

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100003579

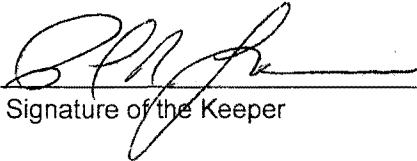
Date Listed: 4/4/2019

Property Name: Thacher School Historic District

County: Ventura

State: CA

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This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation

  
Signature of the Keeper

4/4/2019  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Verbal Boundary Description/Justification:**

The *Verbal Boundary Description and Justification* narratives are amended to add the following:  
The boundaries were drawn to generally exclude school buildings and educational facilities developed outside of the period of significance or those significantly altered when located outside the historic core campus. The district represents the most cohesive collection of historic period buildings and facilities. (See maps, Figures 1-3 for specific boundaries)

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The CALIFORNIA SHPO was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# 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: Thacher School Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

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: 5025 Thacher Road

City or town: Ojai State: CA County: Ventura

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:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

 _____ <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<u>2/14/19</u> _____ <b>Date</b>
<u>for</u> <u>California State Historic Preservation Officer</u> _____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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

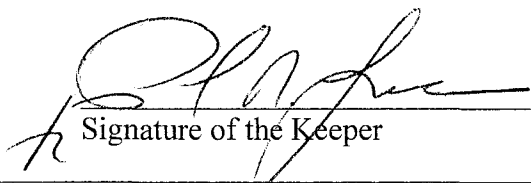
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**4. National Park Service Certification**

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

4/4/2019  
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>24</u>	<u>17</u>	buildings
<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>38</u>	<u>22</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School

EDUCATION/Education-Related

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School

EDUCATION/Education-Related

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

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Spanish Colonial Revival

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Mission Revival

Other: Vernacular

Other: Utilitarian

Other: Mid-Century Modern

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

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Wood

Stucco

Stone

Clay Tile

### 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

The Thacher School Historic District comprises a portion of the Thacher School campus, which is located at 5025 Thacher Road in Ojai, California. Situated in the Ojai Valley, the campus is located approximately four miles northeast of downtown Ojai in unincorporated Ventura County. The campus occupies over four hundred acres of sloping land situated to the north and east of the intersection of Thacher Road and McAndrew Road and extending into the foothills of the Topa Topa Mountains. The surrounding area is developed with low-density residential and agricultural properties. The district contains sixty (60) resources including buildings, structures, objects, and sites. Of these resources, thirty-eight (38) are contributors to the district. Twenty-two (22) resources are non-contributors to the district due to substantial alterations or construction outside the period of significance. Sixty-three (63) percent of the buildings within the district boundary are contributors to the Thacher School Historic District. The district as a whole retains integrity of *location, setting, design, feeling, and association*.

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## Narrative Description

The Thacher School Historic District is composed of a wide and eclectic variety of buildings, structures, objects, and sites which reflect the Thacher School's unique rustic character and distinctive history as a ranch school. The campus is improved with a collection of residential, institutional, and equestrian buildings which date from 1895 to 2017. Campus buildings are oriented around a central core, which reflects some of the earliest development patterns and spatial configurations of the campus. The Dining Hall and Administration Building, which was first constructed in 1895, is situated at the center of campus and functions as the practical and symbolic hub of campus life. The Thacher School Historic District generally consists of the campus' central historic core, which is defined by a perimeter road, as well as two outlying areas to the northwest and southeast of the campus core which have historically been dedicated to equestrian uses and reflect the Thacher School's continued emphasis on horsemanship and outdoor life. Buildings within the district embody a variety of generally modest architectural styles which are unified by common building materials and massing. District resources are united by shared character-defining features including lush, rustic natural landscaping with mature trees and extensive foliage; pedestrian-oriented circulation with limited vehicular access; informal meandering footpaths and roadways shaped by patterns of use over time; and uninterrupted views of the Topa Topa Mountains framed by surrounding natural scenery. Boundaries for the district are defined by historic circulation elements such as roadways and footpaths as well as topographic contours of the landscape.

Character-defining features of the Thacher School Historic District include:

- Hilly topography graded with steep and gentle slopes
- Irregular arrangement of buildings and structures oriented around a central campus core defined by a perimeter road
- Landscaped open spaces within the campus core defined by surrounding buildings and structures
- Cohesive concentrations of outlying facilities and open spaces dedicated to equestrian uses
- Lush natural landscaping with mature trees and extensive foliage
- Pedestrian-oriented circulation with limited vehicular access and informal meandering footpaths and roadways
- Variety of generally modest architectural styles unified by common building materials, volumes, and massing
- Long-range views of the Topa Topa Mountains framed by surrounding natural scenery

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## **Contributors**<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Historic Lower Field**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1890**

***Thacher School Reference #FS18***<sup>2</sup>

The Lower Field is located in the southern portion of the central campus core and is surrounded by McCaskey Commons to the north, the Library and Upper School Dormitory to the east, the Coniferous Bosque and several Staff/Faculty Residences to the south, and the William Larned Thacher Residence (Admissions Office) and the Milligan Center for the Performing Arts to the west. The field is irregular in shape and its borders are defined by a paved roadway. The field is marked with a low stone wall at the southwest corner; other corners to the east and north are marked by large natural stones.

### **2. Dining Hall & Administration Building**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Edward Thacher with Samuel Ilsley**

**Year Built: 1895**

***Thacher School Reference #13***

The Dining Hall is located at the center of the Thacher School campus, on a terraced hillside supported on a stone retaining wall. The building is bounded to the west by a narrow wood deck and the Historic Oval; to the north by the Middle School building; to the east by the landscaped McCaskey Commons; and to the south by the Thacher Commons building, to which it is connected by a wood pergola. The Dining Hall is surrounded by lush landscaping, including several large pepper trees. Constructed in 1895, the dining hall is a vernacular building of wood frame construction, with an irregular L-shaped plan. The building's central block and north wing are two stories in height and have hipped roofs with open eaves and asphalt composition roofing shingles. The exterior walls are clad with board-and-batten siding. The east wing is of exposed concrete masonry unit (CMU) construction, with a flat wood-framed roof and central roof monitor clad in built-up roofing. There are board-and-batten equipment screens on the east wing roof. The primary (west) façade of the central block is symmetrical, with seven bays on each story divided by simple wood posts and beams. The central and two end bays are slightly wider than the remaining four. Fenestration consists of two bands of divided light, wood sash windows that partially wrap the north and south façades. The first story windows include fixed twelve-light sash in the three wider bays and vertically sliding eight-light pocket windows in the narrower bays. Above each first-story window is a decorative wood panel with a jig sawn garland pattern. The second story windows are grouped four-light casements, quadripartite in the

<sup>1</sup> Contributing resources are organized by original construction date. Their numbers here correspond to the numbers on the site map. Resources are identified by their current building name or function; if historic building names and/or functions are strongly identified with the resource, these are noted in parentheses following the current name.

<sup>2</sup> Thacher School reference numbers correspond to building numbers and notations utilized by Thacher School facilities staff, and are included here for internal reference purposes.

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wide bays and tripartite in the narrow bays. The building's primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the south façade and consists of a pair of six-light paneled wood doors accessed from the pergola. There is a projecting one-story volume at the southeast corner, glazed with fixed divided-light wood sash windows, with a flat roof and roof deck above accessed by an exterior wood stair.

### 3. Upper Tennis Courts

**Style:** N/A

**Architect:** N/A

**Year Built:** circa 1895

***Thacher School Reference #FS23***

The Upper Tennis Courts are located at the center of the central campus core, south of Staff/Faculty Residence #36 and east of the Historic Oval. The tennis courts consist of a grouping of six courts which are each surrounded by a chain link fence. A low retaining wall of natural stone, constructed around 1895, defines the eastern boundary of the tennis court area.

### 4. Historic Oval

**Style:** N/A

**Architect:** N/A

**Year Built:** circa 1895

***Thacher School Reference #FS21***

The Historic Oval is located immediately to the west of the Dining Hall and Administration Building and the Thacher Commons Building. The Oval is flanked to the north by the Middle School Dormitory; to the south by the Milligan Center for the Performing Arts; and to the west by the Upper Tennis Courts. The Oval is a landscaped open space generally defined and bisected by paved pathways. Its topography slopes gently downhill to the west, where it is bounded by a low retaining wall of natural stone, which separates the Oval from the Upper Tennis Courts to the west. A bench constructed of wood and natural stone is situated in the southern portion of the Oval, beneath a mature camphor tree. A large rock is situated in the northern portion; it is mounted with a metal plaque noting that the Oval has been dedicated as the Forest Cooke Garden. The Oval also features several significant trees, including the mature camphor as well as heritage Canary Island Date Palm dating from around the 1890s.

### 5. Flagpole

**Style:** N/A

**Architect:** N/A

**Year Built:** circa 1895

***Thacher School Reference #FS20***

The Flagpole is situated at the northeastern edge of the Historic Oval, and is flanked by the Middle School Dormitory to the north and the Dining Hall and Administration Building to the east. The flagpole is constructed of wood and is topped with a metal eagle ornament. The base of



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the flagpole has decayed, and the flagpole is now secured to a wood support pole by metal bands. The support pole sits on a small concrete pad.

**6. Staff/Faculty Residence (#47)<sup>3</sup>**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1896; relocated 1953**

***Thacher School Reference #47***

Staff/Faculty Residence #47 is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the northeast of the equestrian area and Smith Barn. The building was originally constructed as part of Sherman Day Thacher's residence, Chaparral Cottage, and was later relocated to this site to serve as faculty housing in 1953. The building is Vernacular in style and has an irregular plan with attached carport and simple one-story massing. It has a flat roof of rolled asphalt with boxed eaves. The building is of wood frame construction over a raised CMU foundation and clad in plywood paneling. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the north façade and consists of a cement stoop with a metal handrail. The primary entrance door consists of a single paneled wood door with partial glazing in a wood surround. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung, sliding, and casement windows.

**7. Business Office & Staff/Faculty Apartments**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1899 (estimated)**

***Thacher School Reference #22***

The Business Office, also known as the Administration Building, was constructed as an addition to the north of the Dining Hall around 1899. It is two stories in height and is asymmetrically composed, with a recessed second-story balcony with wood posts and corbels and a wood balustrade accessed by an exterior wood staircase. Below the staircase is a passage with wood corbels, partially enclosed by a projecting bay with fixed, divided light wood sash windows. Fenestration consists primarily of one-over-one and four-over-four double hung wood sash windows.

**8. Gymkhana Field**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1900**

***Thacher School Reference #FS9***

The Gymkhana Field is located to the southeast of the central campus and is accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The Gymkhana Field is irregular

<sup>3</sup> There are multiple staff/faculty residences located on the Thacher School campus; for clarification those included in this nomination are distinguished by their campus building numbers and/or colloquial names in parentheses.

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in plan and is laid with soft dirt and sand to accommodate horses and riders. The field is surrounded by a metal pipe fence and is accessed via a metal pipe gate at the northwest corner near the Gymkhana Grandstand. The field's boundaries have expanded over time, and a natural stone bench with an attached planter which once marked its edge is now situated in the southwest portion of the field.

## 9. Outdoor Theatre

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: Andrew Wolfenden**

**Year Built: 1908**

***Thacher School Reference #75***

The Outdoor Theatre is located in the northern portion of the central campus core, to the north of the Lower School and to the south of the Roadside Corrals. It is accessed via a dirt path leading south from the perimeter road. The site is irregular in plan and defined naturally by surrounding trees and landscaping. It is improved with a cavea with seating risers of undressed stones and boulders. The stage is situated at the northern end of the site and consists of wood decking over stone walls. Stone and wood bridges flank the stage. A lighting booth with shed roof and board-and-batten siding at the southern end of the site, to the rear of the cavea. A wood frame wing structure is located to the west and is set on a wooden platform.

## 10. Study Hall

**Style: Mission Revival**

**Architect: Arthur Benton**

**Year Built: 1911**

***Thacher School Reference #18***

The Study Hall is located in the central portion of the campus core, to the east of McCaskey Commons. It is Mission Revival in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a side-gable roof with clay barrel tile roofing, open eaves, overhanging rakes, wood brackets and outriggers, dormers, and interior brick chimney. The building is of reinforced concrete construction and is veneered in smooth cement plaster. The primary (west) façade is asymmetrically composed with battered buttresses. The primary entrance consists of a single partially-glazed wood plank door with divided lights and metal hardware. It is framed by an entrance arch with espadaña and is accessed by concrete steps with parastedes. Secondary entrances on the northern façade consist of single partially-glazed wood plank doors with divided lights, and rectangular and round-arched transom lights; one secondary entrance is set within a projecting wood porch. Fenestration consists of wood sash, divided light, round-arched and rectangular double-hung transom windows.

## 11. Upper School Dormitory and Dodge Annex Residences

**Style: Mission Revival with Craftsman influences**

**Architect: Arthur Benton (dormitory)**

**Year Built: 1911 (dormitory); 1906 (estimated; Dodge Residence annex)**

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### ***Thacher School Reference #15***

The Study Hall is located in the southern portion of campus of the campus core, to the east of the Lower Field. Today, the Upper School Dormitory building is comprised of the original 1911 dormitory and the Dodge Residence Annex, a residence that was relocated from a nearby property in 1946 and attached to the southeast corner of the Dormitory to serve as staff/faculty housing. The building is primarily Mission Revival in style with Craftsman influences; it has an irregular plan and consists of a central three-story block over a raised basement and a projecting two-story block to the southeast. The building has a cross-gable roof of lightweight concrete shingles with open eaves, overhanging rakes, and interior brick chimneys. The building is of wood frame construction and is clad in wood shingles and wood clapboard. The primary (west) façade is symmetrically composed with a recessed central entrance porch topped by a carved wood frieze and flanked by projecting two-story volumes with projecting porches. The primary dormitory entrance consists of a pair of fully-glazed arched doors with divided lights flanked by a pair of arched sidelights with divided lights. Secondary annex entrances are accessed via a raised concrete porch with steps and a handicap ramp. Secondary entrance doors are wood and are fully or partially glazed. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung windows with divided lights, wood casement windows with single or divided lights, wood hopper windows, and double-hung vinyl windows with wood surrounds.

### **12. McCaskey Commons**

**Style:** N/A

**Architect:** N/A

**Year Built:** 1911 (estimated)

***Thacher School Reference #FS19***

McCaskey Commons is located in the central portion of the campus core and is surrounded by the Indoor Chapel and the Student Union to the north, the Study Hall to the east, the Lower Field to the south, and the Admissions Office and the Dining Hall to the west. The area is irregular in shape and its borders are defined by a paved roadway. The northwest corner is marked by several mature trees and an arrangement of large natural stones. A flagpole is located in the eastern portion of the Commons, in front of the Study Hall.

### **13. Staff/Faculty Residence (#14)**

**Style:** Vernacular

**Architect:** Unknown

**Year Built:** 1914; relocated 1953

***Thacher School Reference #14***

Staff/Faculty Residence #14 is located in the southern portion of the campus core, to the south and west of the Upper School Dormitory and to the east of the Coniferous Bosque. The building was originally constructed as an annex to Sherman Day Thacher's residence, Chaparral Cottage. The building was later relocated to this site to serve as faculty housing in 1953 and was subsequently expanded with an addition to the north façade. The building is Vernacular in style

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and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing set into the surrounding hillside on a wood platform foundation supported by wood and concrete posts. It has a combination hipped and flat roof of asphalt composition shingles with open eaves. The building is of wood frame construction and clad with wood shingles, plywood paneling, and cement plaster veneer. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the north façade and is set at grade and sheltered by an overhanging roof. The primary entrance door is a single flush partially-glazed metal door. A secondary entrance is located on the west façade and consists of a set of wood steps leading to a single wood screen door. Fenestration consists of wood casement windows with single lights, wood double-hung windows with divided lights and transoms, and fixed and sliding aluminum windows.

#### **14. Student Union**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1920**

***Thacher School Reference #23***

The Student Union is located in the central portion of the campus core, to the north of McCaskey Commons and to the south of the Health Center. The building is Vernacular in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a low-pitched side-gable roof of asphalt composition shingles with open eaves and overhanging rakes. The building is of wood frame construction and is clad with cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the south façade and consists of full-width projecting wood deck with a canted wood plank railing. The primary entrance consists of a partially-glazed wood plank door with divided lights. A secondary entrance, also located on the south façade, consists of a paneled wood door with wood screen door. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung six-over-six windows and wood clerestory windows with divided lights.

#### **15. Outdoor Chapel**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1920 (pergola); 1951 (chapel)**

***Thacher School Reference #55***

The Outdoor Chapel is located in the northwestern portion of the campus, to the southwest of the equestrian area and to the north and west of the perimeter road. It is accessed via a dirt path which leads from the perimeter road across a rustic stone bridge and continues up the hillside. The hilltop site is irregular in plan and defined naturally by the surrounding landscape and topography. It is improved with a pergola, which was first constructed around 1920 as a memorial to Thacher students killed during World War I; and an outdoor chapel, which was constructed as an addition to the memorial in 1951. The pergola is rectangular in plan consists of a paved stone patio sheltered by a wood trellis supported by six columns of natural stone. Metal plaques commemorating Thacher students killed during wartime are mounted to the columns. The outdoor chapel is located to the northwest of the pergola and consists of a cavea set into the

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hillside and oriented to the west, overlooking the Ojai Valley, and a paved stone orchestra. Cavea seating consists of wood plank benches set atop risers of undressed stone, and the podium is of wood and undressed stone.

#### **16. Staff/Faculty Residence (#6)**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1922**

***Thacher School Reference #6***

Staff/Faculty Residence #6 is located in the southern portion of the campus, south of the perimeter road and the Lower Field, and to the northeast of the Anson Thacher Residence. The building was originally constructed as a faculty club and was later converted to a staff residence in 1943. The building is Vernacular in style and has an irregular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a side-gable roof of asphalt composition shingles with open eaves, overhanging rakes, and interior brick chimney. The building is of wood frame construction and clad with wood shingles. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the west façade and consists of a projecting wood porch with shed roof and wood posts, balustrade, and steps. The primary entrance door is a single fully-glazed door with a sidelight. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung, fixed, and casement windows and aluminum sliding windows.

#### **17. Gymkhana Grandstand**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1927**

***Thacher School Reference #63***

The Gymkhana Grandstand is located to the southeast of the central campus and is accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The Grandstand is situated at the northwestern corner of the Gymkhana Field and is oriented to the southeast. The building is Spanish Colonial Revival in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing with rows of raised stepped seating over an enclosed storage room. It has a hipped roof of clay barrel tile supported by wood posts with open eaves, shaped rafter tails, and exposed framing. The building is of wood frame construction and is clad in smooth cement plaster. Seating is open to the elements and consists of wood plank benches atop stepped wooden risers. A secondary entrance to the storage room is located on the northwest façade and consists of a pair of wood plank doors with metal hardware and clavos set within a parabolic arched opening. The door is flanked by rectangular screened openings with plaster hoods and turned wood spindles

#### **18. Health Center (Chinese Quarters)**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1932**

***Thacher School Reference #24***

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The Health Center is located in the central portion of the campus core, to the north of the Student Union. The building was originally constructed as housing for the Thacher School's Chinese workers and was later converted into a dormitory in 1961; it was subsequently repurposed as the Health Center following the demolition of the School's infirmary in 2003. The building is Spanish Colonial Revival in style and has an irregular plan oriented around a central courtyard and stepped one-story massing set into the hillside. It has a low-pitched cross-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles, open eaves, and shaped rafter tails. The building is of wood construction and is clad in smooth cement plaster and plywood paneling. Façades are asymmetrically composed. Entrances to individual rooms open onto the courtyard and are set at grade and connected by a concrete walkway, which is sheltered by an overhanging roof supported by wood posts. Entrance doors are wood partially-glazed doors with wood screen doors and transoms. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung windows with divided lights, wood casement windows, and aluminum and vinyl sliding windows with wood surrounds.

#### **19. John Cory Memorial**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1932**

***Thacher School Reference #FS16***

The John Cory Memorial is located in the southern portion of the campus, to the south of the Lower Field and to the north of Staff/Faculty Residence #13. It was originally constructed in 1932 as a memorial to John Cory, a popular Thacher School faculty member who died in 1931. The memorial was planned as an outdoor classroom – a favored concept of Cory's – and consists of a paved stone terrace with an integrated bench. The terrace is rectangular in plan with a semicircular projection at the south end, which mirrors the semicircular stone bench that defines the north end of the terrace. A plaque is mounted to the bench noting its construction in memory of Cory.

#### **20. Coniferous Bosque**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: Lockwood de Forest, Jr.**

**Year Built: 1932 (estimated)**

***Thacher School Reference #FS15***

The Coniferous Bosque is located in the southern portion of the campus, to the south of the Lower Field and to the east of Staff/Faculty Residence #6. It is irregular in shape; its borders are defined by the perimeter road to the north, and by the surrounding natural landscape to the east, south, and west. In recent years, the conifer trees which define the Bosque have been plagued by disease, which resulted in the death of many historic specimens in the grove. New trees have since been planted which are of a different species, but share a similar form and growth habit to the existing historic trees.

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## **21. Staff/Faculty Residence (#2/Anson Thacher Residence)**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1934**

***Thacher School Reference #2***

Staff/Faculty Residence #2 is situated in the southern portion of the campus, to the east of the Headmaster's Residence and to the southwest of Staff/Faculty Residence #6. It was originally constructed as a residence for Anson Thacher, son of Thacher School founder Sherman Day Thacher and subsequent Headmaster, and was later utilized as faculty housing. The building is Spanish Colonial Revival in style and has an L-shaped plan and simple one-story massing. A detached stone garage with a square plan and flat roof is located to the northeast of the residence. The residence has a cross-gable roof with clay barrel tile, open eaves, and interior brick chimney. It is of wood frame and stone construction and is clad in smooth cement plaster, horizontal wood lap siding, and natural stone. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the northwest façade and is concealed from the street by a wood fence and gate. The entrance is set at grade and the entrance door is a partially-glazed wood door with divided lights. Fenestration consists of single and grouped wood double-hung windows with divided lights, some with louvered wood shutters, vinyl sliding windows, and glass block windows.

## **22. Admissions Office (William Larned Thacher Residence)**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1934**

***Thacher School Reference #11***

The Admissions Office is located in the central portion of the campus core, and is surrounded by the Dining Hall to the north, McCaskey Commons and the Historic Oval to the east, the Milligan Center for the Performing Arts to the southwest, and the Thacher Commons to the west. It was originally constructed as a residence for William Larned Thacher, brother of Thacher School founder Sherman Day Thacher and a longtime faculty member. The building is Spanish Colonial Revival in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing over a raised basement. It has a front-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles, shallow open eaves, exterior stone chimney, and interior plastered chimney. The building is of wood frame construction and is clad in smooth cement plaster with pierced plaster grilles, wood shingles, and natural stone. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The west façade is defined by a stone terrace which is accessed via paired wood French doors. The primary entrance is located on the west façade and consists of a projecting porch with concrete steps and a stone parastas and a shed roof supported by wood posts. The entrance door is a single partially-glazed wood door with divided lights and a wood screen door. A secondary entrance is located on the south façade and consists of a projecting porch with cement steps and stone parastades, and a hipped roof supported by wood post. The door is a single fully-glazed wood door with divided lights and a wood screen door. Fenestration consists of wood casement, double-hung, and fixed windows with divided lights.

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### **23. Gymkhana Field Interior Bench**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: 1935**

***Thacher School Reference #FS10***

The Gymkhana Field Interior Bench is located on the Gymkhana Field, in the southwestern portion of the site. The stone bench was initially constructed as a memorial to Thacher alumnus John A. Jameson, Jr., with funds donated by Jameson's mother. The bench has an L-shaped plan and is constructed of undressed stone with a concrete seat.

### **24. Indoor Chapel**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont (initial construction); George Livermore (chapel conversion)**

**Year Built: 1936**

***Thacher School Reference #21***

The Indoor Chapel is located in the central portion of the campus core, and is surrounded by the Classroom Building to the east, the Study Hall and McCaskey Commons to the south, and the Student Union to the west. The building was initially constructed as a science laboratory in 1936 and was subsequently converted to a chapel and administrative office space in 1966. The building is Spanish Colonial Revival in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing over a raised basement. The roof is a combination side-gable and shed roof with clay barrel tile, tight eaves and rakes, and a belfry. The building is of wood frame construction over a concrete basement and is clad in smooth cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located at the west end of the south façade and consists of a projecting terrace paved with clay tile and surrounded by a low concrete wall. The terrace extends eastward to an arcaded portico, which continues along the south facade. Primary entrance doors consist of a pair of paneled wood doors with a projecting plaster surround and cornice. Secondary entrance doors opening onto the portico are single paneled partially-glazed wood doors with divided lights. Fenestration consists of wood double-hung windows with divided lights, fixed metal windows with divided lights, and a fixed recessed circular metal window.

### **25. Middle School Dormitory and Residences**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1937**

***Thacher School Reference #32***

The Middle School Dormitory is located in the central portion of the central campus core and is surrounded by the Lower School Dormitory to the northwest, Staff/Faculty Residence #27 to the northeast, and the Dining Hall and Administration Building and Upper Tennis Courts to the south. The building is Vernacular in style and has an irregular plan oriented around a central



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courtyard with one- and two-story massing. It has a hipped roof with asphalt composition shingles and open eaves. The building is of wood frame construction and is clad with cement plaster veneer and wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The building is situated on a corner with multiple entrances leading to an interior courtyard. Individual rooms open onto covered walkways with wood posts and scored and tinted concrete floors. Individual entry doors are single flush doors. Fenestration consists of wood fixed and double-hung windows with divided lights.

## **26. Twichell Barn**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1938**

*Thacher School Reference #45*

The Twichell Barn is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the northwest of the perimeter road and to the northeast of the Chickering Barn. The building is Vernacular in style and has a linear plan with angled terminal volumes and simple one-story massing. The roof is a combination cross-gable and shed metal roof with standing seams, open eaves, knee braces, and overhanging rakes. The building is of masonry and wood frame construction and is clad with board-and-batten and vertical wood plank siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The primary (southeast) façade consists of five bays, with two projecting volumes flanked by three groupings of stalls. Individual stalls are accessed via concrete walkways with an overhanging roof supported by knee braces. Primary entrances consist of paired wood plank doors with a wood transom panel.

## **27. Hunt Barn**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1940**

*Thacher School Reference #42*

The Hunt Barn is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the northwest of the perimeter road and the Chickering Barn. The building is Vernacular in style and has an angled linear plan and simple one-story massing. It has a central hipped roof flanked by side-gable and shed roofs of metal with standing seams, open eaves, knee braces, and overhanging rakes. The building is of masonry and wood frame construction and is clad in brick and wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The primary (southwest) façade consists of three bays with a central volume flanked by rows of stalls. Individual stall entrances are set at grade and consist of wood board Dutch doors. The primary entrance consists of paired wood plank doors with a wood transom panel.

## **28. Staff/Faculty Residence (#27/Music Box)**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

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**Year Built: 1945**

***Thacher School Reference #27***

Staff/Faculty Residence #27 is located in the northern portion of the central campus core, to the south of the Royal Barney Hogan workshop and to the east of Staff/Faculty Residence #31. The building was originally constructed as a music conservatory and was known as the “Music Box;” it was later converted to faculty housing. The building is Vernacular in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing over a raised masonry foundation. It has a shed roof of rolled asphalt with open eaves and overhanging rakes. The building is of expressed brick masonry construction with a projecting bay clad in wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the southeast façade and consists of a corner porch with concrete steps and an integrated brick planter; the porch is sheltered by an overhanging shed roof supported by a wood post. The primary entrance door consists of a paneled wood door with a wood screen door. Fenestration consists of single and grouped vinyl windows.

**29. Camp Supply**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1945**

***Thacher School Reference #26***

The Camp Supply building is located in the central portion of the central campus core, to the west of the Humanities Building. The building is Vernacular in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a combination low-pitched hip and side-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles and open eaves. The building is of expressed brick masonry construction. Façades are asymmetrically composed. Both entrances are located on the south façade and set at grade; entrance doors consist of a single paneled door and a pair of paneled doors. Fenestration consists of fixed wood windows and aluminum double-hung windows.

**30. Gymkhana Field Perimeter Bench**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1945**

***Thacher School Reference #FS11***

The Gymkhana Field Perimeter Bench is located to the southeast of the central campus and is accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The Perimeter Bench is situated at the southern edge of the Gymkhana Field and is oriented to the north. The bench was erected in memory of Thacher alumnus Arthur Driscoll Robbins, who was killed in combat during World War II, by his classmates. The bench consists of a wood plank seat and backrest with stone masonry end panels. A metal plaque noting the dedication to Robbins is mounted on one of the end panels.

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### **31. PTS Arenas (Jameson Field)**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: 1948**

***Thacher School Reference #FS12***

The PTS Arenas are located to the southeast of the central campus, southeast of the Gymkhana Field, and are accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The site was originally developed as the Jameson Field in memory of Thacher alumnus John A. Jameson using funds donated by his mother and was initially used for athletic and equestrian events; today the site houses the arenas and pens for the Thacher Pack and Spur Club, also known as PTS. The site is irregular in plan and its boundary is defined by the surrounding topography and natural landscape. It is separated from the Gymkhana Field by a metal pipe fence with a metal gate. It is improved with two riding arenas surrounded by metal pipe fencing and a cow pen.

### **32. Smith Barn and Livermore Pack Station**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1949**

***Thacher School Reference #48***

The Smith Barn is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the north of the perimeter road and to the southwest of Staff/Faculty Residence #47. The building is Vernacular in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a combination low-pitched hip and side-gable roof of corrugated metal with open eaves. The building is of masonry and wood frame construction and is clad in stone and wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The primary (southwest) façade consists of three bays with a central volume flanked by rows of stalls. Individual stall entrances are set at grade and consist of wood board sliding doors. The primary entrance consists of paired wood plank doors with metal hardware.

### **33. Shed**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1950**

***Thacher School Reference #72***

The Shed is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the north of the perimeter road and to the southwest of Staff/Faculty Residence #47. The precise date of its construction is unknown, but its construction materials and methods suggest that its development dates from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is Vernacular in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a side-gable roof of corrugated metal with open eaves. It is of wood frame construction and clad with plywood paneling and wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The entrance is located on the northeast façade and consists of a

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single flush door. Fenestration consists of single wood windows with divided lights and wood surrounds.

### **34. Blacksmith Shop**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1950**

*Thacher School Reference #44*

The Blacksmith Shop is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the north of the perimeter road and to the north of the Lowery Corrals and the Twichell Barn. The precise date of its construction is unknown, but its construction materials and methods suggest that its development dates from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is utilitarian in nature and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing on a concrete slab. It has a shed roof of corrugated metal with open eaves. It is of wood frame and steel post construction. Façades are asymmetrically composed, and the southeast façade is unenclosed. Fenestration consists wood casement windows with divided lights.

### **35. Gymkhana Field House**

**Style: Mid-Century Modern**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1951**

*Thacher School Reference #64*

The Gymkhana Field House is located to the southeast of the central campus and is accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The Field House is situated at the northeastern corner of the Gymkhana Field and is oriented to the southwest. The building is Mid-Century Modern in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing over a raised foundation. It has a low-pitched side-gable roof of rolled asphalt with open eaves and overhanging rakes. The building is of expressed brick masonry construction. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary (southwest) façade is defined by a full-width concrete porch with a brick parapet sheltered by an overhanging roof supported by wood posts with knee braces. Entrances to the men's and women's restrooms consist of single wood plank doors with transom panels. Fenestration consists of grouped wood clerestory windows with steel security grilles.

### **36. Classroom Building**

**Style: Mid-Century Modern**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1952**

*Thacher School Reference #20*

The Classroom Building is located in the central portion of the central campus core and is surrounded by the Humanities Building to the north, the Mudd Math & Science Building to the

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east, the Study Hall to the south, and the adjoining Indoor Chapel to the west. The building is Mid-Century Modern in style with a rectangular plan and stepped one-story massing set into the hillside with terraced planters. It has a side-gable roof of rolled asphalt with open eaves and overhanging rakes. The building is of wood frame construction and clad in cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the south façade and consists of a covered portico supported by square plastered piers. Entrance doors are paneled doors. Fenestration consists of steel hopper windows with divided lights and clerestory windows.

### **37. Historic Oval Bench**

**Style: N/A**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: 1952**

***Thacher School Reference #FS22***

The Historic Oval Bench is situated in the southern portion of the Historic Oval next to a mature camphor tree. Construction of the bench and drinking fountain was funded by gifts from the graduating classes of 1945 and 1951, and intended for use by players at the nearby tennis courts. The bench consists of a wood plank seat and backrest with stone masonry end panels and an integrated stone masonry drinking fountain. Metal plaques noting the class gifts are mounted on the end panels.

### **38. Staff/Faculty Residence (#62/Horne Residence)**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1890**

***Thacher School Reference #62***

Staff/Faculty Residence #62 is located to the southeast of the central campus and is accessed via a meandering dirt road to the east of the campus perimeter road. The residence is believed to have been constructed around 1890 for Charles R. Horne, a Civil War veteran who settled in Ojai in 1876 and eventually took a job at The Thacher School teaching carpentry to students. In 1890 he established a homestead in Horn Canyon, where he raised hogs, and leased a portion of his land to the School to develop the Gymkhana Field. The residence was subsequently acquired by The Thacher School for use as a faculty residence. The building is Vernacular in style with a rectangular plan with projections and simple one-story massing. It has a side-gable roof of asphalt composition shingles with open eaves, gable vents, and an interior brick chimney. The building is of wood frame construction on a raised stone and concrete slab foundation and clad with cement plaster and horizontal and vertical wood board siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the northeast façade and consist of a recessed entrance porch set at grade and sheltered by an overhanging roof. The primary entrance consists of a single paneled wood door with a wood screen door and wood surround and sidelight. A secondary entrance, also located on the northeast façade, consists of a single partially-glazed paneled wood doors with divided lights and wood surround. Fenestration consists of wood casement, fixed, and bay windows, all with divided lights, and metal sliding windows.

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### **Non-Contributors<sup>4</sup>**

#### **39. Staff/Faculty Residence (#31)**

**Style: No Style**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: circa 1910; relocated 1933**

***Thacher School Reference #31***

Staff/Faculty Residence #39 is located in the central portion of the campus core, to the northeast of the Middle School Dormitory. The building was originally constructed as an infirmary for the school around 1910 and was later relocated to this site and converted to faculty housing in 1933. The building has a generally rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a combination pyramidal and hipped roof with asphalt composition shingles and open eaves. The building is of wood frame construction clad in wood shingles. The primary (southeast) façade is asymmetrically composed with a central entrance. The primary entrance consists of a single fully-glazed door with divided lights. Fenestration consists of round arched casement windows with divided lights and aluminum sliding windows. Due to substantial alterations, the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **40. Laundry & Storage Building**

**Style: Neo-Craftsman**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1924**

***Thacher School Reference #1***

The Laundry & Storage Building is located in the southern portion of the central campus core, to the south of the Headmaster's Residence and to the west of the Anson Thacher Residence. The building was originally constructed as a garage for the Halleck Lefferts Residence, which occupied the site of the current Headmaster's Residence and has since been demolished. The building is designed in the Neo-Craftsman style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a side-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles, open eaves, shaped rafter tails, overhanging rakes, and knee braces. The building is of hollow clay tile and wood frame construction and is clad in wood shingles and cement plaster. The primary (southeast) façade is symmetrically composed and the primary entrance consists of a steel overhead sectional garage door. Due to substantial alterations, the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **41. Library**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Carleton Monroe Winslow**

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<sup>4</sup> Non-contributing resources are organized by original construction date. Their numbers here correspond to the numbers on the site map.

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**Year Built: 1928**

***Thacher School Reference #16***

The Library is located in the central portion of the campus core, to the south of the Study Hall and to the north of the Upper School Dormitory. The building is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and has an irregular plan and complex one-story massing. It has a combination front- and side-gable roof with clay barrel tile. The building is of reinforced concrete and hollow clay tile construction clad in cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. Entrances consist of single and paired partially-glazed wood doors with divided lights and paired fully-glazed doors with divided lights. Fenestration consists of wood casement windows with divided lights and transoms, arched wood windows with leaded glass, steel casement windows, and steel clerestory windows. Due to substantial alterations and additions outside the period of significance, the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **42. Bixby Handball Court Residences**

**Style: Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 1930**

***Thacher School Reference #25***

The Bixby Handball Court Residences are located in the eastern portion of the central campus core, to the east of the Library and Centennial Amphitheatre and to the north of the Anacapa House. The building was originally constructed as a handball court in 1930 and was later converted to staff/faculty housing in 1982. A carport has been added to the southeast. The building is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and has a rectangular plan and simple two-story massing. It has a side-gable roof with clay barrel tile. The building is of brick and wood frame construction clad in cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. Entrances are not visible from the campus road. Fenestration consists of steel casement windows. Due to substantial alterations, the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **43. Staff/Faculty Residence (#36)**

**Style: Minimal Ranch**

**Architect: Austen Pierpont**

**Year Built: 1964**

***Thacher School Reference #36***

Staff/Faculty Residence #36 is located in the western portion of the central campus core, to the north of the Upper Tennis Courts. The building is designed in the Minimal Ranch style and has an L-shaped plan with attached carport and simple one-story massing over a raised CMU foundation. It has a side-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles, open eaves, overhanging rakes, and interior brick chimney; the carport has a butterfly roof. The building is of wood frame construction clad in cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance

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is located on the east façade and consists of a recessed entrance porch sheltered by an overhanging roof. The primary entrance consists of a paneled wood door with leaded glass and vinyl-framed sidelights and transom. Fenestration consists of vinyl sliding windows. Due to substantial alterations, the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **44. Humanities Building**

**Style: Mid-Century Modern**

**Architect: Wilson, Stroh & Wilson**

**Year Built: 1966**

***Thacher School Reference #74***

The Humanities Building is located in the eastern portion of the central campus core and is surrounded by the Mudd Math & Science Building to the east, the Classroom Building and the Indoor Chapel to the south, and the Health Center and the Camp Supply building to the west. The building is designed in the Mid-Century Modern style and has a rectangular plan and simple one- and two-story massing set into the hillside. It has a low-pitched side-gable roof of rolled asphalt with wide boxed eaves and overhanging rakes on wood outriggers. The building is of cast-in-place concrete, CMU, and wood frame construction with expressed stack bond CMU at the lower story and cement plaster at the upper story. Façades are asymmetrically composed; the primary (west) façade features a full-width cantilevered balcony with a concrete parapet and metal pipe railing. The balcony is accessed via a double floating staircase with metal pipe railing. Entrances consist of single or paired paneled doors with transoms and paired fully-glazed metal doors with transoms and sidelights. Fenestration consists of grouped aluminum hopper windows with transoms and jalousie windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **45. Headmaster's Residence**

**Style: Late Modern**

**Architect: George Rockrise & Associates**

**Year Built: 1971**

***Thacher School Reference #7***

The Headmaster's Residence is located in the southern portion of the central campus core, to the south of the Milligan Center for the Performing Arts and to the west of the Anson Thacher Residence. The property is concealed from view by a wood fence with a stone base and is accessed via a wood vehicular gate. A separate pedestrian entrance, also concealed from view, is situated to the north of the building and is marked by a cast stone sculpture of a toad. The building is designed in the Late Modern style and has an irregular plan and simple two-story massing. It has a side-gable roof with asphalt overhanging eaves and rakes. It is of wood frame construction clad with wood shingles. Façades are asymmetrically composed; entrances are not visible from the campus road. Fenestration consists of metal fixed and sliding windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.



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#### **46. Chickering Barn**

**Style: Contemporary**

**Architect: Zelma Wilson**

**Year Built: 1981**

***Thacher School Reference #41***

The Chickering Barn is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the northwest of the perimeter road and to the southwest of the Twichell Barn. The building is designed in the Contemporary style and has an angled, linear plan with simple one-story massing set into the hillside. It has a cross-gable metal roof with standing seams, open eaves, and overhanging rakes. The building is of wood frame construction with plywood panel siding with wood battens. The building is symmetrically composed with groupings of stalls flanking a central aisle. Individual stalls and offices are accessed via a concrete walkway with an overhanging roof supported by wood posts. Entrances consist of wood Dutch doors or fully-glazed single doors with divided lights. Fenestration consists of metal sliding windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **47. Mudd Math & Science Building**

**Style: Contemporary**

**Architect: ROMA (architect); Curtis P. Stiles (landscape architect)**

**Year Built: 1981**

***Thacher School Reference #90***

The Mudd Math & Science Building is located in the eastern portion of the central campus core, to the east of the Humanities Building and to the north of the Bixby Residences. The building is designed in the Contemporary style and has an irregular plan oriented around a landscaped central courtyard and simple one-story massing set into the hillside. It has a shed roof with clay tile surrounded by a parapet. The building is of wood frame construction clad in cement plaster. Façades are asymmetrically composed; individual classrooms are accessed via a paved concrete walkway sheltered by an overhanging roof supported by square plastered columns. Entrances consist of flush doors. Fenestration consists of grouped metal awning windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **48. Royal Barney Hogan Workshop**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: John A. Siekely**

**Year Built: 1990**

***Thacher School Reference #29***

The Royal Barney Hogan Workshop is located in the northern portion of the central campus core, to north of the Music Box Residence. The building is utilitarian in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a combination side-gable and shed roof of

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corrugated metal. Façades are asymmetrically composed; the primary (east) façade is marked by a full-width projecting shed roof. Entrances consist of steel overhead roll-up doors and single flush doors. Fenestration consists of metal sliding windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **49. Lowery Corrals**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1990**

***Thacher School Reference #91***

The Lowery Corrals are located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the north of the Twichell Barn. The corrals are utilitarian in style and have an irregular plan with a shed roof of corrugated metal. The corrals are of expressed steel frame construction with wood board-and-batten siding and metal pipe railings. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the site is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **50. Red Corrals**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1990**

***Thacher School Reference #FS4***

The Red Corrals are located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the north of the Chickering Barn and to the west of the Twichell Barn. The corrals are utilitarian in style and have a rectangular plan with a low-pitched gable roof of corrugated metal. The corrals are of expressed steel frame construction with wood board-and-batten siding and metal pipe railings. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the site is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **51. Roadside Corrals**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: circa 1990**

***Thacher School Reference #FS3***

The Roadside Corrals are located in the northern portion of the central campus core, to the north of the Outdoor Theatre and to the southeast of the Chickering Barn. The corrals are utilitarian in style and have a rectangular plan with a low-pitched, asymmetrical gable roof of corrugated metal. The corrals are of expressed steel frame construction with wood board-and-batten siding and metal pipe railings. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the site is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **52. Centennial Amphitheatre**

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**Style: N/A**  
**Architect: Fields, Silverman & Deveraux**  
**Year Built: 1991**  
***Thacher School Reference #FS14***

The Centennial Amphitheatre is located in the eastern portion of the central campus core, to the east of the Library. The Amphitheatre consists of a stone cavea oriented to the west and facing the adjacent Library. It is of concrete construction with stone risers, concrete steps, and metal-framed bench seating. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the structure is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **53. Thacher Commons**

**Style: Contemporary**  
**Architect: Barton Phelps**  
**Year Built: 2005**  
***Thacher School Reference #12***

The Thacher Commons is located in the center of the central campus core and is surrounded by the Dining Hall to the north, the Admissions Office to the east, the Milligan Center for the Performing Arts to the south, and the Historic Oval to the west. The building is Contemporary in style and has a rectangular plan and simple one- and two-story massing set into the hillside. It has a side-gable metal roof with overhanging boxed eaves and gable vents. The building is clad in vertical wood plank siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed; the west façade features a full-width cantilevered balcony with a concrete parapet and metal pipe railing. The balcony is accessed via a floating staircase with a metal pipe railing. Entrances on the south and north façades are at grade and consist of projecting flat roofs supported by metal posts. Entrance doors are paired fully-glazed metal doors with transoms set within a grouping of fixed metal storefront windows. Fenestration consists of awning windows and metal-framed curtain walls. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **54. Milligan Center for the Performing Arts**

**Style: Contemporary**  
**Architect: Barton Phelps**  
**Year Built: 2005**  
***Thacher School Reference #9***

The Milligan Center for the Performing Arts is located in the southern portion of the central campus core and is surrounded by the Thacher Commons to the north, the Historic Lower Field to the east, and the Headmaster's Residence to the south. The building is Contemporary in style and has an irregular plan and complex one- and two-story massing set into the hillside. It has a combination shed and asymmetrical-gable metal roof with gable vents. The building is clad in wood plank and corrugated metal siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed; the east façade is defined by a dramatic projecting roof supported by metal posts. The primary entrance on the

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north façade is at grade and sheltered by a projecting roof. Entrance doors are paired metal fully-glazed doors with transoms set within a grouping of fixed metal windows. Fenestration is limited and consists primarily of the metal-framed curtain walls defining the primary entrance. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **55. Anacapa House for Visiting Scholars**

**Style: Contemporary**

**Architect: Unknown**

**Year Built: 2005**

***Thacher School Reference #69***

The Anacapa House for Visiting Scholars is located in the eastern portion of the central campus core, to the south of the Bixby Residences and to the east of the Centennial Amphitheatre. The building is a duplex residence designed in the Contemporary style. It has an irregular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a combination side-gable and shed roof with asphalt composition shingles and open eaves. The building is of wood frame construction and clad in stone and wood board-and-batten siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrances are located on the northeast façade, where they are set at grade and marked by overhanging roofs or wood trellises. Entrance doors are paired fully-glazed doors with divided lights. Fenestration consists of casement and fixed windows with divided lights. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **56. Lower School Dormitory and Residences**

**Style: Contemporary**

**Architect: David Hertz**

**Year Built: 2007**

***Thacher School Reference #33***

The Lower School Dormitory and Residences located in the northeastern portion of the central campus core, to the northwest of the Middle School Dormitory. The building is Contemporary in style with a square plan oriented around a central landscaped courtyard, and one- and two-story massing set into the hillside. It has a combination gabled roof of metal with standing seams and overhanging boxed eaves and rakes. It is clad in cement plaster and clapboard siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed. The primary entrance to the central courtyard is located on the south façade and consists of a set of concrete steps with metal railing leading to a wood trellis supported by stone posts. Entrances to individual dormitory rooms open onto the courtyard and are set at grade and connected by a concrete walkway, which is sheltered by an overhanging roof supported by wood posts. Entrance doors are paneled wood Dutch doors. Fenestration consists of fixed and double-hung metal windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

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### **57. Round Pen**

**Style: Utilitarian**

**Architect: N/A**

**Year Built: 2013**

***Thacher School Reference #FS5***

The Round Pen is located in the northwestern portion of campus, to the northwest of the Chickering Barn and to the southwest of the Hunt Barn. The pen is utilitarian in style and has a round plan. It has a concrete foundation and consists of sheet metal fencing mounted on a steel pipe frame. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the structure is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **58. Staff/Faculty Residence (#114)**

**Style: Neo-Craftsman**

**Architect: Irontown Homes/BDC Design**

**Year Built: 2017**

***Thacher School Reference #114***

Staff/Faculty Residence #114 is located in the southern portion of the central campus core, to the south of the Coniferous Bosque and to the east of the Anson Thacher Residence. The building is Neo-Craftsman in style with an irregular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a front-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles and overhanging eaves. The building is of pre-fabricated construction and is clad with board-and-batten and clapboard siding. Façades are asymmetrically composed; the primary (southwest) façade is defined by a partial-width projecting porch with wood steps and balustrade and a combination shed and front-gable roof supported by wood posts. The primary entrance door is a single fully-glazed door. The secondary porch entrance consists of a vinyl sliding door. Fenestration consists of vinyl casement windows. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

### **59. Staff/Faculty Garage (#115)**

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Irontown Homes/BDC Design**

**Year Built: 2017**

***Thacher School Reference #115***

Staff/Faculty Garage #115 is located in the southern portion of the central campus core, to the northeast of Residence #114 and to the southwest of Residence #14. It is Vernacular in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a front-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles and overhanging eaves. The building is of pre-fabricated construction and is clad with board-and-batten siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the southwest façade and consists of a steel overhead sectional garage door. Due to

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construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### 60. Staff/Faculty Garage (#120)

**Style: Vernacular**

**Architect: Irontown Homes/BDC Design**

**Year Built: 2017**

***Thacher School Reference #120***

Staff/Faculty Garage #120 is located in the southern portion of the central campus core, to the southwest of the Anson Thacher Residence. It is Vernacular in style with a rectangular plan and simple one-story massing. It has a front-gable roof with asphalt composition shingles and overhanging eaves. The building is of pre-fabricated construction and is clad with board-and-batten siding. Façades are symmetrically composed. The primary entrance is located on the southwest façade and consists of a steel overhead sectional garage door. Due to construction outside the period of significance, the building is a non-contributor to The Thacher School Historic District.

#### **Integrity**

The period of significance for the Thacher School Historic District extends from 1895 to 1953. This timeframe reflects the evolution of the Thacher School from its origins as a rustic boarding school on the Casa de Piedra ranch into a robust educational institution. Sixty-three (63) percent of the buildings within the district boundary are contributors to the Thacher School Historic District. The Thacher School Historic District retains the relevant aspects of integrity for properties significant under Criterion A, including *location, design, setting, feeling, and association*. The aspects of integrity are discussed in detail below.

- **Location:** The Thacher School remains in its original location on the site of the Casa de Piedra ranch in Ojai. There are two contributing resources to the Thacher School Historic District which have been relocated within the district.<sup>5</sup> The relocated resources – two Staff/Faculty Residences – represent portions of the original residential complex designed and constructed for the School’s founder, Sherman Day Thacher. They have been relocated within the Thacher School campus and remain a part of the campus historic core. Their character and location recall the basic qualities of the historic environment and setting, and they retain their historic association with the Thacher School. The buildings have been rehabilitated and retain significant historic features. The district therefore retains integrity of location.
- **Design:** While most of the individual buildings within the district have undergone some degree of alteration over time, the campus overall has retained many of the principles and features associated with its original design and planning. The campus overall retains the irregular, sprawling arrangement and spatial relationships between major buildings.

<sup>5</sup> Two resources, the Shed and the Blacksmith Shop, may have been relocated to their current sites, but the date of the buildings’ construction and possible subsequent relocation could not be confirmed.

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Circulation patterns have developed from the earliest network of pathways on campus and remain in use today. Visual and spatial relationships between buildings, and between the district and the surrounding landscape, has been maintained, including the retention of important views and vistas which have been created through the siting and orientation of campus buildings over time. Therefore, the district retains integrity of design.

- **Setting:** While some infill residential construction has occurred along Thacher Road and McAndrew Road throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the surrounding area overall has retained a low density of development and is primarily occupied by continuing agricultural operations and modest single-family residences. The Thacher School campus itself has retained its close relationship to the surrounding natural landscape and the adjacent Topa Topa Mountains, which is reflected in the campus topography, vegetation, siting, views and vistas, and spatial relationships. Therefore, the district retains integrity of setting.
- **Materials:** The majority of individual buildings, objects and sites within the district have undergone some degree of exterior alteration; common alterations include the replacement of roofing, exterior wall cladding, some primary and secondary entrance doors, some fenestration, and decorative elements. Therefore, the district does not retain integrity of materials.
- **Workmanship:** As the majority of resources within the district have undergone some degree of exterior alteration, individual resources no longer convey their original construction methods and the district does not retain integrity of workmanship. However, per the discussion of relevant aspects of integrity included in National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, “integrity of design and workmanship...might not be as important to the significance” of a property important for association with an event, historical pattern, or person(s).<sup>6</sup>
- **Feeling:** The district retains a number of shared planning features related to spatial relationships and land use, topography, vegetation, and circulation which continue to convey the historic character of the campus. Contributing buildings within the district retain a number of the character-defining features dating from their original construction, including form, massing, expressed masonry construction methods, some entrances, and some fenestration. As a result, the property retains sufficient physical evidence to convey the feeling and character of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century ranch school developed from a rural ranch. Therefore, the district retains integrity of feeling.
- **Association:** The Thacher School Historic District retains integrity of location, setting, and feeling. It is sufficiently intact to convey the feeling of a rustic early 20<sup>th</sup> century ranch school and continues to convey its relationship to the early development of the Thacher School. The district therefore retains integrity of association.

<sup>6</sup> “Determining the Relevant Aspects of Integrity,” *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1990; revised 1991, 1995, 1997), [https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_8.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm) (accessed November 2017).

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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.)

Education \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1895 - 1953 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

Thacher, Edward, and Ilsley, Samuel  
Benton, Arthur  
Pierpont, Austen  
de Forest, Jr., Lockwood

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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.)

The Thacher School Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Education. It is one of the earliest private boarding schools in California, and it remains a functioning school to the present day. First established in 1889, the Thacher School campus has a rich and complex history, spanning from its early days as a ranch and ad hoc boarding school operated by Sherman Day Thacher to its establishment as a robust educational institution in the second half of the twentieth century. The Thacher School is the oldest school in the Ojai Valley; it is one of only three boarding schools in California which date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and remain in operation, and the only such school to remain in continuous operation as an independent boarding school on its original site. It is also the oldest example in California of the ranch-based preparatory school, an educational trend which originated in the American West at the turn of the century as the region became increasingly romanticized in popular culture. The period of significance for the Thacher School Historic District is 1895-1953. This period encompasses the construction of the earliest extant buildings on campus, through the school's transition to a more conventional institutional operation during the first half of the twentieth century. The period of significance concludes in 1953 with the end of the postwar building campaign and the relocation of founder Sherman Day Thacher's original residence. This period marked a shift in campus development away from the school's origins as a rustic ranch towards a more conventional and larger-scale institutional setting.

#### Criteria Consideration B Discussion

Staff/Faculty Residence #14 and Staff/Faculty Residence #47, two contributing resources to the Thacher School Historic District, were constructed in 1953, using portions of the former Chaparral Cottage (Sherman Day Thacher's original residence) and that building's "Annex Cottage."<sup>7</sup> These 1953 staff residence buildings recall the basic qualities of Thacher School's early historic environment and setting. However, the two residences do not retain integrity as the Chaparral Cottage and Annex Cottage. Therefore, for the purposes of this nomination, Staff/Faculty Residence #14 and Staff/Faculty Residence #47 are considered 1953 buildings and are not required to meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties.

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<sup>7</sup> Two additional resources, the Shed and the Blacksmith Shop, may have been relocated to their current sites, but the date of the buildings' construction and possible subsequent relocation could not be confirmed.

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

### **Criterion A**

The Thacher School Historic District reflects the establishment and subsequent growth of an important private secondary boarding school located in Ojai, California. The Thacher School is significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of private education in California. The Thacher School was originally established in 1889 as a highly-selective private boarding school for boys, and the school has remained in continuous operation on its original site since its founding. The Thacher School is one of only three boarding schools in California dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century which remain in operation today, and the only one of the three to remain in continuous operation as an independent private boarding school on the same campus.<sup>8</sup> The Thacher School is also the oldest school in the Ojai Valley, where its establishment precipitated the development of other educational institutions in the community; today, the Ojai Valley contains a robust concentration of private preparatory schools.

The Thacher School also represents the earliest example in California of the “ranch prep school,” a distinctive institutional type which originated in the American West. Ranch schools gained prominence at the turn of the twentieth century, when popular culture romanticized the distinctive Western landscape and lifestyle of its inhabitants as representative of American virtue. The School’s ongoing dedication to equestrian programs and facilities continues to define the character of the Thacher School as a uniquely Western institution.

The Thacher School’s history was punctuated by two major fires around the turn of the twentieth century, and as a result, few resources remain from the school’s initial period of growth and development. Contributing resources include the earliest extant resources remaining on campus; other contributing resources include representative examples of construction which reflect the school’s continued development throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as well as its sustained interest and emphasis on activities related to horsemanship and outdoor life.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE THACHER SCHOOL**

The Thacher School was first developed in the late nineteenth century as an ancillary operation to Sherman Day Thacher’s Casa de Piedra Ranch. Thacher, a graduate of Yale University, had traveled west to California with his ailing brother and, having become enamored with the Ojai Valley, decided to settle there and establish a citrus ranch. Sherman Thacher’s agricultural operations were still his primary concern when he received a letter from family friend and Yale professor Henry W. Farnam requesting a favor from Thacher. Would he consider taking Farnam’s nephew, also named Henry, for “a year of outdoor life combined with study in

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<sup>8</sup> San Domenico School, originally established in 1850 as the state’s first independent and first Catholic school, has relocated operations several times in its history and is now located in San Anselmo, California; St. Catherine’s Academy, originally established in 1889 and located in Anaheim, operated for a time as an orphanage and, later, a military school.

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preparation for college”<sup>9</sup> Thacher appeared to take Farnam’s request as a matter of course: “After consulting with his family, who agreed that it would be pleasant to have young Henry around, Sherman accepted the proposal without more ado, and looked forward to earning a few extra dollars ‘until the oranges should make his fortune.’”<sup>10</sup>

It did not take long, though, until “somehow it became known all over Ventura County that Sherman was willing and able to tutor.”<sup>11</sup> Sherman Thacher’s favor to a friend soon became a full-fledged operation. At that time, Ventura County public schools were considered to be unsatisfactory, and while he was inexperienced, due to his Ivy League education Thacher was still considered to be better qualified than other local teachers.<sup>12</sup> Although he was pressed by area parents to take on more boys, Thacher at first demurred.

His main concern, he told the parents, was the fear that if he were not careful he would have a school on his hands. They assured him that no one, except themselves, could ever force him to continue taking boys. In a few years the orange orchard would be bearing and his fortune made. He gracefully yielded, intending to gain revenge by exorbitant tuition fees.<sup>13</sup>

With Sherman Thacher’s acquiescence, the Casa de Piedra Ranch school was formed.

### ***Early Development of The Thacher School, 1889 - 1911***

From the earliest days of the school now established at the Casa de Piedra Ranch, its character was contrary to previously-established norms for institutional development. The earliest advertisements made note of the fact that “the place has not been given the title of school. While it is a school as far as progress in study goes, it is hoped that it will always preserve distinctly the more normal life of a household and ranch.”<sup>14</sup> At first few provisions were made for the additional residents of the ranch; all school operations were conducted out of the Stone House – the “first real building” Sherman Thacher constructed on his ranch in 1889.<sup>15</sup> Within just a few years, however, Thacher had taken on enough pupils to make this arrangement unsuitable. By 1892, Thacher was compelled to hire an additional teacher and construct several additional buildings. During the first three academic years from the fall of 1892 to the spring of 1895, a pattern for school life and operation evolved, much of which became permanent.<sup>16</sup> By 1895, Sherman Thacher had developed a fully working school. Admittedly, “the equipment was little

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<sup>9</sup> LeRoy McKim Makepeace, *Sherman Thacher And His School* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 70. Historical accounts of the earliest days of The Thacher School are extremely limited, as are documents related to early construction and development efforts on campus. LeRoy McKim Makepeace’s biography of the School’s founder, Sherman Day Thacher, represents the only substantive record of the initial establishment and subsequent operations of The Thacher School, and this report draws heavily from its narrative to identify and describe the broad patterns of trends and events that shaped the School’s built environment.

<sup>10</sup> Makepeace, 70.

<sup>11</sup> Makepeace, 73.

<sup>12</sup> Makepeace, 74.

<sup>13</sup> Makepeace, 74.

<sup>14</sup> Makepeace, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Makepeace, 49.

<sup>16</sup> Makepeace, 87.

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better than adequate and the buildings were neither handsome nor luxurious. But he knew that the physical plant of a school is of slight importance to anyone except parents.”<sup>17</sup>

Horses figured prominently in life at the ranch; as a means of transportation horses were vital, and horsemanship served as a chief form of recreation when there were few other options. Although not every boy had one at first, pupils living in the County soon started bringing their horses from home. Along with riding, baseball became the primary form of exercise, played at recess with scores carried over from day to day. A baseball field was developed in the 1890s on the site of the present-day Historic Lower Field, with outcropping boulders initially used as bases.<sup>18</sup> Over time, the field was utilized for games, schoolwide calisthenics exercises, and informal gatherings and barbecues, and it remains a recreational site to this day.

On the night of June 17, 1895, a fire broke out in the kitchen building. Without a water source or water storage with which to fight the fire, the entire ranch complex – including all of the school buildings – was completely consumed in less than thirty minutes. The boys, staff, and Thacher family all escaped without injury, but the loss of property and possessions was significant. Sherman Thacher was substantially underinsured, holding coverage for perhaps a quarter of the total value of the property’s improvements, and had almost no money in the bank.<sup>19</sup> However, he immediately announced that he would rebuild at once, a process that was greatly aided by the financial contributions of friends and family members. Perhaps the greatest symbolic loss was that of the Stone House – the heart of the school and ranch. The masonry had been weakened by the fire and it was necessary to abandon the building to ruin. With the demise of the Stone House, its location on the ranch ceased to function as the nexus of The Thacher School activities. When new school buildings were constructed that year, they were situated further away from the site of the former school buildings, a few hundred feet up the hill to the south,<sup>20</sup> and this location formed the central campus core as it is known today. Edward Thacher, who had studied as an architect, designed two new structures with some assistance from Santa Barbara architect Samuel Ilsley. The first – the Main Building, now known as the Dining Hall – contained the parlor, dining room, and kitchen, with dormitories for the younger boys on the second floor. The parlor included a fireplace designed by Sherman Thacher and constructed of stone quarried from the nearby Gridley Ranch.<sup>21</sup> The second building, which later became the Middle School Building (subsequently destroyed by fire), served as a dormitory and school room.

The new campus was constructed swiftly: buildings were ready by the commencement of the new school year in October 1895. While the two school structures were given over to the boys, accommodations were needed to house the Thachers. The challenge was compounded by the fact that Sherman Thacher became engaged that same year, and would soon be bringing a wife to campus. Thus, building activity during the 1895-1896 school year focused on the construction of two residences. The first was a house for Sherman Thacher’s mother, who was known as Madam

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<sup>17</sup> Makepeace, 99.

<sup>18</sup> Makepeace, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Makepeace, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Makepeace, 105.

<sup>21</sup> Makepeace, 105. The second of the two buildings, the Middle School building, was later destroyed in a subsequent fire in 1910.

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Thacher, which was completed in early 1896.<sup>22</sup> The second was a home for Sherman Thacher and his new wife, Eliza Blake. The couple arrived home to the newly-completed Chaparral Cottage after their wedding in June 1896. Practical difficulties made it impossible to accommodate any more married men, which put The Thacher School at some disadvantage in terms of securing additional teachers. “Several highly promising teachers were denied positions because they had the misfortune to be married, explained Makepeace. “Before the days of apartments, a married teacher implied a house, and there was little money to pay for such construction... Besides, the young men were needed to supervise dormitories.”<sup>23</sup> It would be several more decades before more widespread accommodations for married staff and faculty were developed.

Construction activity continued after the fire until there were fifteen buildings on the ranch.<sup>24</sup> In 1899, the barns were expanded to stable forty horses and six cows, and an annex building was added to the north façade of the Dining Hall. That same year, the first well was drilled and a water system was established for the campus. The development and expansion of the water system became a primary concern throughout the next several years. A reservoir had been dug in 1895, and with the development of the well, it could now be filled and the ranch would be relatively safe from the kind of damage wrought by the earlier fire.

The landscape of the campus also began to take shape during this period, including the completion of several important sites: the Historic Oval and the Upper Tennis Courts. The Historic Oval originated from open space whose boundaries were established by the construction of an oval track to the west of the Dining Hall. The clearing remained unimproved over time, although plants and trees were introduced in the 1890s. Based on an examination of archival photographs, it is possible that the area served as an ad hoc horse racing track until the acquisition of the New Field in 1904. The Upper Tennis Courts were developed at the encouragement of William Thacher, Sherman Thacher’s brother. As Makepeace explains, “Interest in tennis was negligible until the arrival of Mr. William Thacher, but his enthusiasm and skill soon made it the most popular game at the school and in the valley. He had been champion of Yale, runner-up in the national Intercollegiate singles, and doubles champion. Not only was he a first-rate player himself, but he enjoyed teaching everyone else. New courts were built at the school, a tennis club was established in the village, tournaments were organized, and matches arranged between the valley and the school and with teams from other towns.”<sup>25</sup> Initially, two courts were constructed end-to-end shortly after William Thacher’s arrival in Ojai in 1895, and a second pair was constructed adjacent to the first around 1905. The courts were situated on terraced land to the west of the Dining Hall and were defined by stone retaining walls.

The first decades of the twentieth century were marked by a great period of growth for the fledgling school at the Casa de Piedra Ranch. In 1899, Sherman Day Thacher’s school had been

<sup>22</sup> The residence was subsequently demolished to make way for construction of a new campus auditorium (now also demolished), which was located on the site of the present-day Thacher Commons.

<sup>23</sup> Makepeace, 165.

<sup>24</sup> Makepeace, 112.

<sup>25</sup> Makepeace, 118.

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officially named The Thacher School,<sup>26</sup> and by 1904 the school housed forty pupils.<sup>27</sup> In 1902, a waiting list was necessitated;<sup>28</sup> the demand to expand was great, but Thacher was hesitant to do so, believing that the school's unique identity and close-knit sense of community would be destroyed. Further, there was no funding available to expand campus facilities to accommodate more students. In the first fifteen years of the school's operation, Makepeace writes, "nothing had been constructed which was not absolutely essential."<sup>29</sup> These improvements included two small annexes to the Main School Building, and an annex addition to the Dining Hall, which included several bedrooms and a one-room library.

Beginning in 1904, more organized and proactive improvements were undertaken. In the autumn of 1904, a field adjoining the Horn Ranch was leased for gymkhana and track activities. This land became known as the New Field – the same name later assigned to each subsequent playing field as it was constructed – which is now known as the Gymkhana Field. The land was improved and eventually purchased, becoming the center of school athletics.<sup>30</sup> In 1906, the Rough House was constructed, representing Sherman Thacher's vision of a place where "boys can let off steam without injury to themselves or others."<sup>31</sup> Another notable improvement was made in 1908 with the addition of the rustic Outdoor Theatre, which was developed in time for commencement exercises to be held there in June.

The campus was once again damaged by fire in the autumn of 1910. There were no injuries, but the Main School Building, Appendix, Annex, and Rough House were destroyed. The only major building to survive the fire was the present-day Dining Hall. Arrangements for housing and classes were improvised during the rebuilding process, with boys bunking with teachers and classes being held in the library. During this time Sherman Thacher made the acquaintance of a Los Angeles architect, Arthur Benton, who was staying in Ojai while he planned the new high school. Benton was well-known in Los Angeles for his civic and commercial projects and favored the popular Mission Revival style of architecture. Thacher commissioned Benton to design the new buildings for the campus, the Study Hall and the Upper School Dormitory, which this time were to be constructed of fireproof material. To offset the \$30,000 anticipated cost of these two buildings, rooms for eight more boys were made available.<sup>32</sup> Both buildings were completed by the start of the fall term in 1911. The beloved Rough House was not rebuilt until 1914, and it was subsequently demolished.

#### Contributing Resources from this Period

- *Historic Lower Field (circa 1890)*
- *Dining Hall & Administration Building (1895)*
- *Upper Tennis Courts (circa 1895)*
- *Historic Oval (circa 1895)*

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<sup>26</sup> Makepeace, 115.

<sup>27</sup> Makepeace, 126.

<sup>28</sup> Makepeace, 111.

<sup>29</sup> Makepeace, 127.

<sup>30</sup> Makepeace, 126-127.

<sup>31</sup> Makepeace, 126-127.

<sup>32</sup> Makepeace, 130-131.

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- *Flagpole (circa 1895)*
- *Staff/Faculty Residence #47 (1896)*
- *Business Office & Staff/Faculty Apartments (1899, estimated)*
- *Gymkhana Field (circa 1900)*
- *Outdoor Theatre (1908)*
- *Study Hall (1911)*
- *Upper School Dormitory and Dodge Annex Residences (1911, dormitory; 1906, residence, estimated)*
- *McCaskey Commons (1911, estimated)*
- *Staff/Faculty Residence #62 (Horne Residence) (circa 1890)*

### ***Institutional Growth, 1911 - 1931***

For the next eighteen years, no major additions were made to the campus.<sup>33</sup> World War I cast a shadow across the school, such that one of the few improvements of note was a war garden started by William Thacher behind his house in 1918.<sup>34</sup> A small faculty club was erected following the war, but the more poignant addition was the development of a memorial peristyle, which now functions as part of the Outdoor Chapel. While many ideas for the memorial were proposed by students, in the end it was agreed that “the memorial must not be disguised as just another part of the school plant,” and the peristyle concept – originally the suggestion of Sherman Thacher – prevailed.<sup>35</sup>

A more significant contributing factor to the lack of development was Sherman Thacher’s financial situation. Thacher had been in debt even before the fire of 1895, but he refused to accept any donations to the School for new buildings, believing that as a privately-operated institution the School should remain self-sufficient.<sup>36</sup> After deliberating for several years, Sherman Thacher decided to incorporate the school as a non-profit institution in 1924. While Sherman Thacher remained headmaster, and his family retained their residences at the School, the Casa de Piedra Ranch property was turned over to the school’s new Board of Trustees.

The school previously had not planned to commence with any development activity until Sherman Thacher’s debts were completely cleared in 1922, but with the question of the school’s future decided through incorporation, the Board now felt that it would be appropriate to accept any financial gifts intended for future building projects.<sup>37</sup> The second half of the 1920s saw the construction of several new buildings as a result of financial gifts to the school. These included a grandstand for the gymkhana area, completed in 1927 and in honor of its patron and board member, Frank Heffelfinger; and a new library, designed by architect Carleton Monroe Winslow and completed in 1928. Several years later, a squash court, completed in 1930, was given in memory of former student John Bixby.

<sup>33</sup> Durand Echeverria, “Building History Program Outlined,” *The Thacher Notes*, April 30, 1947.

<sup>34</sup> Makepeace, 134. The garden was relocated the following year to a larger area above the upper recess baseball field.

<sup>35</sup> Makepeace, 136.

<sup>36</sup> Durand Echeverria, “Building History Program Outlined.”

<sup>37</sup> Durand Echeverria, “Building History Program Outlined.”



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The dawn of a new decade brought great change to the Thacher School. At the commencement exercises for the 1930-1931 school year, in his address to the school, Sherman Day Thacher announced his retirement as well as that of his brother, William Thacher, who had served on the faculty and been a member of the school community for nearly as long as Sherman. Both men intended to step down from their administrative and instructional commitments but planned to remain in residence on campus with their families. The decision was due in part to Sherman Thacher's health; he had been ill for some time, but it was only with great reluctance that he acquiesced to his doctors' wishes that he vacate his duties. He died only six weeks after he announced his retirement, on August 5, 1931.

#### Contributing Resources from this Period

- *Staff/Faculty Residence #14 (1914)*
- *Student Union Building (1920)*
- *Outdoor Chapel (circa 1920, pergola; 1951, chapel)*
- *Staff/Faculty Residence #6 (1922)*
- *Gymkhana Grandstand (1927)*

#### ***Institutional Maturity, 1931 - 1941***

Teacher Morgan Barnes was chosen to succeed Sherman Day Thacher as headmaster of the Thacher School. Almost immediately Barnes and the Board of Trustees commenced with plans to improve the campus. In 1931 the need for long-range planning for future building was seen, and the Trustees authorized Morgan Barnes, the acting headmaster, to retain two of the school's alumni, architect Austen Pierpont and landscape architect Lockwood de Forest, Jr.,<sup>38</sup> to draw up "a comprehensive plan for future building operations."<sup>39</sup> *The Thacher Notes*, the school newspaper, reported on the plan when it was formally announced the following year, noting that "the general limitations in this program are few. The style of architecture to be followed in general will be California Spanish with field-stone and stucco as materials. There is no time schedule at present, general financial conditions being an important factor. It will probably extend over the next twenty years."<sup>40</sup>

The first building to be constructed under the new plan was the living quarters for the school's Chinese workers.<sup>41</sup> Completed in 1932, the L-shaped building featured seven rooms which opened to an interior courtyard, as well as a common room and a bathroom equipped with a shower deemed "the envy of the entire School."<sup>42</sup> A new planting program was also inaugurated, likely under de Forest's direction.<sup>43</sup> The first dedicated science building was also constructed, using funds donated by Howard R. Hughes, Sr. Hughes was the father of famed aviator Howard Hughes, who spent one of his high school years at Thacher as a member of the class of 1923.

<sup>38</sup> De Forest was christened Lockwood de Forest III but was known professionally as Lockwood de Forest, Jr.

<sup>39</sup> Durand Echeverria, "Building History Program Outlined."

<sup>40</sup> "Future Architectural Plan For School Is Announced," *The Thacher Notes*, May 27, 1932.

<sup>41</sup> "New Chinese Quarters," *The Thacher Notes*, December 9, 1932.

<sup>42</sup> "New Chinese Quarters," *The Thacher Notes*, December 9, 1932.

<sup>43</sup> "Many New Improvements," *The Thacher Notes*, December 9, 1932.

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According to historian Judy Triem, the Hughes building, which was completed in 1936, represented architect Pierpont's first major commission on campus.<sup>44</sup>

Other significant building activity from this period included the development of several staff and faculty residences. The construction of these residences marked a departure from previous policy, which did not make provisions for housing for married staff and faculty. Until 1931, only five houses had been provided, for three members of the Thacher family and two other married faculty members. These residences reflected the presence of only five women at the school.<sup>45</sup> In 1934 Anson Stiles Thacher, Sherman Thacher's son, married and a house was constructed for him and his new bride. William Thacher's house – which was almost completely destroyed in a fire in 1933 – was rebuilt in 1934.

Anson Stiles Thacher, Sherman Thacher's son, assumed the duties of headmaster in 1936. The building plan instituted during Morgan Barnes' time as headmaster continued under the younger Thacher's stewardship. Improvements made during this period focused primarily on housing and equestrian facilities. A new Middle School dormitory was designed by Austen Pierpont and constructed in 1937 on the site of the former Middle School building. Two substantial new barns were constructed, also designed by Pierpont: the Twichell Barn, completed in 1938, and the Hunt Barn, completed in 1940.

The construction of the Twichell Barn in 1938 marked a shift from the equestrian center further to the south and west. It was later observed in *The Thacher Notes* that it was hoped the area, "formerly known as the "Pasture," [would] become a kind of play area for the boys particularly interested in horses. There is room there for a number of corrals and even for a small gymkhana practice field." Within the next several years, the construction of additional barns in this area reflected the trend toward relocating these facilities further from the campus core, and over time the area evolved to become the center of equestrian activities on campus. The construction of the Twichell Barn also reflected a new direction in character and materials of the campus, with "architectural points heretofore unemployed in barn construction at Thacher, such as corrugated roofing, a single row of stalls, and two hay-storage rooms separated from the rest of the barn by walls of native stone." This last point was in response to the damage exacted on campus buildings – barns, in particular – by earlier fires, and represented architect Pierpont's attempt to contain any potential fires sparked by the ignition of hay.

#### Contributing Resources from this Period

- *Health Center (1932)*
- *John Cory Memorial (1932)*
- *Coniferous Bosque (1932, estimated)*
- *Staff/Faculty Residence #2 (Anson Thacher Residence and Garage) (1934)*
- *Admissions Office (William Larned Thacher Residence) (1934)*

<sup>44</sup> Judith P. Triem, "Austen Pierpont at The Thacher School: An Architectural Guide to His Works," prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates, 2007, held in The Thacher School Archives at the James G. Boswell Library.

<sup>45</sup> Makepeace, 164. This number likely does not include the School's Chinese servants.

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- *Gymkhana Field Interior Bench (1935)*
- *Indoor Chapel (1936)*
- *Middle School Dormitory and Residences (1937)*
- *Twichell Barn (1938)*
- *Hunt Barn (1940)*

### ***Wartime Activities and Postwar Development, 1941 - 1953***

Any further construction was largely halted while World War II was in progress. A Victory Garden was one of the few wartime development projects. One of the first postwar construction projects was a modest music conservatory, completed in 1945. The previous music building – also modest in size and scale – had been known as the “Music Box,” and the name was carried over to the new building. *The Thacher Notes* observed that the Music Box had been built “despite labor and material scarcities,” likely a reference to the shortage of available building materials during wartime.

Building plans resumed in the late 1940s as school administrators focused on desperately needed facilities upgrades.<sup>46</sup> As John S. Taylor explains, by that time, many of the campus buildings still dated back to the school’s earliest days and were badly in need of repair or outright replacement.<sup>47</sup> In 1946, a building program was established, which was formally announced the following year in *The Thacher Notes*: “The purpose and objective of this program is to raise a fund adequate for the modernization and improvement of the physical facilities of the School and an endowment fund for their maintenance and use.”<sup>48</sup> The new building plan was headed by Austen Pierpont and Lockwood de Forest, Jr., who were joined this time by architect Arthur Brown of San Francisco. Several projects were completed under the new building plan while Anson Thacher remained headmaster, but because fundraising spanned several years, some construction activity was conducted under his successor, Newton Chase, who assumed the position of Head of School in 1949. The last buildings constructed from the proposed plan, the Classroom Building and the Gymkhana Field House, were completed in 1952.

Other improvements of the postwar era included the development of Jameson Field (now known as the PTS Arenas) in 1948. Although the adjacent New Field (now known as the Gymkhana Field) had been developed for equestrian and sporting events beginning in 1904, by the 1940s the Thacher School had sorely outgrown its only athletic facility. The Jameson Field was developed using funds donated by Mrs. John A. Jameson, whose three sons had attended the school; the field was dedicated to her son John A. Jameson, Jr. Work commenced on the field in the spring of 1947, on the site of the former practice riding ring.<sup>49</sup> Students pitched in on school-wide “work days” to assist in constructing fencing, goal posts, and landscaping, and when the field was officially opened in 1948 it contained a 220-yard straightaway track, a baseball field, and a

<sup>46</sup> John Taylor, *The Thacher School*, The Campus History Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 25.

<sup>47</sup> Taylor, 25.

<sup>48</sup> “Thacher Launches Building Program,” *The Thacher Notes*, April 30, 1947.

<sup>49</sup> Grading was temporarily halted the following autumn when the field served as a landing area for Forest Service helicopters who were attending a nearby forest fire in Ojai.

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soccer field. Additionally, the Smith Barn was completed in 1949. The construction of the Smith Barn was motivated by the loss of the Middle Barn, which was demolished to accommodate construction of the new Lower School dormitory. Mrs. Lloyd R. Smith, whose two sons attended Thacher, donated the funds for it to be built; as a result, the barn is named in her honor. The Gymkhana Field House, designed by Austen Pierpont, was completed in 1952.

The school officially closed the building fund on December, 31, 1950, with over \$267,000 raised.<sup>50</sup> Substantial new building projects completed during the 1950s as part of the building campaign included the Gymkhana Field House, the Classroom building, completed in 1952; the new infirmary, completed in 1954 (subsequently demolished); and the auditorium, completed in 1958 (subsequently demolished). All were designed by Austen Pierpont. Additions were also made to several existing buildings during this time, including the library's Donald M. Kerr Memorial Reading Room in 1950, and the Martha Lavender Memorial Room in 1961, as well as a new kitchen addition to the Dining Hall in 1951.

In 1953, the school relocated Chaparral Cottage, founder Sherman Day Thacher's own residence. Chaparral Cottage had been constructed for Sherman Thacher and his wife, Eliza Blake Thacher, on the occasion of their marriage in 1896. Over time, the Thachers required more room for their growing family of six children, and a separate Annex Cottage was constructed immediately adjacent to Chaparral Cottage in 1914. Chaparral Cottage remained the Thacher family home even after Sherman Thacher's death in 1931, although the Annex Cottage functioned off and on as an ad hoc faculty club from the late 1920s through the 1940s. By the 1950s, the Thacher School had identified the site of the Thacher family home as an ideal location for future development. In order to accommodate new construction, Chaparral Cottage was split into two sections, and each was relocated to a different site. One portion of the residence was moved off-campus to the adjacent Thacher family property at 4831 Thacher Road. The other portion was moved to a site north of the equestrian area on campus and converted to faculty housing (Staff/Faculty Residence #47). The Annex Cottage was also moved to another site on campus, to the south along the barranca, and converted to faculty housing (Staff/Faculty Residence #14).

The relocation of the Chaparral Cottage facilities marked the end of an era for campus development. The conversion of these existing facilities for new uses reflected the school's pre-World War II development strategy of undertaking modest, small-scale improvements to the existing campus and repurposing existing buildings where possible and necessary. This practice was all but abandoned by the mid-1950s in favor of demolition and replacement with new, purpose-built construction which differed greatly from the existing campus facilities. Later building campaigns which were launched in the late 1950s and beyond represent a dramatic shift from the early pastoral aesthetic which had long been associated with the Thacher School and its early history. These later efforts were significantly larger in size and scale than their predecessors, appeared more "institutional" in character, and reflected more modern architectural styles. As a result, by the end of the 1950s the campus had begun to evolve away from its origins as a rustic ranch towards a more conventional institutional setting.

<sup>50</sup> "New Kitchen Planned; Building Fund Closes," *The Thacher Notes*, February 28, 1951.

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### Contributing Resources from this Period

- *Staff/Faculty Residence #27 (1945)*
- *Camp Supply (circa 1945)*
- *Gymkhana Field Perimeter Bench (circa 1945)*
- *PTS Arenas (1948)*
- *Smith Barn and Livermore Pack Station (1949)*
- *Shed (circa 1950)*
- *Blacksmith Shop (circa 1950)*
- *Gymkhana Field House (1951)*
- *Classroom Building (1952)*
- *Historic Oval Bench (1952)*

### **ADDITIONAL CONTEXT**

#### ***Ranch Prep Schools and the American West***

As the United States expanded westward throughout the nineteenth century, the American public was understandably curious about this new territory, which seemed so different from their own established towns and cities. By the late 1800s, popular culture had become inspired by – and had found a way to capitalize on – the public’s growing fascination with the exotic and colorful American West. Author Andrew Erish has observed the phenomenon taking place at the turn of the twentieth century, noting that “late-nineteenth-century literature, painting, and theater reflected a widespread interest in the American West. Authors O. Henry, Bret Harte, and Owen Wister, painters George Catlin and Frederic Remington, and Buffalo Bill Cody’s touring wild west extravaganzas helped shape the imagery, romanticize the inhabitants, and exploit the conflicts, thus establishing the popular, stylized, notions of the West.”<sup>51</sup> At the same time, settlers who had ventured west were reporting back to their friends and relatives through correspondence and visits, and Western newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* extolled the virtues of opportunity found in the temperate climate and undeveloped land of the Western landscape.

The idea that the “Wild West” held both adventure and opportunity led to the development of an educational institution unique to the American West: the ranch school. Ranch schools, which were private preparatory schools that initially only admitted boys, were designed to develop character, masculinity, and citizenship through immersion in a Western experience.<sup>52</sup> Ranch schools were established in several western states including Arizona, California, New Mexico and Wyoming. By the turn of the twentieth century, the American West had become imbued in the public mind with qualities – honest, hard work under a vast open sky -- thought to be ideal as a proving ground for American youth. Western ranch schools became a valued educational resource because, in the American mind, the West lacked the inherited privilege and social

<sup>51</sup> Andrew A. Erish, *Col. William N. Selig, The Man Who Invented Hollywood* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012), 31.

<sup>52</sup> Melissa Bingmann, *Prep School Cowboys: Ranch Schools in the American West* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2105), p. xv.

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restraints that inhibited independent agency and becoming “self-made.” Ranch schools took on characteristics that parents expected of authentic western ranch life, including the opportunity for ranch work. The belief that the nation’s future leaders should prove themselves through physical labor had evolved into a rite of passage. Most work conducted by ranch schools, however, was solely for character building rather than the actual running of a ranch. The ranch school experience was meant to impart character traits associated with the American West such as strength, courage, and independence, all traits which were believed to be crucial for the development of future leaders and good citizens.

In philosophy and aims, ranch schools were remarkably similar to the more established Eastern private preparatory schools; however, ranch schools incorporated elements of dude ranches, progressive education, and summer camps to create a uniquely American educational experience for the children of elite families. In this way, they provided an alternative to established private boarding schools in New England and on the East Coast. Even as educational curricula began to evolve towards a more progressive pedagogy, ranch schools held true to a traditional preparatory curriculum with unique extracurricular activities suited to a western lifestyle and designed for the specific purpose of developing character. However, like other preparatory schools, the ranch school’s ultimate goal was to prepare students for a college or university. The schools joined professional associations that catered to the Ivy League colleges, hiring staff with credentials, recruiting influential individuals to their boards of directors, and demonstrating a track record of success through their alumni. Classes prepared students for college, but it was the extracurricular activities and experience of living in the West that were intended to produce self-reliant, responsible young adults who embodied the spirit of the American West.

Western ranch schools thrived from the early years of the twentieth century until just after World War II. Economic trends in the post-World War II era brought about the decline of most ranch schools as increasing travel and tourism reduced the mystique of the mythical American West. Many ranch schools had depended on the elite nature of western travel and the extended visit during the pre-war era to justify hefty tuition fees. After World War II, endowments largely directed towards the eastern schools provided revenues for enhanced facilities and academic programs which rendered the ranch schools less competitive. The ranch schools that prevailed during this changing economic and cultural climate did so by adopting policies and curricula that attracted a more diverse student clientele; ultimately, the academic quality of school mattered more to parents than a unique identity.

### ***Sherman Day Thacher and the Thacher Family***

Sherman Day Thacher was born in 1861 in New Haven, Connecticut to Thomas A. Thacher and his second wife, Elizabeth Baldwin Sherman, a granddaughter of American statesman and founding father Roger Sherman. Thomas Thacher served as Professor of Latin at Yale College for over forty years, and the twin strains of Yale allegiance and the world of private academia would prove to be profound influences on Sherman Thacher’s life. As a child, Thacher attended the Hopkins School and was a self-described “scary, diffident little boy, much tormented by the

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fear of new people and of the dark and of loneliness.”<sup>53</sup> He found some confidence and social maturity at Yale, which was also the alma mater of his father and maternal grandfather. While at Yale, Thacher served as an editor on the *Yale Record* and was a member of Delta Kappa, Psi Upsilon, and the secret society of Skull and Bones. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1883 and worked for a time as a salesman in New York for W. & J. Sloane. However, Thacher chafed at the mundanity of the work and struggled to find a sense of purpose in his life. He wrote to his brother, Edward:

The business which I have to devote myself to seems pleasant enough from day to day, but I cannot but wonder what it is leading to, and I am, naturally enough perhaps, not wholly satisfied with devoting my life to carpets...If I was unusually successful I might in 15 years be a salesman with a salary of, say, \$8000 and afford to rent a flat in Harlem and there raise a family of boys whose ideals would be formed after the fashion of a Broadway swell, and girls equally useless and ornamental.<sup>54</sup>

Nonetheless, Thacher was determined to “stick to carpets, at least until it can be claimed that I did not give them a fair trial.”<sup>55</sup> After a year, Thacher resigned from Sloane. As LeRoy McKim Makepeace noted, “Sherman had difficulty in finding a gentlemanly occupation requiring brains.”<sup>56</sup>

Medicine was out of the question. He knew no science and had little interest for it. Teaching? Apparently this did not enter his mind as it had in Senior year. Architecture must be put aside by someone who drew so crudely that he had to accompany his illustrations in letters with a note on “the things in the picture which need mentioning.” Law had been a possibility before, although there had been doubt “of [his] capability and fitness, not inclination.”<sup>57</sup>

Sherman Thacher decided, then, to become a lawyer. His decision was based largely on the fact that he could return to Yale and live at home, thus keeping his expenses to a minimum. He graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1886 and accepted a position as a clerk with Lathrop and Smith, a law firm in Kansas City, Missouri in January 1887. He worked on and off for Lathrop and Smith for only a few months but remained in Kansas City. He was soon joined by family friend and fellow Yale alumnus Horace Taft, who had come to Kansas City to consider establishing a school. In the meantime, Taft took on a great deal of work as a private tutor and was occasionally aided by Thacher. As Makepeace observes of this time, “It is interesting to note that so far Sherman never thought of teaching except as a way of making money, but whenever he needed money the first possibility he considered was tutoring.”<sup>58</sup> Within the year, however, Thacher returned home to New Haven and once again found himself at a loss of purpose.

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<sup>53</sup> Makepeace, 7.

<sup>54</sup> Makepeace, 35.

<sup>55</sup> Makepeace, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Makepeace, 36.

<sup>57</sup> Makepeace, 36.

<sup>58</sup> Makepeace, 40.

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The answer to his dilemma came with the doctors' pronouncement regarding his ailing brother George's deteriorating health. They "were agreed that his life must now be reckoned in months," Makepeace writes. "There was no hope of recovery, they said, but he would be more comfortable and might live longer in a warmer climate."<sup>59</sup> Thacher's older brother, Edward had recently relocated to the Ojai Valley, which was only populated by a "few hundred people who came there for an odd assortment of reasons," but was already known as "healthful and quiet to the point of desolation."<sup>60</sup> It was decided that George should join Edward in Ojai, but as he could not travel alone due to his illness, Sherman Thacher was charged with accompanying his brother on the trip. The two men arrived in Ojai on Halloween in 1887, and at first Sherman Thacher only intended to stay a few weeks to help settle his brother before returning home. Within weeks, though, Thacher had become enamored with the mild climate and landscape and found satisfaction in the physical labor that came with ranching. He decided to remain in Ojai and become an orchardist. He borrowed money to acquire a 160-acre claim adjacent to his brother Edward's property and constructed a three-room frame cottage. By January 1888, he was ready to become a rancher on the site he called the "Casa de Piedra."

At the time ranching and, indeed, any kind of agricultural operations in Ojai were far more challenging than the landscape and climate might have led one to believe. Architect Austen Pierpont, a lifelong Ojai resident, later recalled that "economically, it was a precarious world in those days... People didn't know what to plant. They asked their neighbors. Agriculture was a difficult business. It was almost impossible to make a living. You had to have some money when you came here, or else."<sup>61</sup> LeRoy Makepeace concurs, noting that "anyone who hoped to make even a living on Sherman's piece of land had to be optimistic."<sup>62</sup> After struggling to plant an olive grove, Thacher turned his attention to oranges. His efforts were sadly interrupted by his brother George's death in January 1889. Their mother, Elizabeth Thacher – whom everyone referred to as "Madam Thacher" – traveled west when her son's imminent passing became apparent. Following George's death, Madam Thacher opted to remain in Ojai and live with her son Sherman. She remained a resident of Ojai, residing on her son's ranch and, later, the campus of his school, until her death thirty years later.

Although he would become best known for the private school he operated from his ranch, Sherman Thacher maintained an active presence in nearly every sphere of civic life in Ojai. He supported public education and before establishment of Nordhoff High School he gave selected children an opportunity to attend his institution without charge.<sup>63</sup> He also served on the Board of Trustees of Nordhoff High School for nearly fifteen years, and was active in the Ojai Men's League, the Ojai Board of Trade, and the Ojai Civic Association. Indeed, the entire Thacher family would play a pioneering role in the development of the area. Sherman's older brother, Edward Thacher, who had been the first to settle in the area, subsequently pioneered the

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<sup>59</sup> Makepeace, 42.

<sup>60</sup> Makepeace, 43.

<sup>61</sup> Gene Beley, "A Name and Home Designs That Outlast the Years," *The Ventura County Star – Free Press*, July 16, 1967.

<sup>62</sup> Makepeace, 46.

<sup>63</sup> John Allan Rogers, "A History of School Organization and Administration in Ventura County" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, June 1961), 231-233.



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development of the local orange and olive industries.<sup>64</sup> William Thacher, the New England and intercollegiate tennis doubles champion at Yale University in 1886, was the last of the brothers to settle in the area, where he founded the Ojai Valley Tennis Club in 1895 and the Ojai Tennis Tournament in 1899.<sup>65</sup> When William Thacher arrived in Ojai, “like every guest at the school he was put to work tutoring and helping generally.”<sup>66</sup> He soon accepted a position as Associate Headmaster, and he remained at The Thacher School until 1931, when he retired at the end of the school year along with his brother Sherman, the Headmaster. Both men intended to remain in residence on campus with emeritus standing. However, Sherman Thacher died only six weeks after he announced his retirement, on August 5, 1931. William Thacher continued to live on campus; he died on November 2, 1953, in Los Angeles.

## CONCLUSION

The Thacher School is a significant secondary educational institution in California. The school’s establishment in the late nineteenth century and subsequent development through the first half of the twentieth century embody important trends in institutional development and private education in the pre-World War II era and reflect the school’s distinctive origins as a ranch operation, representing an institutional trend which is unique to the American West.

The period of significance for the Thacher School Historic District extends from 1895 to 1953. This timeframe encompasses the initial establishment of The Thacher School and reflects the early development and stewardship of the school under its founder and first headmaster, Sherman Day Thacher, as well as the school’s first efforts at organized institutional development. The period of significance concludes in 1953. By this time, the school’s postwar building campaign was complete; Sherman Thacher’s Chaparral Cottage dwellings were relocated; and the school shifted towards more conventional institutional development following the decline of the Western ranch school as a type.

Construction activity which took place on campus during the period of significance reflects the school’s earliest development efforts, both as a ranch and as an organized educational institution and embody the original pastoral aesthetic and rustic character which has long been associated with the character and identity of the Thacher School’s campus. The Thacher School Historic District represents a cohesive concentration of resources which reflect the school’s unique history and significance. The district’s continued equestrian activities, contributing resources, and character-defining features all recall the school’s distinctively rustic feel and help to convey a strong sense of time and place.

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Hoyer, Jane McClenahan, Tom Moore, and the Ojai Valley Museum, *Ojai*, Images of America series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 8.

<sup>65</sup> “The Ojai, 115 Years of History,” The Ojai Tennis Tournament, <http://www.ojaitourney.org/history/> (accessed June 9, 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Makepeace, 99.

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: The James G. Boswell Library at The Thacher School, Ojai, CA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 369.78

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

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

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.470055 | Longitude: -119.187111 |
| 2. Latitude: 34.470486 | Longitude: -119.170537 |
| 3. Latitude: 34.459085 | Longitude: -119.172210 |
| 4. Latitude: 34.459235 | Longitude: -119.178133 |
| 5. Latitude: 34.461154 | Longitude: -119.183328 |
| 6. Latitude: 34.464323 | Longitude: -119.187133 |

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

The Thacher School campus is located at the intersection of Thacher Road and McAndrew Road and is composed of several large parcels of land. The district boundary represents a portion of the Thacher School campus developed during the period of significance which includes the school's historic core as well as equestrian facilities which reflect the school's character and origins as a ranch school.

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

The boundary represents a portion of the Thacher School campus. The boundary was identified based on surrounding topography as well as historic circulation patterns and patterns of land use over time. Properties within the identified boundary were largely constructed within the period of significance and reflect the campus' historic origins and subsequent expansion.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Paul Travis, AICP, Principal, and Heather Goers, Architectural Historian

organization: Historic Resources Group

street & number: 12 South Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite #200

city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 90069

e-mail: paul@historicresourcesgroup.com

telephone: 626-793-2400 x111

date: February 6, 2018

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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.)

Historic maps and site plans

Historic photographs

Thacher School Historic District  
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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: The Thacher School

City or Vicinity: Ojai

County: Ventura

State: CA

Photographer: Heather Goers, Paul Travis, Laura Janssen, and Tavo Olmos

Date Photographed: May 2015, October 2015, November 2015, October 2017, and November 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

Photo #	Description/View	Date Photographed	Photographer
0001	Contextual view of campus core looking southwest from the Study Hall Building across the Historic Lower Field.	11-20-2015	Heather Goers
0002	Contextual view of campus core looking northeast toward the Study Hall and Indoor Chapel across McCaskey Commons.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0003	Contextual view looking north of the Study Hall and Indoor Chapel buildings.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0004	Contextual view of campus core looking east from the Dining Hall toward the Indoor Chapel.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0005	Contextual view of campus core looking north toward the William Larned Thacher Residence.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0006	Contextual view of campus core looking north from McCaskey Common toward the Student Union and Indoor Chapel.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0007	Contextual view of looking north from the Dining Hall to the Middle School Dormitory.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0008	Contextual view looking west from the Thacher Commons across the Historic Oval.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0009	Contextual view looking northeast toward the Dining Hall across the Historic Oval.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0010	Contextual view of equestrian facilities looking northwest toward the Roadside Corrals.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers

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Photo #	Description/View	Date Photographed	Photographer
0011	Contextual view of equestrian facilities looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0012	Contextual view of equestrian facilities looking northwest from Chickering Barn.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0013	Contextual view of equestrian facilities looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0014	Contextual view of equestrian facilities looking northeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0015	Contextual view of road to gymkhana facilities, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0016	Contextual view of gymkhana facilities, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0017	Contextual view of road and entrance to PTS Arenas, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0018	Contextual view of gymkhana facilities, looking southwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0019	View of Historic Lower Field, looking northeast.	11-20-2015	Heather Goers
0020	View of Historic Lower Field, looking northwest.	11-20-2015	Heather Goers
0021	View of Dining Hall, looking northwest.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0022	View of Dining Hall, looking southeast.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0023	View of Upper Tennis Courts, looking southeast.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0024	View of Historic Oval, looking northeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0025	View of Flagpole, looking west.	11-20-2015	Heather Goers
0026	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#47), looking southwest.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0027	View of Business Office & Staff/Faculty Apartments, looking southeast.	10-27-2017	Tavo Olmos
0028	View of Gymkhana Field, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0029	View of entrance to Gymkhana Field, looking southwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0030	View of Outdoor Theatre, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0031	View of Study Hall, looking northeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0032	View of Study Hall, looking southeast.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0033	View of Study Hall secondary entrance, looking south.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0034	View of Upper School Dormitory, looking east.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0035	View of Upper School Dormitory and Annex, looking northeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0036	View of Upper School Annex, looking east.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0037	View of McCaskey Commons, looking southwest.	11-20-2015	Heather Goers
0038	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#14), looking west.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0039	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#14), looking northwest.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0040	View of Student Union, looking north.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0041	View of bridge leading to Outdoor Chapel, looking west.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers

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Photo #	Description/View	Date Photographed	Photographer
0042	View of Outdoor Chapel, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0043	View of Outdoor Chapel memorial pergola, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0044	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#6), looking east.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0045	View of Gymkhana Grandstand, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0046	View of Gymkhana Grandstand, looking northeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0047	View of Health Center, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0048	View of John Cory Memorial, looking southeast.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0049	View of Coniferous Bosque, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0050	View of Anson Thacher Residence, looking southeast.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0051	View of Anson Thacher Residence, looking northwest.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0052	View of Anson Thacher Garage, looking southeast.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0053	View of William Larned Thacher Residence, looking southeast.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0054	View of William Larned Thacher Residence, looking northwest.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0055	View of Gymkhana Field Interior Bench, looking south.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0056	View of Indoor Chapel, looking east.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0057	View of Indoor Chapel, looking north.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0058	View of Middle School Dormitory, looking northwest.	1-12-2016	Heather Goers
0059	View of Middle School Dormitory and Residences, looking southeast.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0060	View of Twichell Barn, looking northwest.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0061	View of Hunt Barn, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0062	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#27), looking west.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0063	View of Camp Supply building, looking north.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0064	View of Gymkhana Field Perimeter Bench, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0065	View of entrance to PTS Arenas, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0066	View of PTS Arenas, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0067	View of PTS Arenas, looking southeast.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0068	View of Smith Barn, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0069	View of Shed, looking southeast.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0070	View of Blacksmith Shop, looking northeast.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0071	View of Gymkhana Field House, looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0072	View of Classrooms, looking northeast.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0073	View of Historic Oval Bench, looking northeast.	10-27-2017	Tavo Olmos
0074	View of Horne Residence, looking south.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers



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Photo #	Description/View	Date Photographed	Photographer
0075	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#31), looking northeast.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0076	View of Laundry & Storage building, looking north.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0077	View of Library, looking east.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0078	View of Bixby Handball Court Residences, looking northwest.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0079	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#36), looking northwest.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0080	View of Humanities Building, looking northeast.	10-20-2015	Paul Travis
0081	View of Headmaster's Residence, looking west.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0082	View of Chickering Barn, looking north.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0083	View of Mudd Math & Science Building, looking northwest.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0084	View of Royal Barney Hogan Workshop, looking southwest.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0085	View of Lowery Corrals, looking northwest.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0086	View of Red Corrals, looking southeast.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0087	View of Roadside Corrals, looking east.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0088	View of Centennial Amphitheatre, looking northeast.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0089	View of Thacher Commons building, looking south.	5-13-2015	John LoCascio
0090	View of Milligan Center for the Performing Arts, looking west.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0091	View of Anacapa House, looking southwest.	11-17-2015	Laura Janssen
0092	View of Lower School Dormitory, looking north.	11-18-2015	Laura Janssen
0093	View of the Round Pen, looking southeast.	11-16-2015	Laura Janssen
0094	View of Staff/Faculty Residence (#114), looking northwest.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0095	View of Staff/Faculty Garage (#115), looking north.	11-17-2017	Heather Goers
0096	View of Staff/Faculty Garage (#120), looking east.	10-9-2017	Paul Travis

**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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**Figure 1: Overall Site Map.**



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County and State

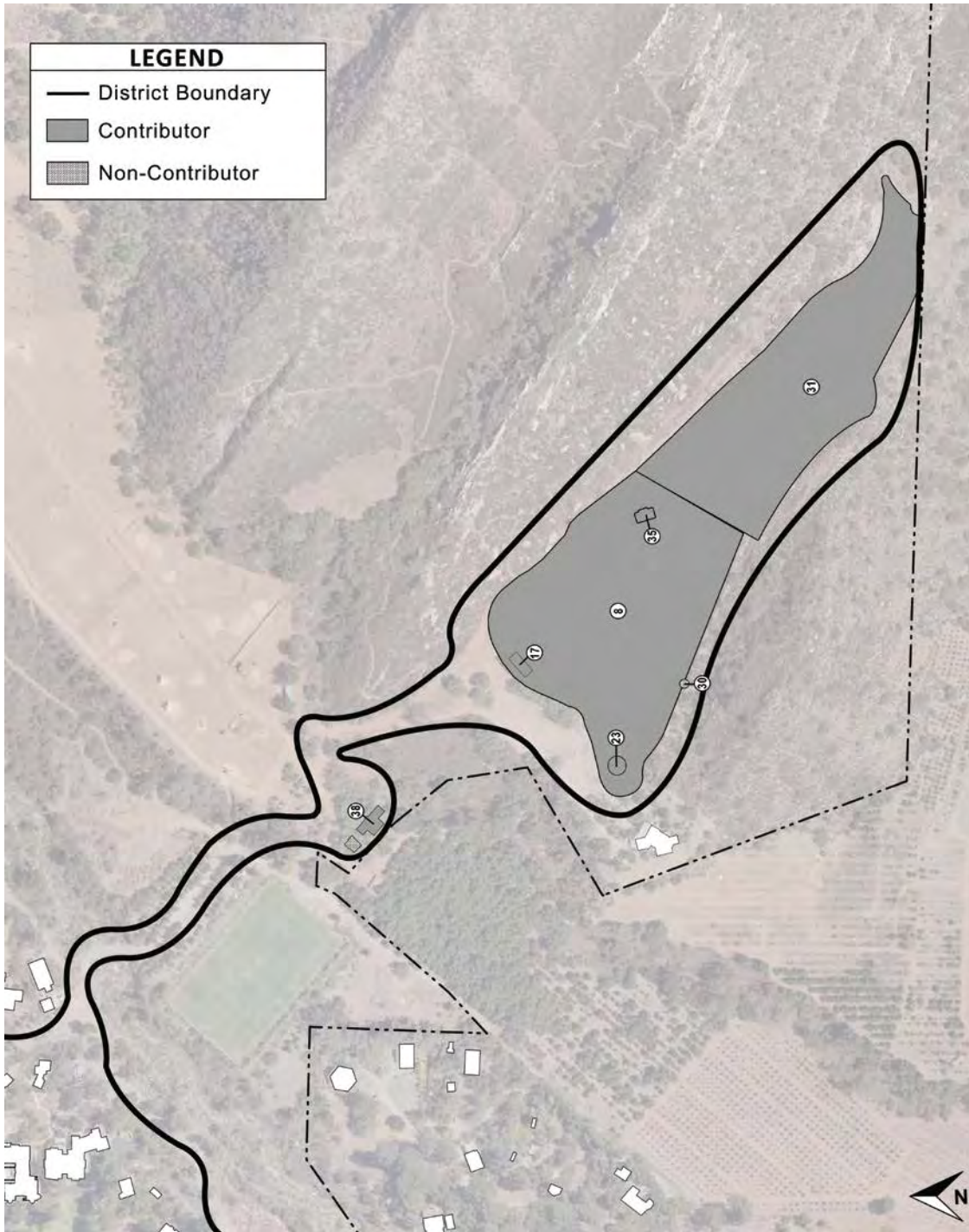
**Figure 2: Site Key – Campus Core.**



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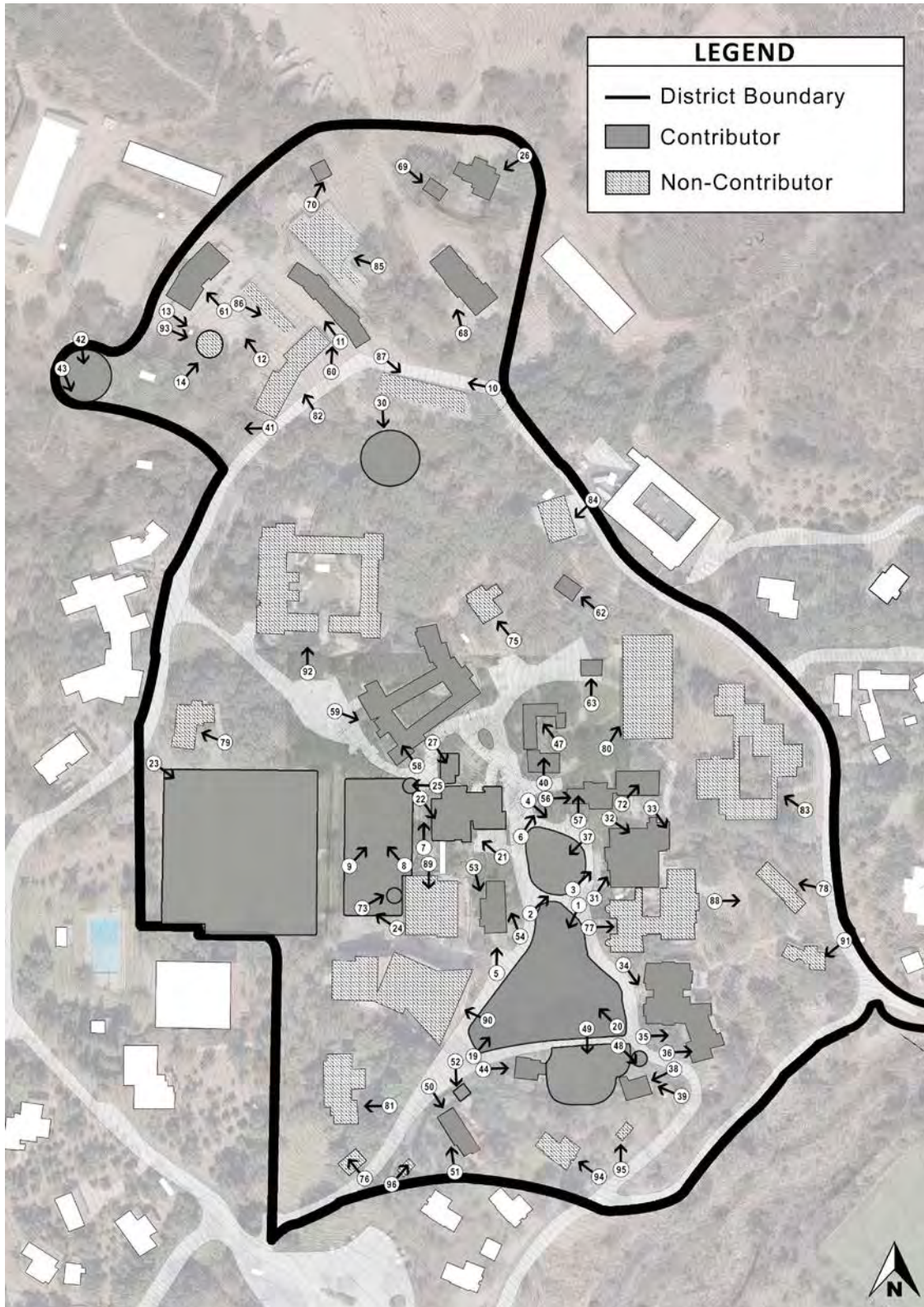
**Figure 3: Site Key – Gymkhana Area.**



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Ventura County, CA  
County and State

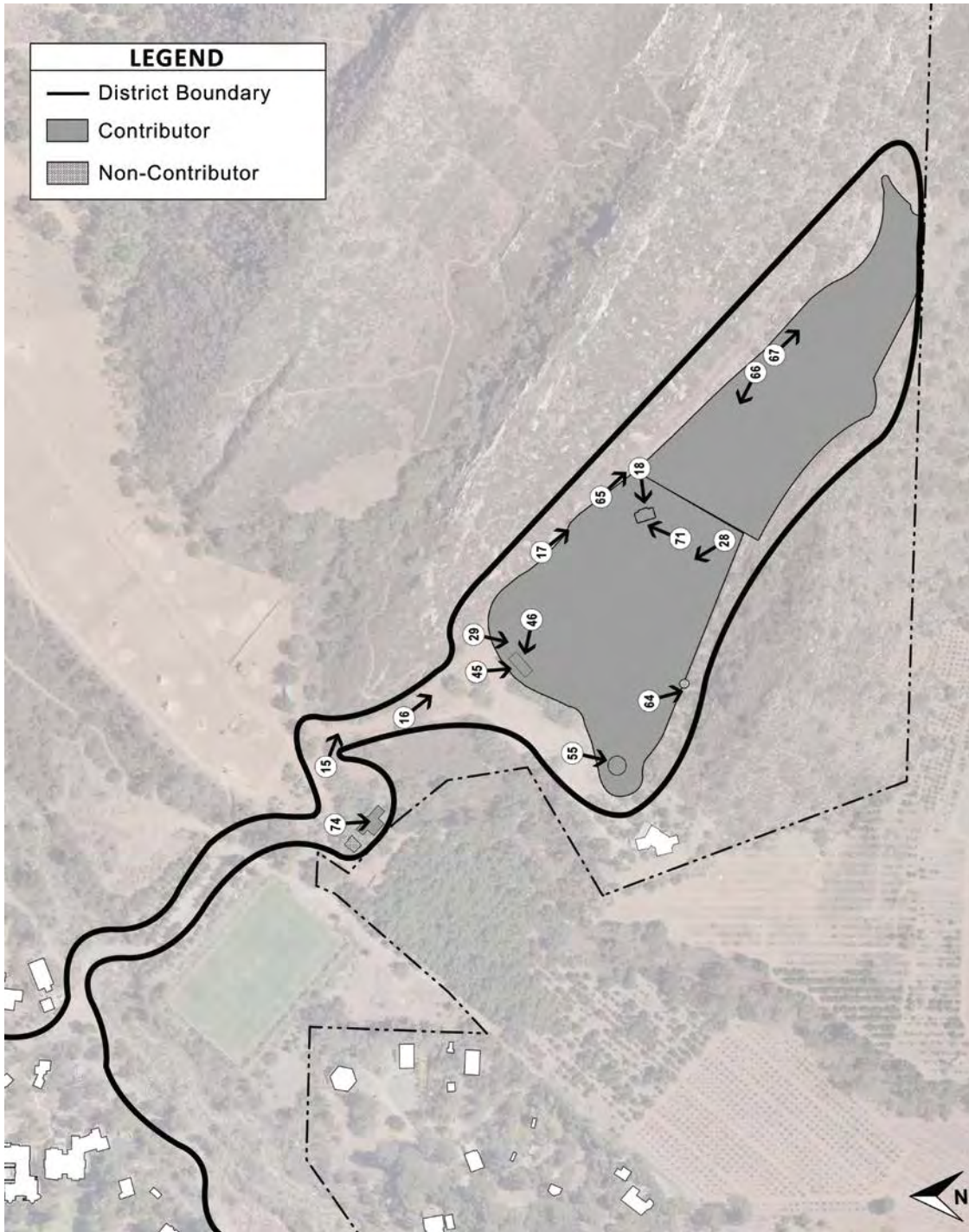
**Figure 4: Photo Key – Campus Core.**



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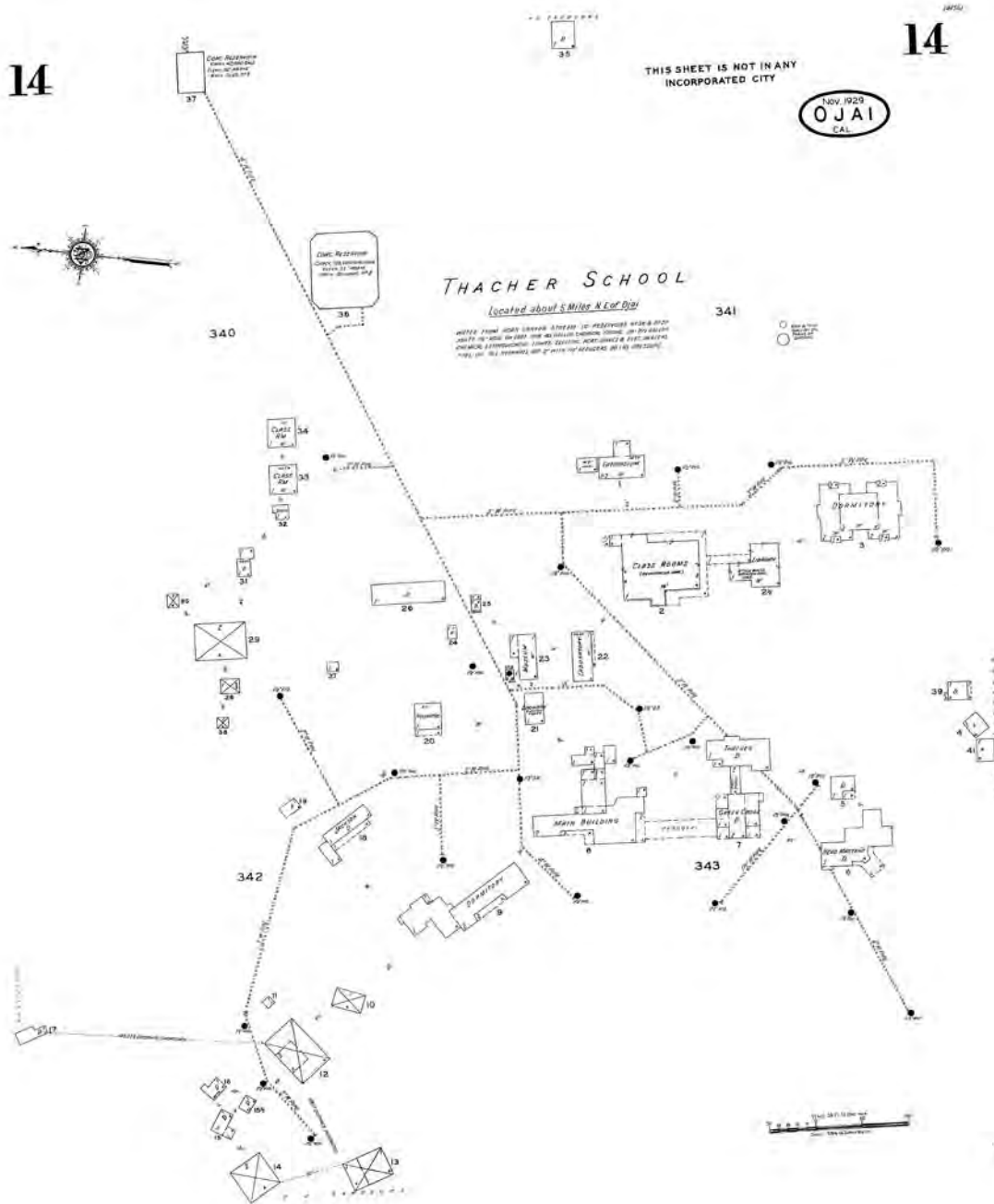
**Figure 5: Photo Key – Gymkhana Area.**



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Figure 6.



Sanborn Map Company Fire Insurance Map, 1929. \*Please note that the Sanborn maps contain some inaccuracies and are provided for reference only.

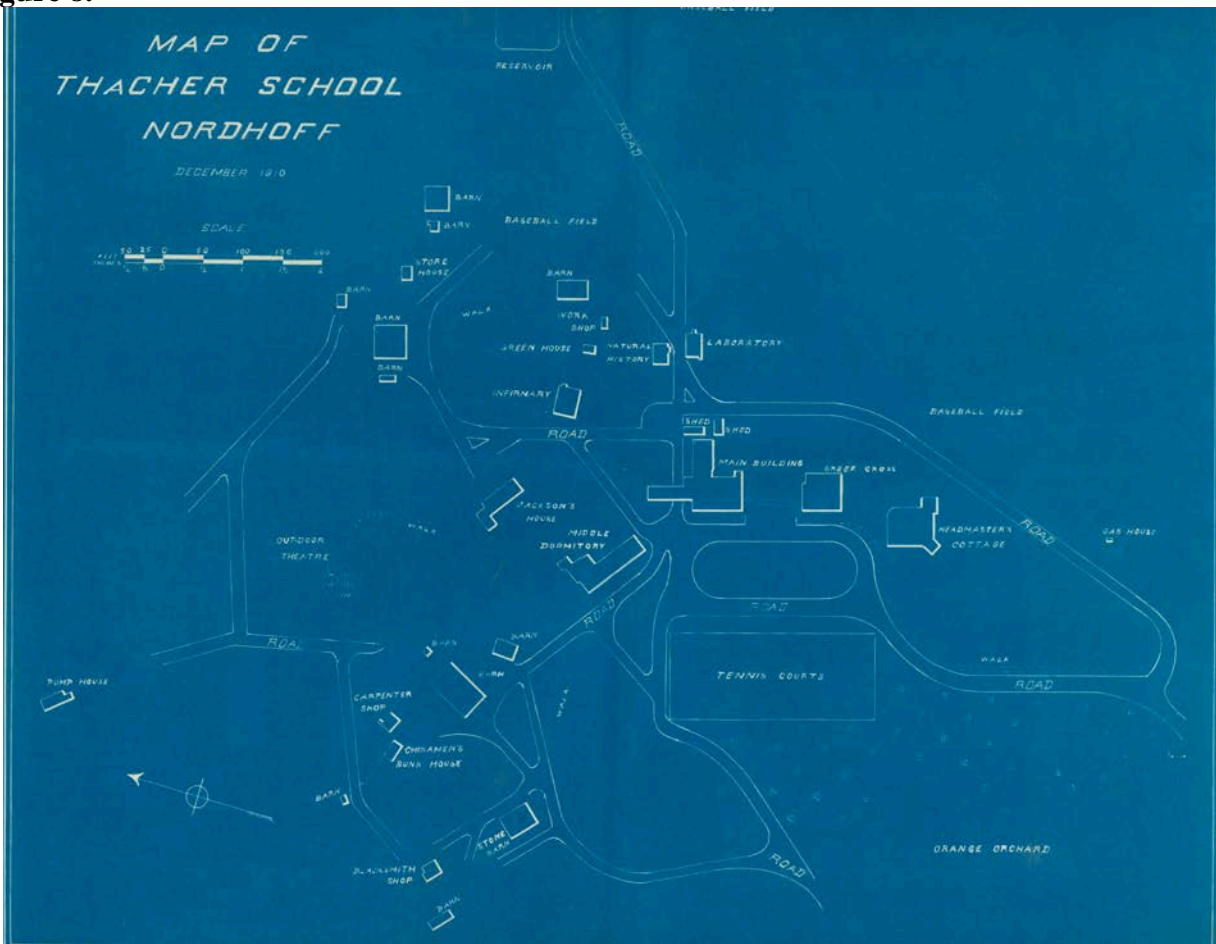




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**Figure 8.**



Map of Thacher School, Nordhoff, December 1910. Source: Thacher School Archives at the James G. Boswell Library.

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Figure 9.



Plan of the Thacher School, Ojai, California, 1939. Source: Thacher School Archives at the James G. Boswell Library.

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**Figure 10.**



Sherman Day Thacher's Casa de Piedra Ranch, with the original Stone House and first school buildings. View looking south, circa 1890. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 11.**



The Thacher School campus as it appeared following its relocation and reconstruction after the 1895 fire. Sherman Thacher's Stone House is visible in the foreground at the far right. View looking southeast, circa 1895. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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**Figure 12.**



Riders compete on dirt track at the center of campus. This location reflects the site of the present-day Historic Oval. View looking northwest, circa 1895. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 13.**



Riders gather at the center of campus. This location reflects the site of the present-day Historic Oval. View looking northwest, circa 1910. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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**Figure 14.**



View looking southeast over campus from the foothills, 1905. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 15.**



View looking southeast over campus from the foothills, 1915. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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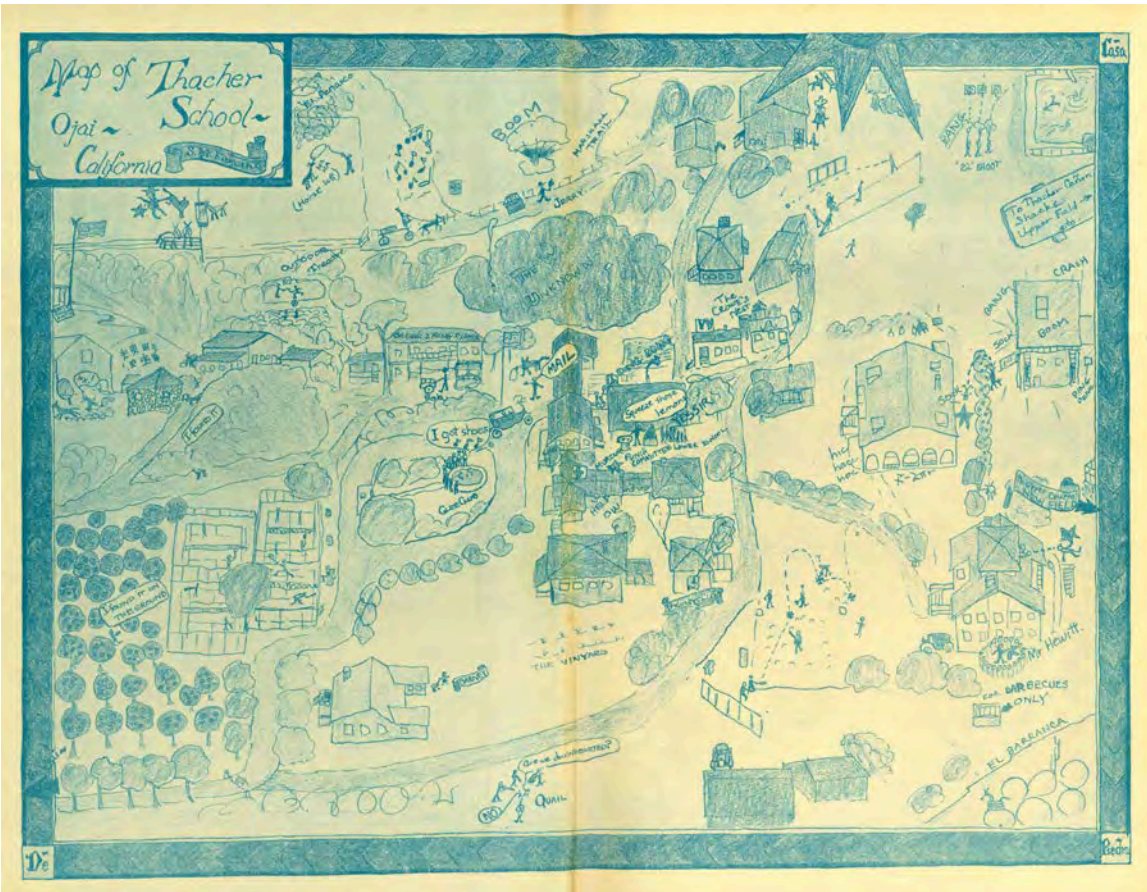
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**Figure 16.**



View looking north across campus, circa 1910. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 17.**



A pictorial map of the Thacher School campus from the School's 1927 yearbook, *El Archivero*. Illustrated view looking north across campus, 1927. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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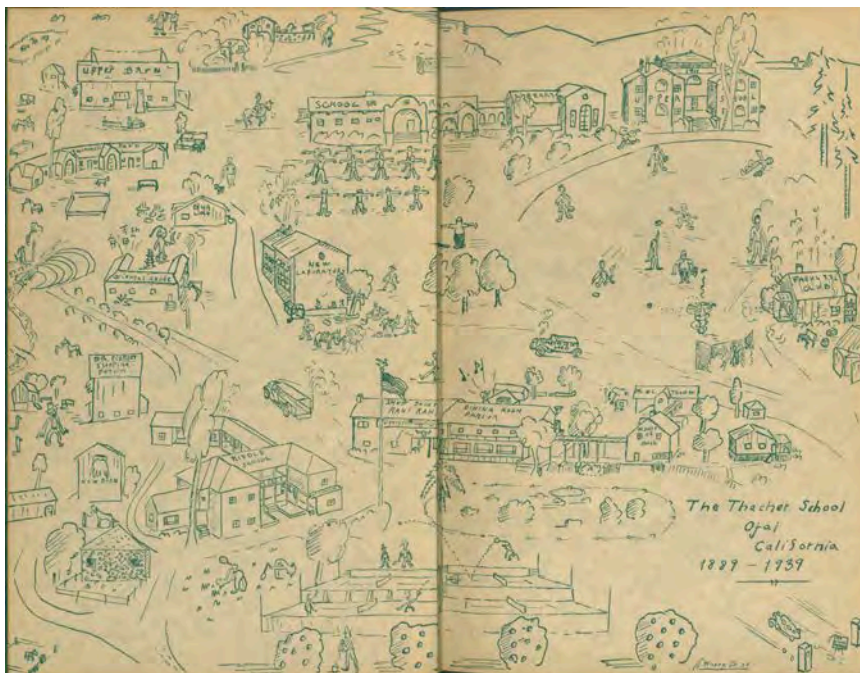
Ventura County, CA  
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**Figure 18.**



View looking southwest over campus from the foothills, circa 1930. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 19.**



A pictorial map of the Thacher School campus from the School's 1939 yearbook, *El Archivero*. Illustrated view looking east across campus, 1939. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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**Figure 20.**



Aerial view looking north across campus, 1940. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 21.**



Thacher students play baseball on the Lower Field, which was first utilized around 1890. View looking southeast, circa 1950. Courtesy of the Thacher School.



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**Figure 22.**



Thacher students take part in a military drill during World War I along the road to the Gymkhana Field, 1918. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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**Figure 23.**



Thacher students take part in a military drill during World War I at Jameson Field, now known as the PTS Arenas, 1918. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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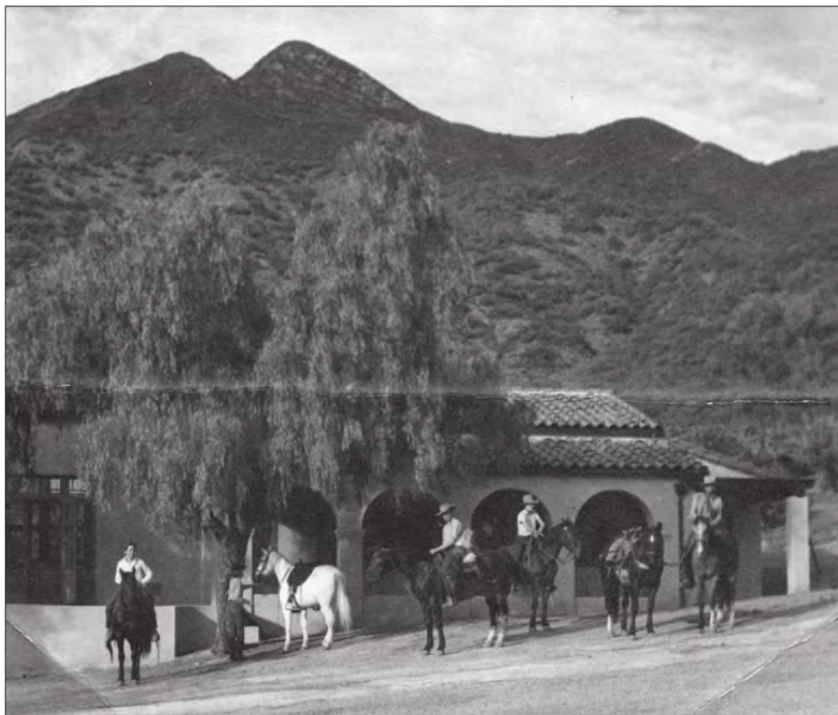
Ventura County, CA  
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**Figure 24.**



The war memorial pergola, completed after World War I. View looking southwest, circa 1920. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

**Figure 25.**



The Science Building, which was completed in 1921 and later converted into the Indoor Chapel. View looking north, circa 1935. Courtesy of the Thacher School.

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**Figure 26.**



The newly-completed Chinese Quarters, now known as the Health Center. View looking west, 1932. Source: *The Thacher Notes*.

**Figure 27.**



The newly-completed Middle School Dormitory. View looking northwest, 1937. Source: *The Thacher Notes*.

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**Figure 28.**



The newly-completed Twichell Barn. View looking north, 1938. Source: *The Thacher Notes*.











21



11

PEDESTRIAN BUSSE  
LINES



























AMERICAN  
INDEPENDENT  
PROPERTY

AMERICAN  
INDEPENDENT  
PROPERTY





















47



BUSINESS OFFICE

BUSINESS OFFICE













STUDY HALL



ALUMNI OFFICE

ALUMNI OFFICE



UPPER  
SCHOOL  
18



UPPER SCHOOL

104

Handicap parking sign





15A

♿  
PARKING  
ONLY









PLAN FOR THE BEST  
HOPE FOR THE BEST

CHAPEL →











ii 6



63



















ADMISSIONS  
→







21

THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE HYDRANT #101  
101







MIDDLE SCHOOL

32





TWHHELL BARN

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27



















1960  
JUN





20























7



ALLEN CHICKERING BARN



3



90





MAYAL SHERIDAN'S  
WORKSHOP  
29





91

WINTERS

40













69









114





1120

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 2/19/2019      Date of Pending List: 3/7/2019      Date of 16th Day: 3/22/2019      Date of 45th Day: 4/5/2019      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver           | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      4/4/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Thacher School Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion A (Education). Originally established in 1889, the Thacher School represents one of the earliest private boarding schools in the state. With a particular emphasis on ranching and equestrian training, the school reflected a relatively unique American educational experience--the Ranch School--one that would become a valued educational option, particularly for children of elite families in the West during the early years of the twentieth century. The campus' historic buildings, an eclectic blend of vernacular California ranch, Spanish Revival (Colonial/Mission), and rustic Craftsman forms, illustrates the continued development of the prestigious local school up through the mid-twentieth century and the romanticized Western perspectives of such Ranch Schools.

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept NR Criterion A

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 4/4/2019

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : **Yes**

## **Thacher School Historic District Ojai Vicinity, Ventura County Staff Report**

The Thacher School Historic District comprises a portion of the Thacher School campus, which is situated in the Ojai Valley, approximately four miles northeast of downtown Ojai in unincorporated Ventura County. The campus occupies over four hundred acres of sloping land situated to the north and east of the intersection of Thacher Road and McAndrew Road and extending into the foothills of the Topa Topa Mountains. The surrounding area is developed with low-density residential and agricultural properties. The district contains sixty resources including buildings, structures, objects, and sites. Of these resources, thirty-eight are contributors to the district. Twenty-two resources are non-contributors to the district due to substantial alterations or construction outside the period of significance. The district as a whole retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association.

The Thacher School is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the development of private education in California. The Thacher School was originally established in 1889 as a highly selective private boarding school for boys, and the school has remained in continuous operation on its original site since its founding. The school is one of only three boarding schools in California dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century which remain in operation today, and the only one of the three to remain in continuous operation as an independent private boarding school on the same campus. The Thacher School also represents the earliest example in California of the “ranch prep school,” a distinctive institutional type which originated in the American West. Ranch schools gained prominence at the turn of the twentieth century, when popular culture romanticized the distinctive Western landscape and lifestyle of its inhabitants as representative of American virtue. The School’s ongoing dedication to equestrian programs and facilities continues to define the character of the Thacher School as a uniquely Western institution

The district is composed of a wide and eclectic variety of buildings, structures, objects, and sites, which reflect the Thacher School’s unique rustic character and distinctive history as a ranch school. The Dining Hall and Administration Building, which was constructed in 1895, is situated at the center of campus and functions as the practical and symbolic hub of campus life. The central historic core is further defined by a perimeter road, as well as two outlying areas to the northwest and southeast of the campus core which have historically been dedicated to equestrian uses and reflect the Thacher School’s continued emphasis on horsemanship and outdoor life.

In general, buildings within the district embody a variety of generally modest architectural styles which are unified by common building materials and massing. District resources are united by shared character-defining features including lush, rustic natural landscaping with mature trees and extensive foliage; pedestrian-oriented circulation with limited vehicular access; informal meandering footpaths and roadways shaped by patterns of use over time; and uninterrupted views of the Topa Topa

Mountains framed by surrounding natural scenery. Boundaries for the district are defined by historic circulation elements such as roadways and footpaths as well as topographic contours of the landscape.

The period of significance for the Thacher School Historic District extends from 1895 to 1953. This period encompasses the initial establishment of The Thacher School and reflects the early development and stewardship of the school under its founder and first headmaster, Sherman Day Thacher, as well as the school's first efforts at organized institutional development. The period of significance concludes in 1953. By this time, the school's postwar building campaign was complete; Sherman Thacher's Chaparral Cottage dwellings were relocated; and the school shifted towards more conventional institutional development following the decline of the Western ranch school as a type.

Thacher School is nominated to the National Register by its board of directors. Staff supports the nomination and recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine the Thacher School Historic District eligible under National Register Criterion A at the local level of significance with a period of significance from 1895 to 1953. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing on the National Register.

Jay Correia  
Supervisor, Cultural Resources Programs





DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
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February 14, 2019

Joy Beasley  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20250

Subject: **Thacher School Historic District National Register Nomination**

Dear Ms. Beasley:

**The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the Thacher School Historic District Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.** On August 3, 2018, at its regular quarterly meeting, held in Sacramento, the California State Historical Resources Commission (Commission) voted unanimously to approve the nomination for forwarding to the Keeper of the National Register. The Commission found Thacher School Historic District eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the development of private education in California.

The period of significance for Thacher School Historic District extends from the founding of the school in 1895, to 1953, the year Thacher's postwar building campaign was complete and the school shifted towards more conventional institutional development following the decline of the Western ranch school as a type.

The State Historic Preservation Officer is nominating Thacher School on behalf of the owner. The County of Ventura, a Certified Local Government, did not comment on the nomination. If you have questions please contact Jay Correia at 916-445-7008 or [jay.correia@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jay.correia@parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures