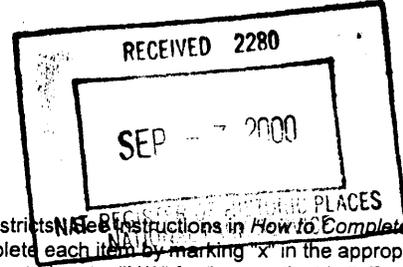


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1180



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sonoma State Home, Main Building

other names/site number Sonoma State Hospital, Sonoma Developmental Center

2. Location

street & number 15000 Arnold Drive  not for publication

city or town Eldridge  vicinity

state California code CA county Sonoma code 097 zip code 95431

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Samuel Abeyta 8/29/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

10/6/00  
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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Health Care/Hospital
- Domestic/Institutional Housing
- Education/Library, School
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Vacant, Not in Use
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late Victorian/Gothic
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Concrete
- roof Slate
- walls Brick
- \_\_\_\_\_
- other Marble trims
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Health/Medicine

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1908-1950

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1908

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Sellon & Hemmings, Architects: McElroy/Copeland & Pierce of San Fran

\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Sonoma State Home, Main Building

Name of Property

Sonoma County, CA

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property**

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	542065	4244457	3	---	---	---
2	---	---	---	4	---	---	---

See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Pat Mazzini & George Ellman (with OHP revisions, July, 2000)

organization Glen Ellen Historical Society date May 17, 2000

street & number P.O. Box 35 telephone (707) 996-0601

city or town Glen Ellen state CA zip code 95442

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Developmental Services, State of California, Attn: Douglas Van Meter

street & number 1600 9<sup>th</sup> Street telephone (916) 654-1890

city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95814

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

Section number 7 Page 1

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Description

The Main Building is a three-story over basement, steel-reinforced brick masonry and terracotta building in the Victorian Gothic style. It is located on the beautifully landscaped grounds of what is now called the Sonoma Developmental Center. The building is clad in red brick, primarily in common bond, but with decorative soldier and diagonal coursing. The building is the tallest on the campus and is essentially rectangular with small projections at front and rear, giving it a slightly H-shape. It measures about 62 feet in width at the front and about 104 feet in length. Toward the rear, the two slightly projecting sections of the building are a remnant of the first building constructed at the site. That building was constructed in 1891 and was virtually destroyed in the 1906 earthquake.

The roof of the building is a combination of hip and gable with crossed gables at the front elevation. The slate roof has been protected with a layer of foam material to prevent leaks.

On the main elevation the central bay projects forward to enclose the entry within a porch with an arched opening. Above the porch is a two story bay window framed with terra cotta and with a bull's eye window above. The window consists of a circle of twelve small panes surrounding an inner circle of four larger panes. In the original plans this window was to hold a clock. Behind the projecting bay is a triangular pediment. Cream colored glazed terracotta is used for cornices, window surrounds and other details, including decorative banding. The cornice banding is decorated with a leaf design every three to four feet. Diamond shaped terra cotta pieces repeat on many lines of the building.

Access was not available to the interior of the building, but it appears to retain at least the original plan layout of reception area and center corridor. In the basement were the billiard room, drug store, laboratory, two clinics, and three storerooms. On the first floor were the reception room, superintendent's office, several offices for physicians, the library, a schoolroom, the matron's, stenographer's and secretary's offices. The second floor had living quarters for the superintendent and the matron, as well as visitors' rooms, and a staff dining room. The superintendent's quarters consisted of a sitting room, bathroom and several bedrooms. The third floor had staff bedrooms.

Currently the building is vacant and shows signs of neglect, particularly from birds entering the building. The exterior brickwork and terracotta is still in excellent condition, although some glazing on the terracotta has worn off. The building has very high integrity, since no important changes have been made to the exterior.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

Section number 5 Page 2

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Significance

The Sonoma State Home, Main Building, is significant under National Register Criteria A and C. It is the oldest remaining building of the state's first facility for the education and care of developmentally delayed children. It is also important as a good institutional example of Victorian Gothic architecture. The Main Building, because of its size and the quality of its architecture, is the focal point of the Sonoma Developmental Center (originally called the Sonoma State Home) campus.

Under Criterion A, the Sonoma State Home, founded in 1883, was the first of its kind in California and one of the first of its type West of the Mississippi. At that time, most developmentally delayed children were cared for at home or were abandoned to almshouses where they received virtually no care or training. Julia Judah and Frances Bentley were the driving forces behind the founding of the state's facilities. Julia Judah was the wife of Henry Judah, the prominent railroad builder, and Frances Bentley was the wife of a Methodist minister. Both families had developmentally delayed children. The two women investigated the latest advances in the care of such children and traveled to Syracuse, New York in 1881-82 to visit that state's pioneering institution run by Dr. H.B. Wilbur. Returning to California they formed the California Association for the Care and Training of Feeble Minded Children. The purpose of the association was to "provide and maintain a school and asylum for the feeble minded in which they may be trained to usefulness."

In 1883 the Association opened a private facility in San Jose. The Home moved next to Vallejo, then to Alameda and Santa Clara. The student population grew rapidly from 20 to more than 100 in just a few years, necessitating the moves to larger quarters. The founders also recognized that the needs of the Home were outstripping private resources. As a result, the State of California was persuaded to take over operations in 1885. Governor Stoneman signed "An Act to Establish the California Home for the Care and training of Feeble-Minded Children," which authorized the admission of "all imbecile and feeble-minded children between the ages of 5 and 18 who had been residents of California for one year and who were incapable of receiving instruction in common schools." In actuality, at Governor Stoneman's insistence, assurance was given that the Home would also take in children who were more severely handicapped. In 1889, \$51,000 in state funds purchased a beautiful 1670 acre ranch just south of the small town of Glen Ellen in the Sonoma Valley. This would be the site of the new facility.

Ground was broken for the first building and a cornerstone was laid in 1890. The original building consisted of three wings tied together with a central administration area. The building

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Continuation Sheet

Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

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was two stories high and built in the Tudor style of architecture. The west wing was built first and contained a kitchen, client and employee dining rooms on the ground floor and an assembly hall and dormitory on the second floor. The north wing was the sleeping quarters for male residents and the south wing for female residents.

The first residents occupied the building in 1891. By this time there were 148 clients. The move from Santa Clara occurred on November 24, 1891 in a special train provided by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Upon arrival, the clients formed ranks, and with colors flying and the band playing "Home Again," they paraded to the new building. During the first few months the residents had to vacate the building during the day so that workmen could finish the construction.

During the earthquake of 1906, much of this building was destroyed. What remained was incorporated into a new building, designed in a different style by the State Architect, George Sellon (1907-1909).

When the new building opened in 1908, the theories relating to the developmentally disabled were about to change dramatically. In 1909 the name of the institution was officially changed from the "California Home for the Care and Training of Feeble-Minded Children" to "Sonoma State Home." This was in keeping with the original founders desire to create "a home away from home." The name change also was indicative of changing attitudes toward children who were retarded in their mental development. According to Esther M. Pond and Stuart A. Brody ("Evolution of treatment Methods at a Hospital for the Mentally Retarded"), "significant changes took place in social attitudes, scientific thinking, and treatment methods concerning the mentally ill and defective during the 1910-1920 decade. Medical and psychological investigators throughout the country were delving into the etiology of mental retardation, deriving methods for more accurate diagnosis and evaluation, and planning for the social and industrial rehabilitation of patients. Their findings brought about the first major reorganization in the treatment of the mental defective in the United States. Much of this professional pioneering was carried out at Sonoma State Home which, until the Pacific Colony was opened in 1927, was the state's only institution for the mentally retarded." (p. 11)

A great deal of the changing outlook focused on the use of intelligence testing to accurately evaluate the capabilities of each individual student. In 1913-14 the students of the Home participated in a study by Dr. Lewis Terman of Stanford University, helping to calibrate IQ testing for the lower levels of intelligence. In 1914 the Home began to employ intelligence testing to individualize training programs. The Home's educational programs were its primary focus at the time, and intelligence testing was felt to be of great value in connection with educating the Home's students.

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Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

Section number 8 Page 4

Another area in which the Home pioneered was one which today is viewed with alarm. In 1909, a state law allowed for the sterilization of the hospitalized mentally ill and "defective" along with some types of criminals. It was felt that sterilization made patients more compliant and amenable to education, and also would make it less problematic for them to be released into the community. For many years the Sonoma facility sterilized between 200-300 people each year, both men and women. Sterilizations reached their peak in 1930 but after 1950 dropped off substantially. Sterilization was considered to be the main element of "treatment" for many patients, and in fact, a large number of those who were sterilized were released from the Home to take up a more traditional life outside. The fact that so many clients left the facility led to the addition of social workers to the staff. They helped clients prepare for leaving the institution and checked up on them in their communities.

Another important aspect of the Sonoma program was its incorporation of agricultural activities into the lives of those clients able to participate. The Home was able to be virtually self-supporting in terms of its food production, largely because of the work of the residents.

After 1945 the treatment of the developmentally delayed relied less on sterilization and more on community clinics, early diagnosis and treatment, and educating the public on dealing with retarded persons. With this emphasis on keeping the more capable retarded individuals in the community, the Sonoma facility saw some dramatic changes. In 1953 the name of the institution was changed to Sonoma State Hospital, reflecting the new patient population. Patients were who severely disabled or who had multiple handicaps were now the largest segment. Education approximating a traditional school curriculum had been the original purpose of the Sonoma facility. By the 1950s, however, because of the nature of the patients being admitted, training in areas such as basic self care, communication skills, social skills, simple work skills and leisure time skills necessarily supplanted the previously academic program. Today the trend continues, with only the most severely disabled clients remaining at the facility, which is now called the Sonoma Developmental Center.

The Main Building at the Center, the subject of this nomination, is the centerpiece of the 1670 acres making up the Development Center today. The grounds consist of wooded hills, with lakes and creeks running through. It is one of the most beautiful settings for an institution in the state. The Center was, for many years, the largest employer in Sonoma County and at the present is still the third largest. The communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge cherish the grounds and this unique building.

The Main Building is important under National Register Criterion C as it is a very good example of Victorian Gothic architecture. John Blumenson characterizes the style as follows: "The most distinguishing feature of the Victorian Gothic style is the polychromatic exterior finish.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

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Materials of differing colors and texture are juxtaposed, creating decorative bands highlighting corners, arches and arcades. Ornamental pressed bricks, terra cotta tile and incised carvings of foliated and geometric patterns also are used to decorate wall surfaces. Straight-headed openings are used in addition to traditional Gothic (pointed arch) windows and doors.” (*Identifying American Architecture*, p. 33) All of these aspects of the style are present in the Main Building, and they come together to create one of state government’s most distinguished institutional buildings.

(Note: Additional buildings at the Center are significant and are likely to be nominated in the future, either individually or as a district. The nomination of the Main Building is being proposed separately because of its precarious situation. It is much in need of repair and it is hoped that designation will aid in obtaining funding.)

### Bibliography

#### Printed material:

Blumenson, John J.-G., *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945* (Nashville, Tenn., 1983).

Pond, Esther M., and Stuart A. Brody, *Evolution of Treatment Methods at a Hospital for the Mentally Retarded*, California Mental Health Research Monograph No. 3 (n.p., 1965).

Sonoma Developmental Center Records, Archives located at the Center, Eldridge, CA.

Sonoma Index Tribune Supplement, November 22, 1966, Commemorative Issue

Sonoma Index Tribune Supplement, November 16, 1990, Commemorative Issue

#### Interviews:

Anderson, Lynn, Director of Audio-Visual Department, Sonoma Developmental Center, Center Historian, June 25, September 15, 1998, April 10, May 6, 1999.

Berkland, Jim, employed at Center in the 1940s, January 20, 1999.

McAleese, Peggy, Daughter of Fred Butler, M.D., Director of the Center from 1918 to 1949, January 15, 1999.

Murphy, Theresa, Acting Administrator Director, Sonoma Developmental Center, June 20, 1998 and November 14, 1999.

Sassenrath, Merlin, Son of the Assistant Director, 1918-1949, January 15, 1999.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): None

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sonoma State Home, Sonoma Co., CA

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Primary location of additional data: Archives at the Sonoma Developmental Center; Sonoma State University, Northwest Information Center, Sonoma Index Tribune Archives, Bancroft Library.

### Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: Please see enclosed scale map.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries encompass the historic building and its immediate setting.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   11   Page   1  

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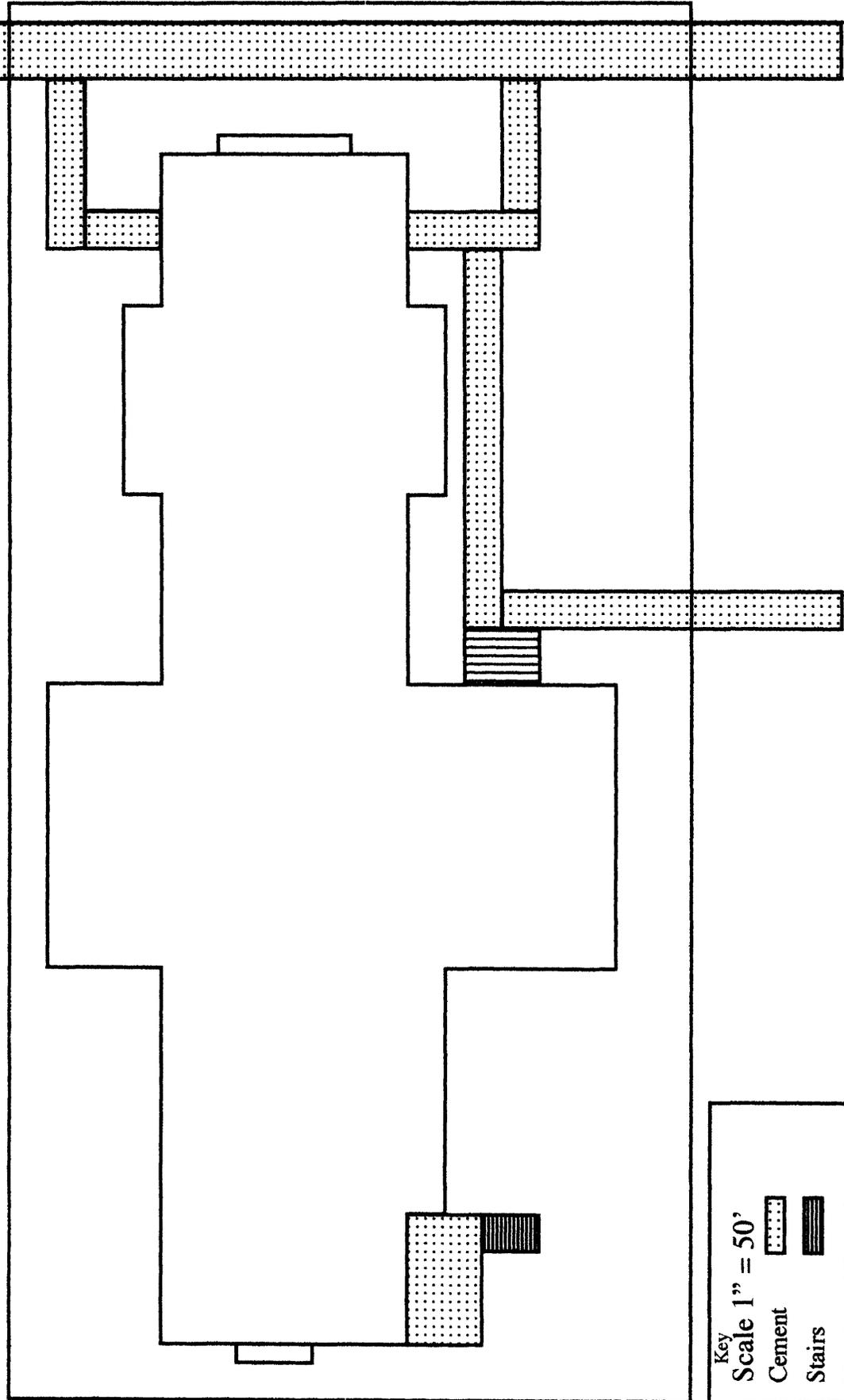
1. Name of Property: Sonoma Developmental Center\*
2. County and State: Sonoma County, California\*
3. Name of Photographer: Pat Mazzini\*
4. Date of photography: Black and White Photos, October 20, 1999  
Slides, February 8, 2000
5. Location of all negatives: 15416 Woodside Court\*
6. and 7. Description of View and direction of camera:  
  
    Black and white Photographs:
  - #1 Front of Main Building facing east, camera facing west
  - #2 North side of building, camera facing south
  - #3 Upper windows of front of building, east side, camera facing west
  - #4 Small windows and banding on north side of building, camera facing south
  - #5 Large windows on south side of building, camera facing north
  - #6 South side of building, windows showing cream terracotta stones, camera facing north

\* applies to all photographs

*Sonoma State Home, Main Building  
Sonoma Co., CA*

**FOOTPRINT OF MAIN BUILDING AT SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER 9-22-99**

North  
↑

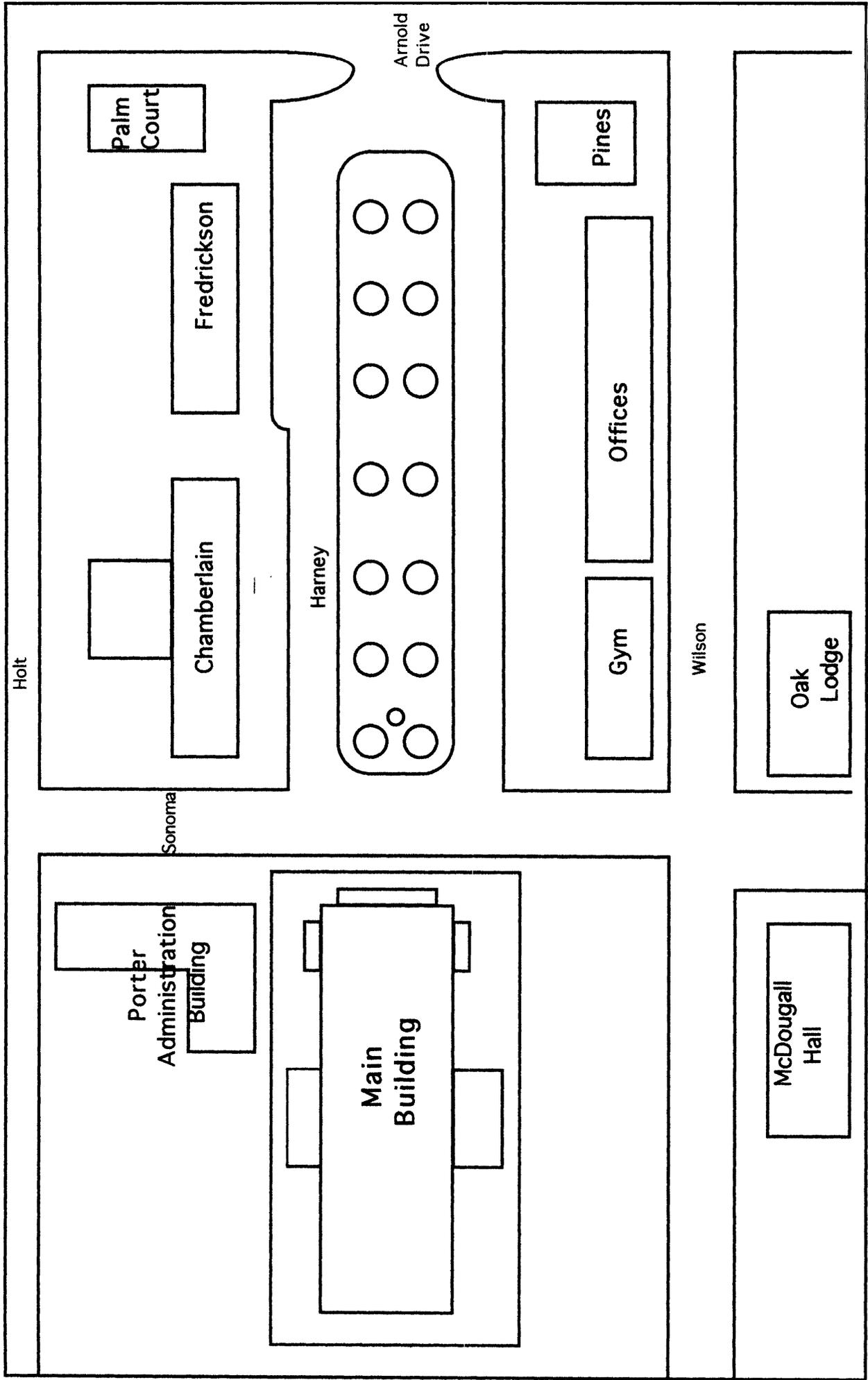


Key  
Scale 1" = 50'  
Cement [dotted pattern]  
Stairs [hatched pattern]  
Nominated Boundary [solid line]

Sonoma State Home, Main Bldg.  
Sonoma Co. CA

LOCATION OF MAIN BUILDING, SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER 9-22-99

North



South