural environment also provided resources, and remnants of the orchard and gardens are within the boundaries. Seclusion was important to the artist, reinforced by distant views and natural sounds. The tall hills and trees that ring the district boundary provided her a feeling of privacy and shelter. The boundaries include the essential landscape features and spatial qualities associated with Pond Farm, including the pond for which the property was named, the plant variety, the views, and the surrounding hills.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Janet Gracyk  
organization: Terra Cognita Design & Consulting  
street & number: 145 Keller Street  
city or town: Petaluma state: California zip code: 94952  
e-mail: gracyk707@gmail.com  
telephone: (707) 695-9360  
date: April 2012, Revised April 2013, December 2013

*Assistance provided by Christopher Corey, Laura Parent, and John Fraser, California State Parks, and Anthony Veerkamp, National Trust for Historic Preservation*

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Pond Farm Pottery Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Guerneville  
County: Sonoma  
State: California  
Photographer: Janet Gracyk  
Date Photographed: varied, between 07/07/2012 and 12/18/2013, as indicated individually  
Photos Total: 39  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, with view indicating direction of camera:

1. Barn/Studio. Front or west façade (03/27/2013)
2. Barn/Studio. South side (12/18/2013)
3. Barn/Studio. Rear or east view (12/18/2013)
4. Barn/Studio. North side (03/27/2013)
5. Barn/Studio. Interior, view to east of main studio (12/18/2013)
6. Barn/Studio. Interior, view west of showroom (12/18/2013)
7. Barn/Studio. Interior, foyer view to east (12/18/2013)
8. Barn/Studio. Interior, view to west in south studio (03/27/2013)
9. Barn/Studio. Interior, view of kiln in kiln room (03/27/2013)
10. Wildenhain House. Front or west façade (12/18/2013)
11. Wildenhain House. South side (03/27/2013)
12. Wildenhain House. Rear or east view (12/18/2013)
13. Wildenhain House. North side (03/27/2013)
14. Wildenhain House. Interior, view to west of kitchen (03/27/2013)
15. Wildenhain House. Interior, view to north of bedroom (12/18/2013)
16. Guest House. Front or south façade (07/07/2012)
17. Guest House. East side (12/18/2013)
18. Guest House. Rear or north view (12/18/2013)



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19. Guest House. West side (12/18/2013)
20. Guest House. Interior, living room, view to the southwest (12/18/2013)
21. Kiln Enclosure. Front or south side (12/18/2013)
22. Kiln Enclosure. Rear or north view (12/18/2013)
23. Barbecue behind barn. Side, view to south (12/18/2013)
24. Barbecue behind barn. Detail, view to north (12/18/2013)
25. Curved seat behind barn. View to northeast (12/18/2013)
26. Curved seat behind barn. Detail of front, view to east (12/18/2013)
27. Curved seat behind barn. Detail of top (12/18/2013)
28. Paving with embedded pottery shards. View to south (07/07/2012)
29. Paving with embedded pottery shards. Detail at front door of house showing "Little Jug" insignia (11/25/2013)
30. Herr property and pond. Parking area with Walker and Herr era plants visible, view to northeast (12/18/2013)
31. Herr property and pond. Remnant concrete wall on Herr property (12/18/2013)
32. Landscape elements. Automobile gate. Re-creation of original sign (07/07/2012)
33. Landscape elements. Arbor in front of main house with small brick barbecue and garden plants visible, view to north (03/27/2013)
34. Landscape elements. Concrete bridge with pedestrian gate visible in the background, view to west (12/18/2013)
35. Landscape elements. Along road showing fence, view to the south (12/18/2013)
36. Landscape elements. Remnant orchard trees on the hill north of the Pottery, view to the east; Walker palm tree is visible in the distance (12/18/2013)
37. Pond. To the south; pond is dry (11/25/2013)
38. Setting. From hill showing property and distant hills looking southeast (12/18/2013)
39. Setting. Ridge east of the property, Herr property in the foreground (11/25/2013)

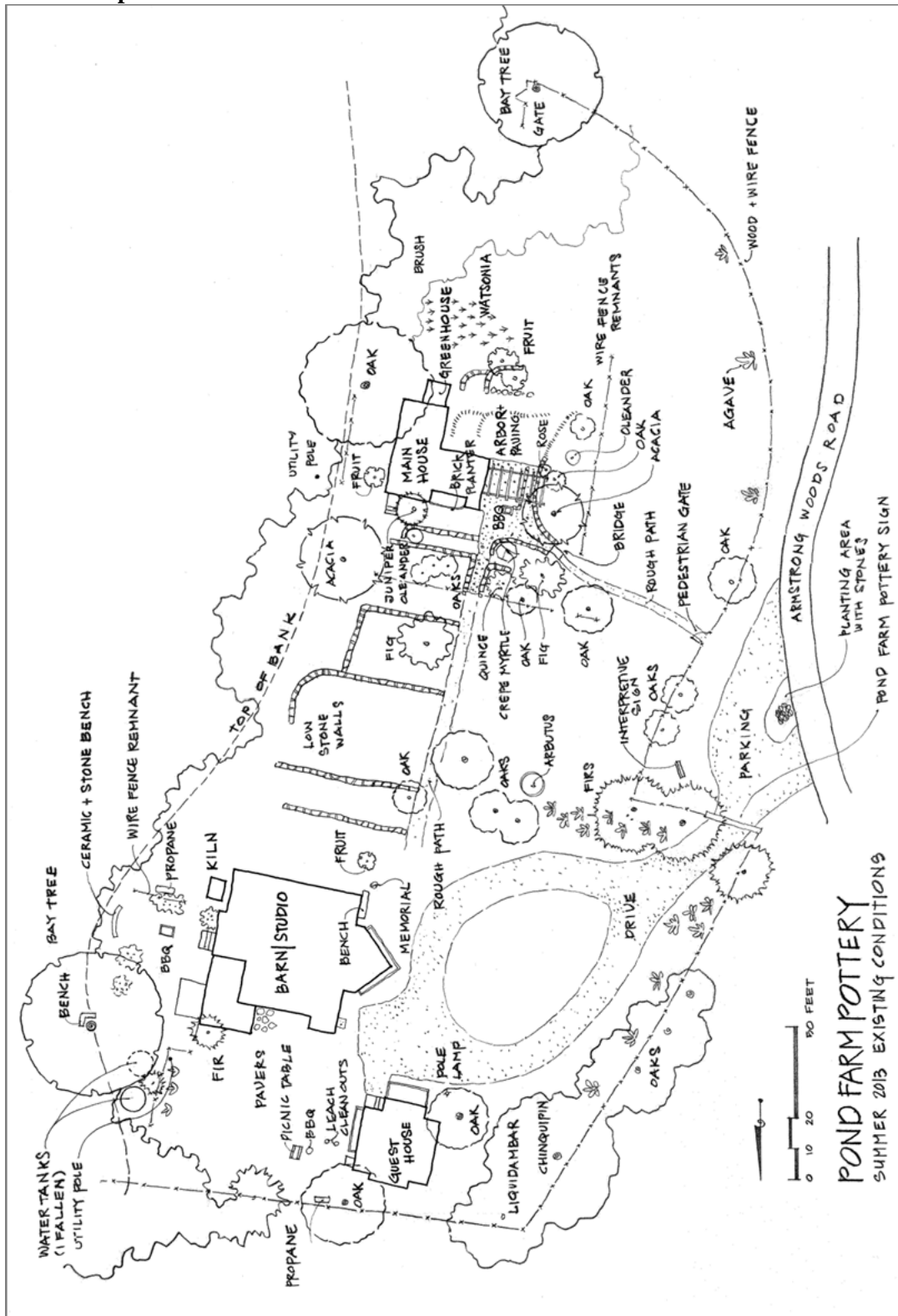
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Sketch Map



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Photo Key Part 1 of 2

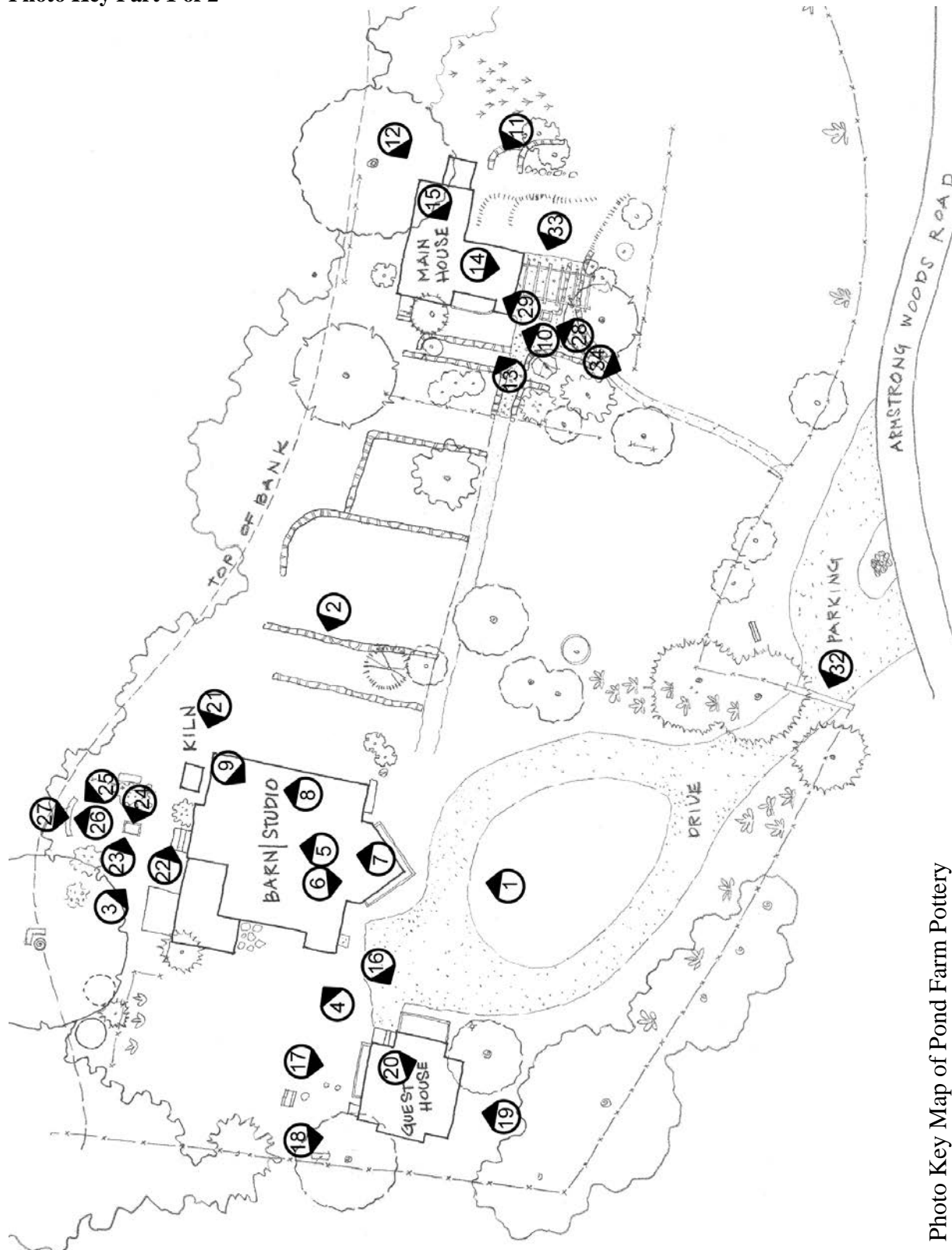


Photo Key Map of Pond Farm Pottery Historic District, showing the area of the Pottery. Photo numbers not on this page are located on the following page.

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**Photo Key Part 2 of 2**

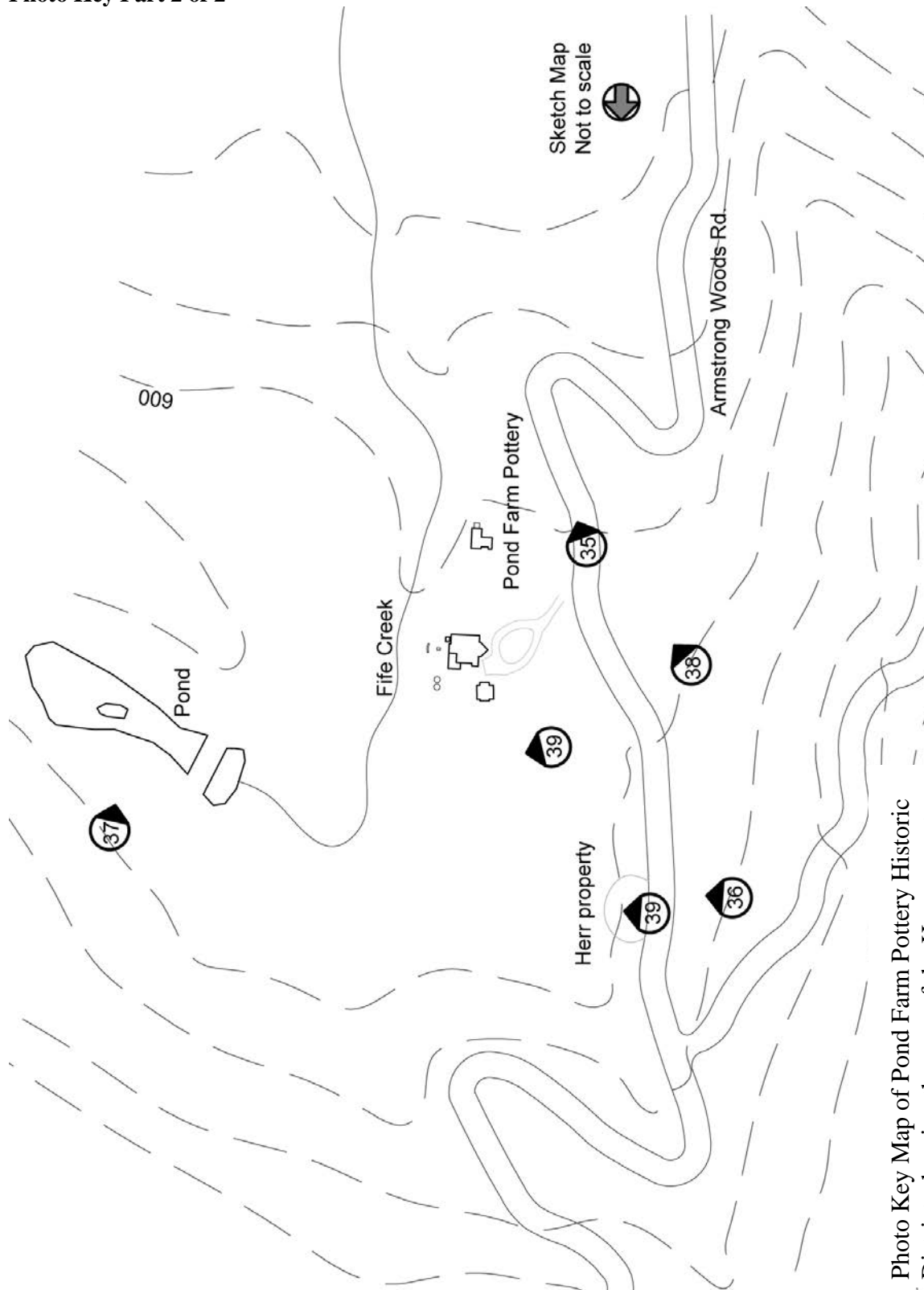
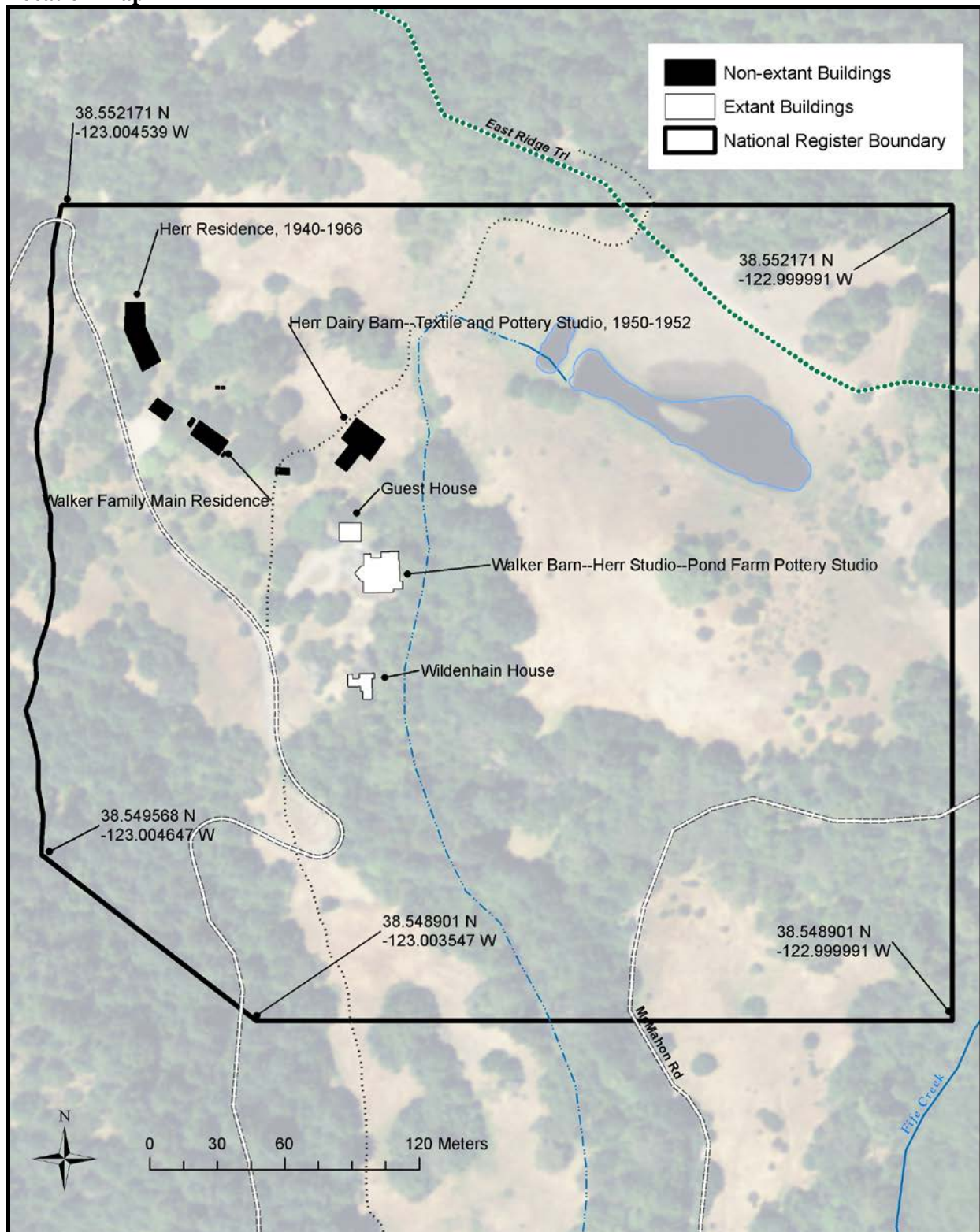


Photo Key Map of Pond Farm Pottery Historic District, showing the area of the Herr property. Photo numbers not on this page are located on the previous page.

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### Location Map



Courtesy Archaeology, History and Museums Division, California State Parks, February 18, 2014

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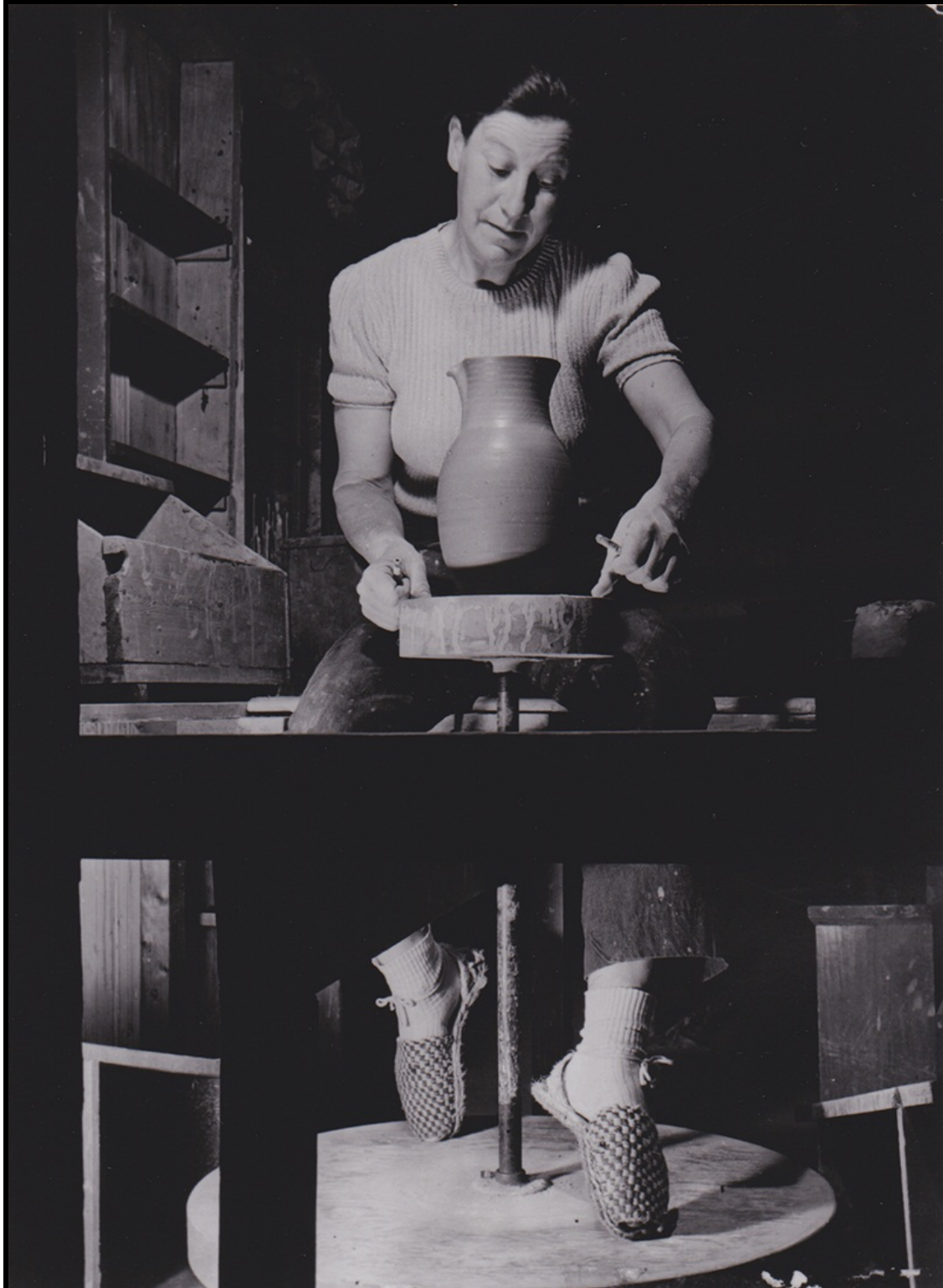
**Figure 1. Ceramics by Marguerite Wildenhain, displayed in the south studio. View to the west, with Wildenhain standing near the door to the adjacent room. 1956. Photo by Otto Hagel, used with permission of the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.**



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**Figure 2. Marguerite Wildenhain working at her kickwheel at Pond Farm Pottery. 1958. Photo by Otto Hagel, used with permission of the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.**



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**Figure 3. Interior of the main studio at Pond Farm Pottery. View to the east, taken from the second floor showroom, showing students and their work. Unknown date. Photo by Otto Hagel, used with permission of the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.**





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**Figure 4. Marguerite Wildenhain addressing her students. Pond Farm Pottery and the studio/barn are visible in the distance. View to the southeast. 1952. Photo by Otto Hagel, used with permission of the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.**



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**Figure 5. Outdoor arbor area with packing shed in the background. Arbor not extant. No date, unknown photographer. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.**



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**Figure 6. Showroom located above the entry vestibule, containing examples of Wildenhain's work. No date, unknown photographer. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.**



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**Figure 7. Wildenhain house, main entry, view to the southeast. Part of the arbor and table are visible to the right. Date of 1959 marked on the slide, photographer unknown. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.**



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**Figure 8. Ceramists of the early Studio Pottery Movement**

Name	Country of Origin	Teaching	Synopsis of skills
Andreson, Laura	United States	UCLA 1936-1970.	Slab and coil at first. Known for bold glaze experimentation. Explored stoneware then porcelain. Influenced by Natzlers. Influenced by Wildenhain's techniques, via students who studied with her.
Baggs, Arthur E.	United States	1905 managed, later owned, Marblehead Pottery, a production studio. Ohio State University 1928-	Leader in the postwar American ceramics field, experimented with techniques and glazes suitable for production and industry. Studied under Binns. He was awarded the Charles F. Binns Medal in 1928 in New York.
Ball, Carlton	United States	California College of Arts and Crafts. Mills College 1940-	Built his own wheel following news of M. Wildenhain's throwing skills and taught himself to use it. A prominent educator with strong technical skills.
Binns, Charles Fergus	Great Britain	Established New York State School of Clay-Working and Ceramics (now New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University) 1900-1931.	Created stoneware pots in the Arts and Crafts style. Experimented with clay bodies and glazes. An admired instructor. <i>"He influenced and indeed probably caused the advancement of the American studio pottery movement both by the creation of his own unique glazed stoneware vessels and even more importantly by his enthusiasm for teaching others about the balance between art and science..."</i> (Alfred.edu)
Bonifas, Paul	Switzerland, emigrated in 1934	Washington University, Seattle, 1934-1959.	A European modernist. Created sculptural forms and unusual enamel glazes. Hand building and use of molds and forms. Did not use a wheel.
Grotell, Maija	Finland, emigrated in 1927	Henry Street Craft School 1929-1938. Rutgers 1939 to (?). Cranbrook Academy 1936-1964.	Materials research. Threw on a stand-up treadle wheel. Worked in the school studio after classes were over for the day. Received a Charles Fergus Binns medal in 1961. Helped propel ceramics into the world of fine arts. Leader in the postwar American ceramics field.
Haile, Samuel	Great Britain	Alfred University, 1940; University of Michigan 1941.	In the United States for a short time, Haile's simple, strong forms and glazes, combined with surface painting, was considered a radical departure in the United States at that time.
Harder, Charles Mabry	United States	Alfred University 1936-1958.	Succeeded Binns at Alfred University. Revised the Alfred program to emphasize industrial ceramic design; desiring to establish a strong American aesthetic by incorporating Bauhaus principles to the American systems and tastes, and developing a philosophy of ceramics. Consulted with industrial design potteries, such as Russell Wright and Enfield Pottery and Tile Company.
Heino, Vivika and Otto	United States	Vivika - 1940s at League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts, then University of Southern California in 1952. Chouinard School of Art	The Heinos maintained a studio near the school where they made and sold pottery. The venture was successful, considered unusual in the 1950s, which showed students it was possible to make a living as a potter. Otto created glazes that became famous. Vivika did teach privately at their studio. She is

Pond Farm Pottery Historic District  
Name of Property

Sonoma, California  
County and State

Name	Country of Origin	Teaching	Synopsis of skills
		in 1955. Rhode Island School of Design 1963-1965, thereafter worked as production potters.	considered to have helped redefine the studio pottery movement by the example of her delicate, functional work. Wheel thrown and architectural production.
Karnes, Karen	United States	Black Mountain College, 1952-1954, as an artist in residence. Taught for short periods of time in her private studio	Influenced by Hamanda and Leach. Learned to throw on a wheel in Italy. Known as a strong craftswoman.
Leach, Bernard	England	Visited the United States, did not live in this country.	Exposed contemporary American potters to Japanese folk pottery traditions. Lectured at Alfred in 1950, then elsewhere. His "A Potter's Book" was a breakthrough publication in the 1940s. Leach is also important in the British Studio Pottery Movement.
Lukens, Glen	United States	University of Southern California, chaired new ceramics department in 1933.	Used a treadle wheel. Initiated the first college-level classes in ceramics on the West Coast. Experimented with glazes. Generally used forms. Instrumental in advancing ceramics education. Wrote important early books on technical aspects of ceramics. Early emphasis on production and industrial methods, gradually moved to a more expressive use of clay. Awarded Charles Fergus Binns medal in 1949.
MacKenzie, Warren and Alix	United States	University of Minnesota, 1952-	Studied with Leach and Hamada and were influenced by Korean ceramics. Took pride in producing functional wares.
Manker, William	United States	Scripps College, 1935-1947.	Established the ceramics department at Scripps, important in advancing ceramics education. Maintained a studio in Claremont, CA.
McIntosh, Harrison	United States		Studied with Glen Lukens, Petterson and Wildenhain. Began making ceramics in 1940.
McKinnell, James and Nan	United States	Colorado, 1950s, then Archie Bray Foundation, then several other schools. Settled in Ft. Collins.	Kiln experimentation. Glaze experimentation. They produced work separately and also collaborated on work. Nan studied under Bonifas at the University of Washington.
Natzler, Gertrud and Otto	Austria, emigrated in 1938	Did do a little private instruction in their own studio.	Gertrud introduced a European-style wheel which they brought from Austria. Natzler's wheel influenced Laura Andreson, as well as others. Gertrud threw forms which Otto glazed. Otto experimented with glazes, developing unusual colors and finishes. After Gertrud's death in 1971, Otto experimented with slab forms.
Petterson, Richard	Born in China to American parents	Scripps College, 1947-1975, with a three year appointment to Taiwan to promote arts.	Studied with Andreson. Promoted individually crafted pottery through the Annual Invitational Ceramic Exhibitions at Scripps, which were presented in magazines nationwide. Invited Wildenhain, among others, to lead workshops at Scripps.
Poor, Henry	United States	Taught art at Stanford, 1911-1916; San	Advocated an expressive use of clay after he began exploring ceramics in the 1920s. Maintained a studio

Pond Farm Pottery Historic District

Sonoma, California

Name of Property

County and State

Name	Country of Origin	Teaching	Synopsis of skills
Varnum		Francisco Art Association 1917	in New York for many years. Noted as a painter, sculptor and ceramist.
Prieto, Antonio	Spain	California College of Arts and Crafts, 1950-1967.	Thrown forms with abstract surface designs.
Randall, Ted	United States		Designed a fly wheel copied by many potters.
Rhodes, Daniel	United States	Alfred University, 1947 to 1973. University of California, Santa Cruz, 1977-1980.	Cast and thrown work early on. Influenced by Leach, moved to more abstract work. Later produced sculpture. Noted author on ceramics techniques.
Sanders, Herbert	United States	San Jose State College 1938-(?). School for the American Craftsmen 19(?) Returned to San Jose State College in 1951. Spent 2 years studying Oriental ceramics. Retired in 1974.	Glaze experimentation. In 1951, received first Ph.D. in ceramics (Ohio State). Wrote and lectured, advanced the idea that potters were artists. Worked in the school lab.
Scheier, Mary and Edwin	United States	Glade Spring Pottery, Virginia, in 1930s. Both at University of New Hampshire, 1940-1961.	WWII, Edwin in Army Air Corps, Mary took over ceramics department. 1947, Mary took a top prize at the Ceramic National Exhibition - "Best designed piece of pottery suitable to mass production." Edwin also won a prize. In 1966, moved to Mexico.
Senska, Frances	Born in Cameroon to American parents	Montana State University, established ceramics department, 1946-1973.	Studied under Grotell at Cranbrook. In 1950 attended the Pond Farm Workshops summer school. One of the founders of the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, MT.
Hamada, Shoji	Japan		Visited the United States with Bernard Leach, demonstrating his skills and Korean and Japanese folk pottery traditions, which had a lasting effect on the Studio Pottery movement.
Singer, Susi	Austria	Educated at the Wiener Werkstatte in Austria. Arrived in the U.S. in 1939.	Hand-modeled earthenware figures, considered influential in later 1970s sculptural developments in ceramics.
Soldner, Paul	United States	Scripps College, 1956-Otis Art Institute	Developed a Raku-style firing, and other firing techniques. Thrown forms. Used plywood forms. Kept a studio at his home in Aspen. Developed a kick wheel.
Voukos, Peter	United States	Resident artist at the influential Archie Bray Foundation. Black Mountain College in 1953. Established ceramics programs at Otis Art Institute 1954-1958 and at the University of California,	Wheel-thrown forms in early years, developed into constructed and abstract forms that brought ceramics into Funk Ceramics and Abstract Expressionism, or the American Clay Revolution. Voukos, among others, broke with studio potters in creating non-utilitarian forms. Voukos invited prominent ceramists to lead workshops at Archie Bray, including the McKinnells, M. Wildenhain, Ball, Leach and Hamada. Used his classroom as his workshop.

Pond Farm Pottery Historic District  
 Name of Property

Sonoma, California  
 County and State

Name	Country of Origin	Teaching	Synopsis of skills
Wildenhain, Rudolf Frans	Germany	Berkeley, 1959-1985. Rochester Institute of Technology, 1950-1970.	Wheel-thrown forms, individual pieces and production pottery, tiles, murals and sculptures. Maintained a private studio.
Wildenhain, Marguerite	France	California College of Arts and Crafts, 1940-1942; Pond Farm Workshops 1949-1953; Pond Farm Pottery 1953-1980	Small amount of production pottery in US; wheel-thrown forms, later sculptural tiles. Introduced Bauhaus throwing techniques and style of wheel. Noted for strong forms with integrated patterns and glazes. Guest lecturer around the country. Author and speaker. Nationally prominent, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s. Leader in the postwar American ceramics field.
Wood, Beatrice	United States	Happy Valley School in 1948 until 1990s.	Dancer and artist, began producing ceramics at 35 years old. Studied with Glen Lukens and the Natzlers. Maintained a pottery studio in the San Fernando Valley, and later in Ojai. Noted for her glazes.













farm pottery











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MILBURN FIRE CO. DENVER COLO. 1874

























NIGHT CRAWLER

HERBAL ESSENCE

























pond farm pottery

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National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pond Farm Pottery Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Sonoma

DATE RECEIVED: 5/01/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/20/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/04/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/17/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000307

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: Y  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

     ACCEPT         RETURN         REJECT                         DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Pond Farm Pottery Historic District is significant at the national level under National Register Criteria A and B, in the areas of Art, Education, and Social History. Conceived during World War II as a "sustainable sanctuary for artists," the Pond Farm Workshops and later the Pond Farm Pottery played an extremely influential role in the emergence of ceramics as an important twentieth-century art form under the guidance of internationally respected Bauhaus artist and educator Marguerite Wildenhain. As Wildenhain's home and studio, the Pond Farm Pottery was the focal point of her activities for a period of almost forty years. Wildenhain not only perfected her own innovative craft at Pond Farm, but perhaps more significantly the property was home to her summer workshops and teaching efforts, whose influence on a whole generation of post-war artists has been widely recognized and acclaimed. The artist/teacher also completed three influential books while a resident at Pottery Farm. Wildenhain's career has received significant scholarly recognition within the art world and she is widely acknowledged as one of the preeminent Masters of the twentieth-century Studio Pottery Movement, an exceptional artist, teacher, author, and mentor. The property meets Criteria Consideration G for its associations with Wildenhain and Pond Farm's exceptionally important role in twentieth century American art. As the story of a Jewish woman in a largely male dominated profession at the time, and a participant in the dramatic diaspora of Europe's intelligentsia during World War II, Wildenhain's life and career centered at Pond Farm offers exceptional insight into the social history of the mid-twentieth century art world.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criteria A+B

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignea      DISCIPLINE Historical

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 6/17/14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100  
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053  
calshpo@parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



April 29, 2014

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Pond Farm Pottery Historic District  
Guerneville vicinity, Sonoma County, California  
National Register of Historic Places Nomination**

Dear Ms. Shull:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Pond Farm Pottery Historic District** to the National Register of Historic Places. On April 22, 2014 in Pacific Grove, California, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and B at the national level of significance with a period of significance of 1942 to 1980.

Pond Farm Pottery is significant in the areas of Art, Education, and Social History for its association with the Studio Pottery Movement and ceramist and teacher Marguerite Wildenhain who lived, worked, and taught at Pond Farm. Pond Farm Pottery played an important role in the emergence of ceramics as an important art form. Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm in 1942 and concluded her active working life in 1980 with the last summer session, publication of her third book, and a retrospective exhibit of her work. She remained at Pond Farm until her death in 1985. The property meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for its strong association with the Studio Pottery Movement of the mid-twentieth century and the internationally significant contributions of Wildenhain, an exemplary ceramist who was an important female pioneer in ceramics and ceramics education.

The property is nominated on behalf of California State Parks. Russian River District Superintendent Elizabeth Burko supports the nomination, as does the California State Parks Division of Archaeology, History & Museums. Twelve letters of support have been received.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Amy Crain of my staff at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

Jenan Saunders  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

**Pond Farm Pottery Historic District**  
**Guerneville vicinity, Sonoma County**  
**Staff Report**

Pond Farm Pottery Historic District is a 35 acre rural property in the hills above the Russian River in Austin Creek State Recreation Area, Sonoma County, California. The most prominent building is the barn/studio, a two-story tall vernacular barn to which was added a prow-like entry. The nearby guest house is a one-story building just northwest of the barn. The modest one-story main house is downhill of the barn and is partially obscured by garden plants. Both one-story buildings are in the Second Bay Tradition of architecture. At one corner of the barn is a simple metal and wood structure that contained a kiln. Behind the barn are a handmade seat and a barbecue. In front of the house there is an area of paving embedded with pottery and stones. The barn and main house are vacant, and the guest house is used for State Parks staff housing. The property has a rustic appearance. The group of wooden buildings is surrounded by a rough fence and located just east of a winding, narrow road. A tributary of Fife Creek cuts into the gently rolling meadows behind the buildings. A pond, roughly fish-shaped, for which the site was named, is located east of the tributary in an area of open grass land. Wooded hills rise sharply in the distance, and on the west side of the road, creating a feeling of isolation. The west side of the road is also the location of an old orchard of which a few trees remain. The site of the former Herr complex, north of the extant buildings, is marked by garden plants, a remnant section of concrete paving and wall, and a small water catchment basin. The extant buildings, as well as large portions of the district, have changed little from the period of significance and as such retain a strong level of historic integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Pond Farm Pottery is significant under Criteria A and B at the national level of significance in the areas of Art, Education, and Social History for its association with the Studio Pottery Movement and ceramist and teacher Marguerite Wildenhain who lived, worked, and taught at Pond Farm. American ceramists of the 1940s and 1950s were in the early stages of a ceramics revolution that resulted in several developments in ceramics in the United States, including the emergence of the Studio Pottery Movement. During the first half of the twentieth century, European immigrant ceramists such as Marguerite Wildenhain introduced new arts and crafts skills, methods, and philosophies across the country. Her school, Pond Farm Pottery, played an important role in the emergence of ceramics as an important art form. Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm in 1942 and concluded her active working life in 1980 with the last summer session, publication of her third book, and a retrospective exhibit of her work. She remained at Pond Farm until her death in 1985. The property meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for its strong association with the Studio Pottery Movement of the mid-twentieth century and the internationally significant contributions of Wildenhain, an exemplary ceramist who was an important female pioneer in ceramics and ceramics education.

The property is nominated on behalf of California State Parks. Russian River District Superintendent Elizabeth Burko supports the nomination, as does the California State Parks Division of Archaeology, History & Museums. Twelve letters of support have been received to date. OHP staff supports the nomination and recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine the Pond Farm Pottery Historic District meets National Register Criteria A and B at the national level of significance with a period of significance 1942 to 1980 and satisfies Criteria Consideration G. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register.

Amy H. Crain  
State Historian II  
April 7, 2014



PAINTER  
PRESERVATION  
PLANNING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

April 7, 2014

California State Parks  
Attn: Office of Historic Preservation  
Ms. Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

**Re Pond Farm Pottery Historic District**

Dear Ms. Roland-Nawi,

I am writing to express my support for the Pond Farm Pottery Historic District nomination. As a long-time consultant in Sonoma County and former chair of the Sonoma County Landmarks Commission, I support the nomination of this property for its importance to Sonoma County. I also believe that listing State Parks properties in the National Register raises the profile of the important properties that State Parks stewards, and that this can only be beneficial in maintaining access to these important public resources.

I also applaud the depth of research and clarity of presentation in this nomination, something I have come to appreciate even more in my present position as National Register and Survey coordinator with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office in the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. I hope that this nomination will go forward.

Sincerely,

Diana J. Painter, PhD  
Owner/Principal architectural historian

Cc Yolanda Solano  
Sonoma County PRMD

Janet Gracyk  
Terra Cognita Design & Consulting

March 30, 2014

Dear National Register of Historic Places,

Concerning the nomination for Pond Farm Pottery Historic District, the following is why we believe that approving this site is important. We all know that Marguerite was a terrific ceramic Artist, famous even before she arrived in the United States. She was a wonderful teacher, writer and lecturer. She gave talks and seminars across the country. Her home and her studio, Pond Farm are legendary. Even today, thirty years after her death her name or the words Pond Farm sound a deep cord in the world of Art Education and pottery.

The reason, however, that we wrote this letter is to speak to the personal transformation she brought about in us, her students. Many of us were very young and just finding our way in life. Some were majoring in art or hoping for a career teaching, but many of us just wanted to learn more about pottery. We all expected a summer of pottery instruction and pottery making but did not expect a life changing experience. Marguerite was a stern taskmaster. She required and expected one hundred percent effort from each of us. She had the ability to read each student, their strength and their weakness, and pull the absolute best out of us. As the days became weeks, we saw tremendous progress as a result of constant practice and learning the Pond Farm techniques.

As we now realize, we learned so much more from this wonderful women. She not only taught us how to make a living as a potter, but how to live. She would read to us at coffee break on a wide range of topics; essays on nature, art criticism, philosophy, poetry, astronomy etc. She encouraged us to read, to think and to question. She spoke to us about our values, hopes and dreams and encouraged us to think deeply about what was important and to consider the things that truly give value to our lives. She not only spoke of these things but she lived them. She lived in a tiny humble cottage on a hillside in the wilds. She had a large library of books, beautiful art pieces and tasteful but simple furniture. She had a very special rock collection of unusual examples she had collected because of her deep interest in Geology. Each stone was labeled by name and the location where she found it. She kept a large garden with fruits, vegetables and flowers as well a cactus and succulents that had particularly interesting shapes. It was a surprise to us to see how such a famous Artist lived so simply. She lived her philosophy. Hers was a creative life committed to pottery, teaching and writing [ three books and many essays] while ignoring the things that do not give lasting value. For many of us this was life changing, we saw first hand the living result of such a creative life.

By making Pond Farm a National Historic site, it would restore and preserve this special place of learning and inspiration for future generations. The possibility of having this as a place for workshops and retreats for other aspiring artists and

teachers could only be a good thing. Pond farm should always provide a visible model of how one can live a life based on deep values and creativity.

Sincerely,

*Wayne Reynolds*

*Caryn Fried*

Wayne Reynolds and Caryn Fried

Valley of the Moon Pottery, Santa Rosa, CA.

## Crain, Amy@Parks

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**From:** Marianne Hurley (LPC) <mhurley@lpc.nyc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 9:50 AM  
**To:** Crain, Amy@Parks  
**Subject:** Pond Farm support letter  
**Attachments:** Carol Roland.docx

Hi Amy, attached is a support letter for Pond Farm. Do I also need to mail a hard copy? I am so happy it is coming before the commission. Hope all is well and the Jewish Community Center is moving along too. Marianne



**Marianne Hurley**

Landmarks Preservationist  
1 Centre St., 9<sup>th</sup> Fl. | NY, NY 10007  
p: 212.669.4869 | [mhurley@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:mhurley@lpc.nyc.gov)

Carol Roland-Nawi  
Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Historic Preservation  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, California 95816

March 31, 2014

Dear Carol,

I am writing in support of the Pond Farm Pottery Historic District application for designation and listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This Sonoma County property is significant as the home and workplace of Marguerite Wildenhain, a nationally recognized Bauhaus-trained ceramics artist, practicing within the Studio Pottery Movement.

I have visited the site on several occasions while working with the Russian River District of California State Parks, and had worked with Janet Gracyk, author of the nomination, during part of the research and writing phases. The final document reflects her exhaustive research and understanding of the various aspects of the cultural landscape, Marguerite's life, and her contribution to the history of this art form.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Hurley  
Landmarks Preservationist,  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission





**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

28 March 2014

Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Historic Preservation  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

BY EMAIL to [acrain@parks.gov.ca](mailto:acrain@parks.gov.ca)

Dear Dr. Roland-Nawi:

On behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the nomination of Pond Farm Pottery to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Trust believes that Pond Farm is a nationally significant historic property with enormous potential to teach and inspire the public.

Located in Austin Creek State Recreation Area near the Russian River community of Guerneville, Pond Farm was conceived during World War II by San Francisco couple Gordon and Jane Herr as a “sustainable sanctuary for artists away from a world gone amuck.”

Among the European artists invited to teach was Marguerite Wildenhain, an early Bauhaus graduate who fled Nazi persecution of Jews to start a new life in rural Sonoma County. While the Pond Farm Colony was short lived, Marguerite stayed until her death in 1985, teaching a nationally-renowned summer school at Pond Farm for three decades.

The National Trust has long considered Pond Farm to be one of the most significant and underappreciated historic sites in the California State Parks system. Our history of advocacy for its preservation dates back to 2001, when we invited the then newly appointed Chief of Cultural Resources at the Department of Parks and Recreation to tour the property.

As a result of that visit, DPR committed funding for a Historic Structure Report and HABS-format Historical Report that documented the property in detail, finding it to be significant for its association with “internationally renowned potter and ceramicist, author and teacher” Marguerite Wildenhain.

**San Francisco Field Office**

The Hearst Building, 5 Third Street, Suite 707 San Francisco, CA 94103

E [info@savingplaces.org](mailto:info@savingplaces.org) P 415.947.0692 F 415.947.0699 [www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org)

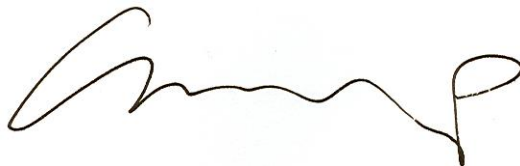
Unfortunately, a lack of funding and no clear plan for the future meant that Pond Farm continued to be managed in a state of arrested decay for another decade, leaving the property increasingly vulnerable.

In 2012, the National Trust named Pond Farm a “National Treasure,” and joined forces with the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, the California State Parks Foundation, and the Department of Parks and Recreation to transform Pond Farm into a preserved, well-maintained, and engaging historic site with strong community support and a sustainable management plan. DPR has shown its commitment to the long-term preservation of the property not only by supporting the property’s nomination to the National Register, but also by dedicating nearly a half million dollars for the stabilization of the property.

Pond Farm offers the opportunity to tell compelling stories in the history of art and arts education, women’s history, Jewish history, and above all a universal story of triumph in the face of adversity. Together with DPR and our partners, we intend to follow Marguerite Wildenhain’s example in overcoming adversity to “make something of lasting beauty and utility.”

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance will be invaluable in building the necessary public support to assure the long-term preservation of the site, cementing its place in our nation’s artistic heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Veerkamp', written in a cursive style.

Anthony Veerkamp  
Field Director

cc:

Liz Burko, Russian River District Superintendent, California State Parks  
Michele Luna, Executive Director, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods  
Elizabeth Goldstein, President, California State Parks Foundation  
Janet Gracyk, Terra Cognita Design & Consulting

**Crain, Amy@Parks**

---

**From:** Ragnar Naess <Ragnae@Earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2014 2:53 PM  
**To:** Crain, Amy@Parks  
**Cc:** Billie Sessions  
**Subject:** Pond Farm Pottery Nomination

RAGNAR NAESS  
NORTH RIVER POTTERY  
**107 HALL STREET BROOKLYN NY 11205**  
718-636-8608 [ragnae@earthlink.net](mailto:ragnae@earthlink.net) ragnarclay.citymax.com

**March 27, 2014**

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

Dear Carol Roland-Nawi:

I am pleased to add my voice to those urging inclusion of Pond Farm Pottery in the California and National Registries of Historical Places.

It is too easy for me to call up seminal experiences I had during three summer sessions studying pottery with Marguerite Wildenhain. The grounds and remaining buildings are sacred space to me personally. My own career in clay began and was profoundly shaped by our teacher and our groups of dedicated students studying on that beautiful mountainside.

I offer you background for a broader interest of the American public in Pond Farm's preservation. The following come to mind:

Narrowly measured, there are generations of potters working today whose world views and technical foundation can be traced to Wildenhain, regardless of their ultimate judgment of her vision and demands upon her students or the evidence of her hand in their work today.

More broadly one can find few real sites, places and buildings, which symbolize and bear witness to the diaspora of Europe's intelligentsia during the reign of the Nazis in Europe. There are bigger names - musicians, scientists, scholars- more widely known. But they did not go into mountain wilderness to start afresh, a paradigmatic American immigrant impulse, nor did most collaborate with founding families of California as did Marguerite Wildenhain and her little gang of Bauhaus refugees whose path was mentored by Jane Brandenstein Herr, (later Bransten- Martinson, Jameson and Bransten {MJ&B} coffee, among other things).\* Jane Herr's forebears were among the immigrant families making a new life in the wilderness as founders of the California gold rush economy.

Pond Farm is a tiny but material witness to an enormous phenomena in American history, and vividly the history of California. True, the initial plan of a Bauhaus like school failed after Jane Herr, who held together the various factions in the initial group, died of cancer. But the vision all initially shared of starting fresh in a new land as a response to the brutalities of war and devastation remained in Marguerite's presence there as the soul of Pond Farm Pottery.

In the 60's and 70' when I was a student there I was part of an idealistic generation which wanted to start afresh- though from a different impulse, not from grim circumstances of war. We wanted to return to elemental experiences with materials, design and marketing as individual makers of well-designed practical objects for people's daily lives. In some respects the revolt against consumer society of the '60's was not unlike the questioning which gave birth to the Bauhaus- the search for authentic design and human expression in a world too weighted by an impersonal industrial revolution consumed by bottom-line thinking with its cheap mass merchandising and craving inducing advertising.

Finally, returning to the pedagogy of Wildenhain training at Pond Farm *Pottery*: In a world where an 'anything-goes' mentality has infused art and handcraft for decades, a teacher who believed one must master an alphabet and rich vocabulary of form before trying to create pots was a rare and splendid gift. The discipline of our years at Pond Farm Pottery can be a life lesson offered to coming generations in the form of a true historical monument with all the protections and presentations such a monument deserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ragnar Naess". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Ragnar Naess

\*All of this is documented in Dean and Geraldine Schwarz's "Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus" as well as in published family stories of the San Francisco based Haas-Lilienthal-Bransten families.

March 20, 2014

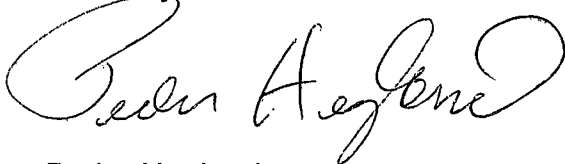
Carol Roland-Nawi, PHD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, Ca 95816

Dear Carol Roland-Nawi,

I am writing this letter to support the nomination of the Pond Farm Historic District for the National Registrar of Historic Places. I was a student at Pond Farm during the summers of 1976-1980. I observed firsthand the beauty of the landscape there and the organic and uniquely western way the buildings of Pond Farm fit in. More than that, Pond Farm represented the ideals of , first, the Herrs, and more importantly those Marguerite Wildenhain. She brought to the United States a renewal of the belief that there was great value in a life dedicated to making things by hand. She influenced scores of students at her school at Pond Farm and the entire world of Craft in the United States.

What remains of of this beautiful and meaningful place can still be preserved and hopefully enhanced to give a glimpse into Marguerite's inspiring and important life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peder Hegland". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Peder Hegland  
Peder Hegland Pottery  
Sartell, Mn 56377  
pheglan@mac.com  
320-252-9281

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

To Whom It May Concern:

I am deeply grateful for the work that has been accomplished on behalf of the Pond Farm Pottery site being considered for the National Register of Historic Places. I highly support the nomination. For 20 years I have researched, written, and promoted the importance of this site in conjunction with the life, teaching and ceramic work of Margurite Wildenhain.

In 1994, during my doctoral work in art education I became captivated by Wildenhain, a Bauhaus ceramics student who managed to make her way to Guerneville (which is a story worthy of a film), who via several modifications to the workshop idea and site carved out a world renown summer school in a majestic northern California barn complete with potters wheels of historic design. In 1996 when I accepted a position at a California university, I knew I needed to continue my Wildenhain work. To quote myself from the 2002 *RIPPLES: Marguerite Wildenhain and Her Pond Farm Students* catalog, a 3-site exhibition that traveled from California to New York, my project was a "commemoration and celebration of the historic importance and educational significance of this pioneer artist's contribution to the world of ceramics."

Though Wildenhain enrolled hundreds of students in the Pond Farm workshop and summer school for more than 30 years, which is certainly important, the Pond Farm barn and property represents far more than that. Somewhat regularly for 2 decades, I have presented lectures and conference presentations on Pond Farm and Wildenhain at state/national ceramics and art education venues. Each time there are attendees whose high school ceramic teacher or their teacher's teacher took a workshop from Wildenhain somewhere. She taught workshops in 47 states (and many times, several times at a site or in a state). The point is, the 'genealogy' of her students as teachers who taught the next generation who became teachers have spread the notoriety of Pond Farm and Wildenhain's words of wisdom, 'art as a way of life,' and ceramics skills and methods that continue to ripple through the ceramics world and ceramics education.

I am so pleased that Pond Farm has been nominated for this register. As a large part of my professional work and for me personally, I cannot express what it would mean for the nomination to be successful and therefore listed in the National Registry. Please approve.

Sincerely,  
*Billie Sessions*

Billie Sessions, PhD  
Emeritus, Art Department  
California State University San Bernardino



# *Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods*

*Preservation through Education & Stewardship*

Russian River District State Parks

March 11, 2014

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

Dear Dr. Carol Roland-Nawi,

Within the ceramics field, Marguerite Wildenhain is an acknowledged master, as central to the understanding of 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery as Walter Gropius is to 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. High standards of artistic excellence in art and teaching provide an important legacy, mission and "brand" for Pond Farm.

Marguerite Wildenhain was the first woman to receive the designation as Master Potter in pre-World War II Europe. She was the first female master at the Weimar Bauhaus, working with Walter Gropius. A French Jew, Marguerite left Germany in the late 1930s and eventually accepted an invitation from Gordon and Jane Herr to help create a 140-acre experimental art colony in Guerneville. Although the art colony did not survive, Marguerite purchased the land and buildings at Pond Farm and retained a life estate in the property after State Park's acquisition of thousands of acres, which became Austin Creek SRA in 1964.

The nomination of Pond Farm Pottery to the National Register of Historic Places is a dream come true for Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods and our partners, California State Parks, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the California State Parks Foundation. Since 1994, Stewards has been collecting archival materials about Pond Farm, including many historic photographs and videos. We have longed to restore this significant cultural resource and now we are on our way to accomplishing this goal due to the collective efforts of our partnership. The partnership funded the restoration cost estimates, which led to funding to begin stabilizing the historic barn and Marguerite's home. We have also developed a business plan with options for re-use of the property to provide for long-term sustainability.

We encourage your approval of this nomination. It will assist in securing additional funding to complete the restoration of Pond Farm Pottery and honoring Marguerite, an internationally renowned potter.

Sincerely,

Michele Luna  
Executive Director for the  
Board of Directors of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods



**Crain, Amy@Parks**

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**From:** kempjane@mchsi.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2014 5:56 AM  
**To:** Crain, Amy@Parks  
**Subject:** Pond Farm

Dear Ms. Roland-Nawi --

I am writing in support of placing Pond Farm on the National Register of Historic Places. Pond Farm was a significant art school in California developed by Marguerite Wildenhain in the mid-twentieth century. The ceramics education she taught at the school, based on Bauhaus ideas she learned in Europe, brought new ideas and concepts to that art form. The many students she taught during her summer classes and workshops have, in turn, instilled her philosophy of art and craft to countless other young artists.

The significance of the place, Pond Farm, was an essential part of that education. The location helped to develop aesthetic ideals in the students, with its setting in a deeply rural area of California, near the coast and the redwoods. Wildenhain constructed many of the buildings (the studio and house) herself with minimal assistance from friends, neighbors and students.

I urge you to consider placing the entire Pond Farm complex on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Jane Kemp  
Emerita Professor of Library Studies (retired) Luther College  
700 College Drive  
Decorah, IA 52101



1001 Lost Cololi Avenue  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3600

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

www.sonoma.edu/english

12 March 2014

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

Dear Dr. Roland-Nawi:

I am writing in support of adding the Pond Farm Pottery Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. I have taught courses at Sonoma State University on the history of California utopias and utopian thinkers, and thus would very much like to see the Pond Farm Pottery site added to the National Register of Historic Places. This site bears a special significance to the cultural history of the North Bay, which has been home to a number of utopian communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Marguerite Wildenhain's ceramics studio and gardens formed the center of a new consciousness about ceramics and sculptural arts in this area of the state: a consciousness that would spread throughout the West, and, indeed, throughout the country. Please give this rich historical area the recognition and protection it deserves by advocating that it be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Dr. Catherine Kroll  
Associate Professor

Contact information:  
kroll@sonoma.edu  
(707) 664-2966

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5640 Hazel Avenue  
Richmond, CA 94805-1904  
March 6, 2014

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816-7100

Dear Dr. Roland-Nawi:

This letter is in support of the application for the Pond Farm Pottery nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, which is to be considered by the State Historical Resources Commission on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Pond Farm Pottery has been documented for the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), because of its significance as the school, studio, and residence of influential ceramist and teacher Marguerite Wildenhain. Not only does the immediate property possess integrity, but the rural character of its surroundings is intact, making this application an opportunity to register a significant cultural landscape associated with Wildenhain and the Studio Pottery Movement.

Sincerely,



Cate Bainton  
HALS Northern California Chapter member

cc: Janet Gracyk

CARLILE • MACY

15 Third Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Tel: 707 542 6451  
Fax: 707 542 5212

March 4, 2014

Office of Historic Preservation  
Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD  
Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd St., Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816

SUBJECT: Listing of Pond Farm Historic District  
on National Register of Historic Places

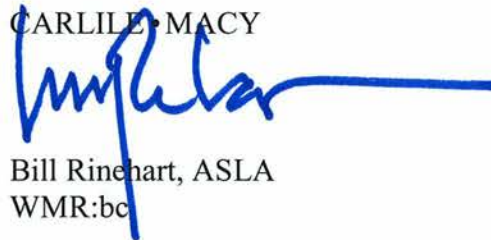
Dear Dr. Roland-Nawi:

I support the nomination of the Pond Farm Historic District, and encourage the State Office of Historic Preservation and the State Historical Resources Commission to list this property on the National Register of Historic Places, thereby placing it on the California Register as well.

Thank you for your work and consideration of this highly significant site.

Very truly yours,

CARLILE • MACY



Bill Rinehart, ASLA  
WMR:bc