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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 09 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Station KPH Operating Station  
other names/site number Marconi Property

2. Location

street & number 18500 State Highway #1 DNA  not for publication  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

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: DNA  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Kathryn Mualhere Signature of certifying official Date 6/5/89

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

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

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

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

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Communications Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Other/Conference Center

Residence

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Concrete

other Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Station KPH Operating Station is a simple steel frame and concrete building located about 3/10 mile from the other four buildings that comprised the original station complex. The Operating Station building is separated from the others by a number of later buildings that belonged to the Synanon organization. All the buildings are located near Tomales Bay in a wooded setting that has grown up since the construction of Station KPH.

The Operating Building is approximately 84' by 41', is one and a half stories high and has a red tile hipped roof. At the southwest elevation, two levels of wood frame windows span the facade. At the upper level, windows are one over one, double hung, and grouped in threes and fours. These windows were added in the 1970s and fill in the openings in what was formerly a veranda. There is a door at the southwest end of the former veranda. The door appears to be of modern vintage. On the other elevations windows are placed singly, are multi-paned and double-hung with fixed panes above. Design elements are limited -- the building's purpose as an isolated utilitarian structure required little decoration. A small, non-contributing 1970s garage is located near the northeastern corner of the building.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Application Form for MARCONI PROPERTY - Operating Station

Item 7            Description

The original Station KPH property was 1125 acres of barren coastal land purchased in 1912 by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America for use as a wireless telegraph receiving station. The station became the first dependable communication link between the Continental United States and Hawaii, and by way of Hawaii with Japan. Nominated to the National Register is the Operating Station originally constructed in 1913. Four other structures, set apart from the Operating Station, the Hotel, the Powerhouse, and two Cottages were nominated to the National Register on July 28, 1988 and approved by the State Historical Resources Commission on November 4, 1988 to be forwarded to the National Park Service to be registered at a National level.

The property is located on the east shore of Tomales Bay, approximately 40 miles North of San Francisco on the coastal State Highway #1 in Marin County, California. The Operating Station is located approximately 3/10 of a mile North of the four previously registered buildings at the top of a hill overlooking Tomales Bay. The building is of steel frame and heavy concrete construction with a traditional red tile roof which remains unchanged and in good condition. The building has a basement with thick concrete walls and sufficient ceiling height that makes it serviceable as a fall-out shelter, even today.

The original function of the Operating Station was to house the receiving equipment required to operate the telegraph station. This building provided the work environment for those employees living and working at the Marconi site. The original one story building consisted of eight rooms, an Instrument Room, Receiving Office, Dark Room, Main Office, Superintendent's Office, General Office, Locker Room, and Store Room. The facility also offered two lavatories. All of the rooms have an 11'10" ceiling height providing a great feeling of spaciousness. Interior walls have since been reconfigured and interior cosmetic changes have occurred, as the building is currently being used as residence

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for the Property's General Manager. The Bay side, or West side, of the building originally had an open veranda, 60' x 10', with a gently sloping tile roof supported by seven concrete pillars. The veranda has since been enclosed by glass and sheetrock and is now being utilized as interior rooms.

Over the past 70 years, the property has been developed into a park-like setting with a backdrop of a pine forest and other extensive landscaping.

The Operating Building stands on a part of a 62-acre parcel currently known as the Marconi Property. The remaining acreage of the originally 1,125 was sold in 1922. The larger acreage was originally needed to accommodate a mile long receiving antenna, supported by seven steel towers. Each tower was approximately 270 feet tall and was set in a concrete base. Four heavy concrete anchors surrounded each tower to hold the guy wires. The towers have been dismantled.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Communications  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1914-1931  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

White, J. C., Engineering Company  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See Item 8 - Continuation Pages 1-4.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Orrin E. Dunlap, Jr. The Man and His Wireless, Macmillan Co., New York, 1937.
- Degna Marconi My Father Marconi, McGraw Hill Book Co. Inc., New York, 1962.
- Alexander Seidl The Dawn of Trans Pacific Wireless Communication  
"SPARKS JOURNAL", Titanic Edition 1982, a Publication by the  
Society of Wireless Pioneers Inc.
- Henry Dickow The Story of Haraden Pratt - Pioneer  
"SPARKS JOURNAL", Volume 7, No. 3, March 1985.
- Florence Donnelly Onetime Voice of Pacific, "INDEPENDENT JOURNAL", August 3, 1957.
- RCA Marshall Property Record, 1919-1947.
- Susan Reed Interview, March 2, 1986. Wife of former Chief Engineer.
- William A. Breniman. Personal communication, December 14, 1985.  
Secretary of the Society of Wireless Pioneers.
- Helen Utman Harris. Personal communication, February 7, 1985.  
Daughter of original manager of Marshall Marconi Station.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property \_\_\_\_\_ under an acre

UTM References

A 

1	0	5	1	0	7	5	0	4	2	2	1	6	1	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are shown on the enclosed scale map. The area chosen coincides with the historically graded area cut to accommodate this building.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The area selected for nomination has been delineated to encompass only the one building of historical significance constructed for the function of Station KPH, and not yet registered on the National Register of Historic Places. The property consists of the area originally graded on top of the hill on which the building sits.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rickee Raney  
organization California State Parks Foundation date November 28, 1988  
street & number 900 Larkspur Landing Circle, Suite 175 telephone (415) 461-2773  
city or town Larkspur state California zip code 95476

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Item 8 Significance

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

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

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

RCA retained title to the property until 1947. The property changed hands three times before it was bought by Synanon in

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

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

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

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



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

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

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The property is being nominated at the national level of significance because Station KPH made possible trans-Pacific radio communication, clearly an event of international importance.

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

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Boundary Justification: The boundaries chosen are those of convenience since the setting that now surrounds the property does not coincide with the historic setting of the building. The site for the operating building was chosen precisely because it was barren and did not have vegetation that would interfere with the reception of radio transmissions. See historic photo (#6).

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000819  
Station KPH Operating Station  
Property Name

Date Listed: 7/24/89  
Marin CA  
County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

-----  
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.

*Amy Schlegel*  
Signature of the Keeper

*7/24/89*  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

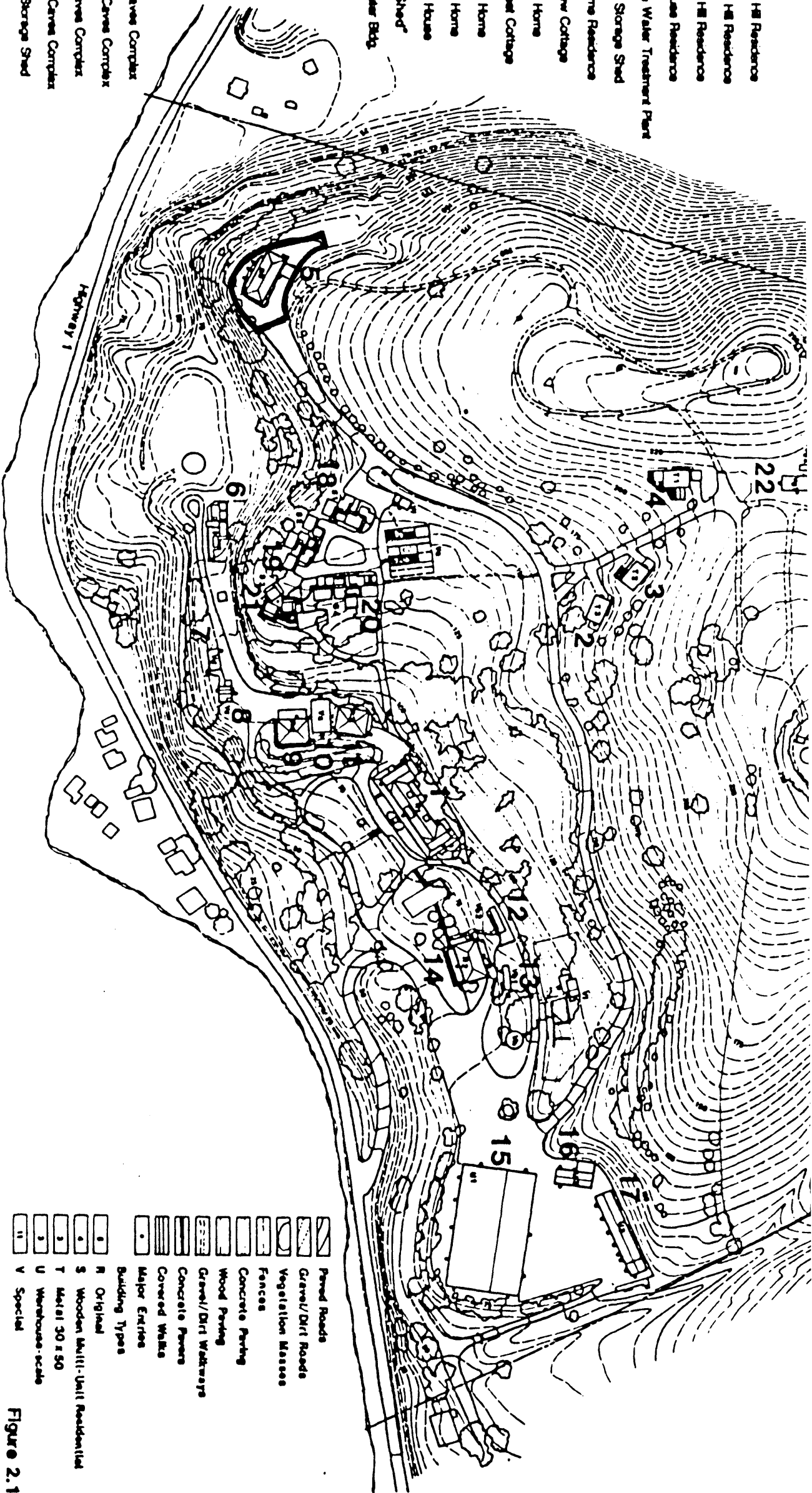
The USGS map is incorrectly marked; the property is the small black square at the edge of the coast adjacent to the number 200 and the number 1 within the circle below the current fold of the map.

Discussed and concurred in by the California SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

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

- 1 In
- 2 Lower Hill Residence
- 3 Middle Hill Residence
- 4 Upper Hill Residence
- 5 Cottages Residence
- 6 Waste Water Treatment Plant
- 7 Wood Storage Shed
- 8 A-Frame Residence
- 9 Bayview Cottage
- 10 Middle Home
- 11 Phaeacal Cottage
- 12 Middle Home
- 13 Middle Home
- 14 Power House
- 15 The 'Shed'
- 16 Computer Bldg



1" = 100'  
 - - - NR property boundary

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Station KP4 Operating Building  
 18 500 State Highway #1  
 Marshall, Marin County  
 California

- Paved Roads
- Gravel/ Dirt Roads
- Vegetation Masses
- Fences
- Concrete Parking
- Wood Parking
- Gravel/ Dirt Walkways
- Concrete Pavement
- Covered Walks
- Major Entries
- Building Types
  - Original
  - Wooden Multi-Unit Residential
  - Metal 30 x 50
  - Warehouse-scale
  - Special

Figure 2.1

