

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name PIG KNOLL SCHOOL
other names/site number DISTRICT NO. 11 SCHOOL; WEST POMONA COMMUNITY CENTER; CULTURAL CENTER OF THE VILLAGE OF POMONA
name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 584 ROUTE 306 not for publication
city or town POMONA vicinity
state NEW YORK code NY county ROCKLAND code 087 zip code 10970

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local
2. David Markey 5/24/2019
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
NYSPU
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official Date
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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] 7/8/2019
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

RECREATION & CULTURE

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: art gallery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: STONE

roof: ASPHALT

other: GLASS, METAL, BRICK

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The former Pig Knoll School, originally Town of Ramapo's District No. 11 School, is a load-bearing stone educational building erected in 1915 in the Pomona area of the Town of Ramapo, Rockland County, New York. Built to the designs of architect Walter Robb Wilder, the building is characterized by its rustic Arts & Crafts stonework and interpenetrating hipped and gable-roofed masses; the principal elevation is a symmetrically composed and dominated by a large central window band that corresponds with the former classroom area within. The building's period of usage as a school house was relatively short-lived, consisting of less than 15 continuous years, excepting a brief period mid-century when, by necessity, it was brought back into active educational service for the town. A second life for the building was assumed in the early 1950s, at which time the former school edifice was deeded back to the residents of District No. 11 for use as the West Pomona Community Center. After falling into disuse yet again, it was eventually acquired by the Village of Pomona in more recent times and it presently serves as the Village of Pomona Cultural Center, which functions as an intimately scaled gallery and performance space. The building today presents as a composite of these three distinctive periods of use, of which the earliest school-house era is best represented by the exterior, it having survived in large measure as designed by Wilder. Aspects of the existing floor plan also appear to date to that earliest period, although some features, such as the bathrooms, were introduced subsequent to the original building campaign of 1915 and the building's short-lived usage as a dedicated educational building. These reflect the building's second significant period, beginning in 1952, when it began a new life as a community center. Although it functioned historically as the District No. 11 schoolhouse, the building has long been referred to by its more common name, the Pig Knoll School, on account of its proximity to an area farm which figured prominently in the immediate area's view shed.

Narrative Description

Location, Setting & Orientation

The former Pig Knoll School is located on the east side of State Route 306, north of New Pomona Road (County Route 86) and south of Stag Court; it is addressed as 584 Route 306. Route 306's intersection with U.S. Route 202 is located further to the north, while the Palisades Interstate Parkway is situated to the east, in the Mt. Ivy area, and is accessed via Route 202. The immediate area is characterized by wooded and hilly terrain interspersed with dense housing disposed along the north-south course of Route 306 and adjacent side roads that extend east and west from it. The school was erected on a flat shelf of land east of the road, with the terrain falling off somewhat steeply behind the building, to the east. Asphalt-paved vehicular parking areas are located to the north and south of the building, which was oriented with its principal elevation facing westwards towards the road. A walkway laid with

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masonry pavers is aligned with the front of the building and provides access to the entrance on the west elevation, and it further serves to connect the two parking lots. A small and modestly landscaped expanse is located between the walkway and the road, and it is bordered on the latter side by stones which form a low wall; a flagpole rises from this area, and there is additionally a wood sign which rests on a stone base, ovoid in plan and capped with concrete. The falloff in grade to the east required that the building be constructed in banked fashion, and as such the basement wall is fully exposed to grade on that elevation but is not visible on the opposite west elevation. A second point of access to the interior, via the basement, is located on the east elevation and is approached from the front of the building by a concrete ramp with corresponding metal pipe railing. Although housing located to the east on Sherwood Ridge Road and Ethan Allen Drive is partially visible through the woods, the overall setting is nevertheless largely unmolested and characterized by deciduous trees which frame the building on three sides; a thickly wooded hill is located on the opposite, west side of Route 306, serves to isolate the building from housing located beyond. Thus the school enjoys a somewhat sequestered immediate setting, notwithstanding the physical development which has occurred on its periphery.

Exterior

The former Pig Knoll School is characterized architecturally by its highly picturesque rustic stonework and its distinctive massing, whereby the principal hip-roofed central mass is intersected by smaller gable-roofed outer blocks arranged with their ridges perpendicular to that of the main section. Both the building's form and rustic materials relate it well to its natural environment; its massing, with gabled peaks rising in unison with the high hipped roof, is seemingly expressive of the rugged terrain of the Ramapo Mountains. On the principal west-facing elevation the gable-fronted outer blocks frame a large window band corresponding with the core of the building and the former classroom space within; the band consists of five individual sets of sash with transom units above. The building is a single-story construct and was erected to conform to its banked site, allowing the finished basement to be fully exposed at grade on the rear elevation.

The west façade of the building is symmetrically composed. The central feature of this elevation is the large rectangular-shaped window band that rises from a low stone wall and terminates at eave's level. This feature is divided into five vertical units by four wood mullions; each window is hung with six-over-six wood sash with a corresponding six-light transom above. Flanking the window band to either side are the stone-walled outer blocks, which have steeply pitched front facing gables, the inner slopes of which are terminated by the eaves, thus creating an irregular end-gable profile. The stonework of these two sections, and the low wall beneath the window bands that connects them, was laid up irregularly with locally sourced rounded fieldstone bedded in tan-hued mortar, along with some flatter stones used for stabilizing quoins at the corners. The outer stone blocks feature a single

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aperture at first-story level, both originally windows, but one of which (on the north block) was reworked to serve as a door and a means of egress. These openings are spanned by flat stone arches, as all apertures are throughout the building, and the south block window retains its six-over-six wood sash window and concrete sill; the other bay is occupied by a glazed and paneled door with transom above. Centered below the apex of both gables is a decorative circular motif with a petal-like border rendered in stone; these were also employed on the gables on the opposite east elevation. The roof of the gables and main hip-roofed section are laid with asphalt shingles.

The south side elevation is, like the façade, symmetrically composed, and on this elevation the site's sloping grade is readily evident; towards the southwest corner the building presents as a single-story construction, but at the southeast corner the full height of the basement level is evident. Fenestration consists of a centrally placed door and small flanking windows, the latter being rectangular in shape and fitted with four-light wood casement windows. A wood porch with low hipped roof shields the entrance from the elements. The roof of the porch is sustained by square wood piers with sections of rectilinear railing protecting its south and east sides; concrete block presently serves as the porch's foundation. On this elevation, as with the opposite north one, the main roof has a "peaked" profile, as the end of the main section's hipped roof rises above the east-west gable ridge of the outer blocks. A brick chimney with concrete cap rises behind the roof ridge; its position corresponds with the main block's hipped roof.

The opposite north elevation is blind, though evident in the stonework is a centrally located and now closed-off aperture, by all indications a doorway, the flat arch of which remains fully visible in the stone wall; to either side are what would appear to have been windows, also closed off, thereby replicating the fenestration of the opposite south elevation. Similar stone as that used for the walls was used as infill material but the vertical seam corresponding with the door's side jambs remains fully evident, along with the spanning arch, as do the window profiles.

As with the other three elevations, the rear (east) elevation of the building was composed with symmetrically placed fenestration. The massing echoes that employed on the opposite elevation, excepting that on this side of the building the wall corresponding with the basement is exposed to view, while the area occupied by the window band on the façade is in this instance blind and clad with wood shingles, stained red. A centrally placed door, which is approachable via the ramp that extends along the south elevation, constitutes the central bay and is flanked to either side by windows hung with six-over-six wood sash. There are additionally two smaller windows, one with horizontal louvers and the other, located on the north side of the elevation, with a two-lite wood casement, situated so as to correspond with the outer blocks; the north window is now partially screened by a detached storage shed, a non-contributing feature that was added to the facility in more recent times—it is of prefabricated manufacture,

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wood frame with a rectangular footprint and gable roof. Above the basement windows and corresponding with the principal floor within are two windows, each of which retains original six-over-six wood sash.

Interior

The interior of the former Pig Knoll School is presently a composite of the original and albeit brief school era, the mid-twentieth century period when the building was first transformed into a mixed-use community center, and the more recent and current iteration as a cultural center for the Village of Pomona. While the general spatial arrangement and vertical circulation date to the original school period, inclusive of the first-floor classroom which receives abundant natural light from the window band, other features such as the bathrooms reflect the community center era initiated in the early 1950s. Both the basement and first-floor levels exhibit a similar disposition of space, whereby each floor is largely given over to a single large volume with smaller partitioned spaces on the south side of the plan; vertical circulation between these two levels is by means of a staircase located in the southwest corner. The school's single classroom occupies most of the principal floor; the lower level served as a recreation room for inclement weather and as a lunch room, and it was the location of a wood-burning stove at one time. Bathrooms are now located on both levels, although when the school was completed there were none, as there were instead privies located outside (no longer extant). In addition to lacking indoor bathrooms, the building was also not electrified originally.

The first-floor classroom now functions as a flexible exhibition space. It is characterized by original hardwood strip flooring and smoothly finished wall and ceiling surfaces hung with gypsum board—it is not presently known whether the existing wall and ceiling finishes conceal earlier treatments—and interior doors are of a paneled wood type. The space receives abundant natural light from the large window band that spans the west wall and which is augmented by artificial lighting provided by a combination of suspended fixtures and directional spot lights. Communication with the basement is by means of the original L-shaped staircase, which descends to a landing before turning 90 degrees to complete its run; the risers and treads are presently concealed by carpeting. The stair is accessed from a vestibule that corresponds with the exterior door on the south elevation and which has the same hardwood strip flooring and gypsum wall and ceiling surfaces as the adjacent classroom space. The remainder of the first-floor plan is given over to a bathroom, located in the southeast corner and accessed from the vestibule, in addition to two closets, one of which is accessed from the bathroom and the other directly from the gallery. Downstairs, in the basement, the staircase opens up directly into the area that now functions as an event space and which occupies the remainder of the plan excepting space given over to a bathroom and mechanical room in the southeast corner. Wall and ceiling finish is gypsum board and the floor is laid with vinyl tile over concrete. This ceiling is spanned by a dropped and cased structural beam aligned between the north and south walls and which is

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in part sustained by cast-iron columns. Artificial lighting is provided for by flush-mounted fixtures and directional spotlights.

The attic is unfinished and mostly consists of crawl space only. The roof framing consists of dimensionally sawn two by eight-inch rafters spaced 16 inches on center; these sustain wood lathing strips that suggest an original roof surface of wood shingles.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1915- 1969

Significant Dates

1915; 1952

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wilder, Walter Robb; architect

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is initiated with the construction of the building and terminates at 1969, given its continued use as a community center during that decade. As such all of those physical features which date to the schoolhouse period, 1915- ca. 1927, and from the subsequent community center period initiated in 1952, are deemed significant in this context.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Pig Knoll School, constructed as the District No. 11 School for the Town of Ramapo, is an architecturally and historically significant resource located in Rockland County, New York. The building was designed in 1915 by architect Walter Robb Wilder (1874-1934), a onetime draftsman in the nationally distinguished architectural office of McKim, Mead & White who worked closely with one of the firm's principal partners, Stanford White. Later, with Harry Keith White—not a relation of Stanford White—he was himself a principal in the office of Wilder & White. Wilder and his wife, Louise Beebe Wilder (1878-1938), an accomplished and renowned gardener and author of numerous books on the subject, resided in the Pomona area, and the couple took an avid interest in the community, especially its school-aged children. It was the Wilders' residency in Pomona and their investment in the community which accounted for his fielding of the commission for the school during the Wilder & White partnership. The building's rustic styling associates it with the American Arts & Crafts movement of the early twentieth century period; as such it deviates from the Neoclassical and Renaissance-inspired work which Wilder became familiar with while in the employ of McKim, Mead & White from 1898 to 1906 and the Neoclassical work executed by Wilder & White for the State of Washington in Olympia. Despite the building's notable architecture pedigree, its service was limited to a short period that concluded by 1927, notwithstanding a brief period in which it was used again for that purpose during the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1952, following the centralization of area schools, the building was deeded back to the taxpayers of former District No. 11, at which time it was retrofitted to serve the local community under the auspices of the West Pomona Community Center. The building served faithfully in this capacity for a time; however, by the early 1980s it was being used only sporadically. At that time, it became the residence of local architect R. Todd Campbell, who took an avid interest in it and sought to protect it from further vandalism and deterioration. After falling into tax foreclosure, the building was acquired by the Village of Pomona and it has since functioned as a cultural center for area residents. The building is being nominated under Criterion A, in the area of Education, for its direct association with the history of education in the Town of Ramapo, and also in the area of Social History, for its use beginning in 1952 as a mixed-use civic space that hosted a wide range of programs benefitting the community. It is additionally being nominated in association with Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a distinctive and unusual example of a one-room rural district school in the Arts & Crafts idiom erected to the plans of architect Walter Robb Wilder.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical & Educational Context

The region of Rockland County that encompasses the present-day Village of Pomona was known for a time, in its earliest years of European-American settlement, as Kakiat—a corruption of the Native American

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name *Hackyackawek*— the name given to a land patent granted to speculators at the end of the seventeenth century, in 1696. As with all of Rockland County, the towns of Ramapo and Haverstraw were originally contained within the bounds of Orange County. When it was set off from adjacent Haverstraw in 1791, the Town of Ramapo bore a different name, New Hempstead, a legacy of its early settlement by Long Islanders, before the present town name was officially adopted. The nominated property is located in the vicinity of the hamlets of Ladentown and Camp Hill, south of the Ramapo Mountains in a locale that came to be known as Pig Knoll. That colorful name was taken from a nearby hilltop pig farm owned by Adam Klingel, and as such was not a local hamlet like Ladentown and Camp Hill.¹ The Suffern-Haverstraw road, or present-day U.S. Route 202, is situated a short distance to the north and was an important early overland transportation route that linked the Hudson River, to the east, with the Ramapo Pass and the interior of the county. The road on which the school was erected, present-day Route 306, was for a time known as the Egypt Road, the derivation of which remains a point of speculation. The Village of Pomona was established as a municipal entity in 1967; it straddles the boundary that separates the towns of Ramapo and Haverstraw.

During the nineteenth century the educational needs of Ramapo's school-age children were served by common district schools. One of these district schools—Ramapo District School No. 11—served the area in question into the early twentieth century. The district school system in New York State originated in the later eighteenth century. In 1787 the Board of Regents of the University of New York was established, and in 1793 the regents issued a report in which they advocated creating a state-wide common district school system. In 1795 the state appropriated \$50,000 annually, over the course of a half-decade period, to encourage the development of such a system, and in 1805 the state legislature passed an act which created a Common School Fund.² The year 1812 was a landmark one for the history of education in New York, as a law passed that year established the state's common school district system and authorized the disbursement of monies from the Common School Fund; while the 1812 law authorized the creation of common schools by local authorities, an amendment two years later required local participation. By the mid-nineteenth century, New York's statewide common school system amounted to a vast constellation of over 10,000 common school districts.³ This system, in which students learned the rudiments of spelling, writing, arithmetic, and geography, remained largely as established until the early 1850s, when the common school system

¹ Carole Morrill, "Pig Knoll: The Lives of a School," *South of the Mountains* vol. 46, no. 1 (Historical Society of Rockland County: 2002), 10.

² Rev. David Cole, *History of Rockland County, New York* (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884), 14.

³ Douglas H. Shepard, "The Common School System in New York State," 2000; <http://chautauqua.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/6928/The-Common-School-System-in-New-York-State-PDF>, accessed 4 February 2019.

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was proving inadequate in more populous areas; in 1853 a new state law mandated the creation of union free school districts to help mediate this issue.⁴

Prior the construction of the nominated building, District No. 11 was served by a one-room building of wood-frame construction, which was erected on land deeded to the Town of Ramapo by Cornelius Springsteen in 1838 for the purpose.⁵ This building would remain in service until replaced by the existing building; the older school was subsequently converted into a dwelling by the Dorian family and was later featured in a 1938 edition of *The American Home*; however, it was demolished in more recent times.⁶ During the summer of 1914 requests for bids for the construction of a new school to serve District No. 11 were advertised in local newspapers:

BIDS FOR NEW SCHOOL HOUSE. The Board of Trustees, District No. 11, Town of Ramapo will receive sealed bids for the construction of a stone and frame schoolhouse for said district to be located on the east side of Egypt State Road about 1500 f. north of the Pomona Road. Plans and specifications may be seen at the residence of Mr. Mark Anthony in said district, at the office of Wilder and White, Architects, No. 50 Church street, New York City, or copies may be obtained from the above architects upon a deposit of \$5.00, which deposit will be returned upon the return of the plans and specifications to them. Bid are to be sealed and delivered no later than July 20th...⁷

The school, designed by Walter Robb Wilder of the firm of Wilder & White, was completed in 1915 but, unfortunately, had a short life as a school; by one former student's recollection, all of the students of District No. 11 had, by 1927, been reassigned to different schools located in the vicinity.⁸ Among the reasons for the building's relatively short run as a school was an influx to the area of former New York City residents, who were, by virtue of their previous urban residence, accustomed to a higher standard of educational facility than the rural one-room school offered; outdoor toilets, the lack of electrification, and mixed-age classes, which were all relatively alien concepts to these newer residents.⁹ Many students instead came to be transported via bus to the Brick Church school and, after 1928, to school at Spring Valley. One area resident recalls that the bus which conveyed students from the Ladentown area to Spring Valley was derisively called by some students there "the Hillbilly bus," on account of the still very rural nature of the area where the students who were being bused in resided.¹⁰ District No. 11, while it continued to formally exist, nevertheless functioned, as described by Carole Morrill, "as a tax entity... to contract for the district children on a yearly basis."¹¹ Between that time and centralization in 1952 the building was

⁴ Shepard, "Common School System."

⁵ Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 10.

⁶ Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 10.

⁷ "Bids for New School House," *Suffern Independent*, 11 July 1914.

⁸ Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 5.

⁹ Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 10.

¹⁰ Recollections of Noel Smith Fernandez, Village of Pomona 50th Anniversary pamphlet (2017), 29.

¹¹ Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 11.

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used intermittently for meetings and other functions, including as a polling place for elections. It was also still used sporadically for educational purposes, such as in 1950, when 22 kindergarten and first-grade children from Camp Hill District No. 12 and two additional children from District No. 11 were being taught there under the direction of teacher Beatrice Linquist.¹²

During the early 1950s residents of four local school districts were weighing the merits of whether local schools should be consolidated or centralized; as noted in a local news account, there was considerable emphasis “placed on getting the most for the tax dollar.”¹³ In March 1950 area residents gathered for a meeting at the nearby Camp Hill School in order to discuss the proposed centralization of seven area school districts inclusive of the Pig Knoll district. There was not yet a prevailing consensus among residents whether consolidation or centralization offered the best path forward for taxpayers; those opposed to centralization feared losing the control which they currently had by way of their local district board members, while consolidation would allow the smaller districts to retain some measure of self-destiny. Charles C. Marcum, a member of the centralization committee and the president of the Camp Hill School District at that time, was asked during the meeting to offer his position on the matter. Although Marcum indicated that he was first leaning towards centralization, after studying the merits of consolidation he instead favored the latter, though with the understanding that he would still support centralization “if further study of consolidation provided to be less valuable than he believed it to be at the present.”¹⁴

By the following year momentum towards school consolidation was gathering strength. During the school elections of that year all three incumbent candidates in the Brick Church district were routed at the ballot box. “The result was a clear-cut victory for the group favoring consolidation of the north districts of the township rather than centralization.”¹⁵ Opponents of the group which supported consolidation, under the name Ramapo Citizen’s School Committee, charged the “consolidationists” with distorting the truth. Among them was J. Hiram Newman, chairman of the Ramapo Centralization Committee, who suggested those in favor of consolidation were continuing “to mislead many good people with implied promises which they can have no hope of fulfilling.”¹⁶ In spite of their successes in pushing a pro-consolidation agenda in 1951, it was centralization that ultimately won out, and the divergent views on the subject continued unabated to the end. “During the last few days before the voting there had been a continuous battle of pamphlets and circulars. Both sides to the controversy used sound trucks on

¹²Ladentown news items, *Orangetown Telegram*, 15 September 1950.

¹³“Centralization Contrasted to Consolidation,” *The Rockland County Journal-News*, 31 March 1950.

¹⁴“Views Vary On Central Plan; Backers of Consolidation Get in Licks for Four Ramapo Districts,” *The Journal-News*, 14 April 1950.

¹⁵“Consolidationists Group Picks Up Several Trustees,” *The Journal-News*, 2 May 1951.

¹⁶“Newman Says Group Asked Delay on Vote; Deferment of Central Plan Election Sought by Committee, Figure on Fall Action,” *The Journal-News*, 11 June 1951.

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Tuesday urging the voters to cast their ballots.”¹⁷ In March 1952 seven local school districts were united to create the new Ramapo Central School District No. 2 as part of the centralization process; this brought an end to “a campaign that has gone on over a period of many years.”¹⁸ This district remains as formed to this day, though it was renamed the East Ramapo Central School District in 1973.

Following school centralization in 1952 the local taxpayers voted to keep the former Pig Knoll School, at the symbolic cost of one dollar, for conversion into a community center, which was aptly named the West Pomona Community Center. In 1962 one resident noted that this action had been conceived at the time “to foster a healthy interest in civic affairs and to bring about social enjoyment and entertainment for the community.”¹⁹ In the intervening decade since centralization, changes were made to the interior of the school building to accommodate its new civic use, among them the introduction of bathrooms, electric baseboard heating, a first-floor kitchen, and a second kitchen and “recreation room” in the basement.²⁰ The building was at that time being used in a number of ways, among them as a meeting place for two Girl Scouts and one Boy Scout Explorer troop, a Women’s Auxiliary group, and a youth group; other hosted activities included suppers, card parties, square and social dances, parties for special occasions, and community rummage sales.²¹ A nurse school and ballet academy were also conducted there. For a time early in its history as a community center, Walter Wilder’s daughter, Harrison Wilder Taylor, was actively involved.²²

In spite of these varied community-based uses, the organization’s fortunes were flagging in the early 1960s, as committee members were at that time “in an all-out drive to interest old and new residents in the center...”²³ As older residents moved away, support for the community center was ebbing, and school centralization had since eroded the sense of community which residents in District No. 11 had at one time felt. Although dedicated volunteer trustees labored to keep the organization viable and protect its not-for-profit status, use of the building declined and attrition and vandalism began to take their toll. In the early 1980s a New City-based architect and historic preservationist, R. Todd Campbell (1951-2001), began to take an active interest in the building and its future. For seven years Campbell resided in the building, for which he paid rent to the organization, in order to

¹⁷“Centralization Approved by 1,147 Majority,” *Orangetown Telegram*, 6 March 1962.

¹⁸“Centralization,” *Orangetown Telegram*.

¹⁹“W. Pomona Center Community’s Hub,” *Rockland County Journal-News*, 27 February 1963.

²⁰“W. Pomona Center.”

²¹“W. Pomona Center.”

²²Morrill, “Pig Knoll,” 11.

²³“W. Pomona Center.”

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protect it from further vandalism and deterioration.²⁴ It is thus Campbell who should be credited with personally intervening on the building's behalf in order to ensure its survival, at a critical crossroads in its history.

Although the West Pomona Community Center had been approached by potential buyers for the school as the organization foundered, it nevertheless remained the center's intent that the building not be sold to a private organization, in order to allow for further exploration of a broader public use moving forward. Soon after, ownership was assumed by Rockland County, on account of delinquent taxes, with plans for its sale at public auction. Under the leadership of then Pomona mayor Melvin Klingher, the village acquired the former school by settling the delinquent tax bill and shortly thereafter the present public iteration, under the name of the Cultural Center of the Village of Pomona, was launched.

Architectural Context: Walter Robb Wilder & the Pig Knoll School

The Pig Knoll School was designed by architect Walter Robb Wilder, a principal in the architectural practice of Wilder & White at that time. Born in Topeka, Kansas in 1875, Wilder received his architectural training at Cornell University in New York and subsequently studied abroad in Europe. Upon his return to the United States in 1898, he received employment as a draftsman in the New York City architectural office of McKim, Mead & White, which at that time ranked among the foremost national architectural practices and which specialized in Beaux-Arts design. Wilder, as noted in one source, "was associated with Stanford White in designing a number of distinctive residences for the firm's clients."²⁵ Following White's untimely death in 1906, Wilder left the McKim, Mead & White office and that same year entered into partnership with Harry Keith White, another former draftsman with that firm, under the office name of Wilder & White, with professional offices in Manhattan. That firm, which fielded educational, religious and residential work in New York and New Jersey, in 1911 received its largest and most visible commission, for the design of the State of Washington's Neoclassical legislative building, insurance building, and the Temple of Justice, the signature features of a new state office campus located in Olympia.²⁶ The project was the zenith of the two men's professional association and their personal involvement in the work would continue from the early 1910s into the late 1920s.

²⁴Obituary, Historical Society of Rockland County, 2001.

²⁵Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), 658.

²⁶Norman J. Johnson, "The Washington State Capitol Campus and its Peripatetic Planning," *Columbia Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1999).

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Following Wilder's 1902 marriage to Louise Beebe Wilder (1878-1938), the couple moved to Bronxville but later relocated to the Pomona area of Rockland County, in 1909, after the purchase of a large farmstead there. That property, situated on the Haverstraw Road, or present-day Route 202, came to be known as Balderbrae, and there Louise Wilder immersed herself in extensive garden and landscape design activities, which her husband augmented with the design and construction of new buildings and other wayside embellishments.²⁷ Her passion for gardening led to her publication of 10 books on the subject, along with countless articles published in popular newspapers and magazines, which brought her considerable recognition and renown. The Wilders were well known in the Pomona-Ladentown area, and on the Fourth of July would host a large party and invite the local children to attend and enjoy ice cream, cake and fireworks.²⁸ While residing in Pomona Walter Wilder fielded local architectural commissions for the Wilder & White office, distinctive among them an Egyptian Revival house of reinforced concrete construction in Wesley Hills erected in 1915 and known locally as Luxor Temple, and still extant. It was erected for Joseph M. Goldberg as the centerpiece of a 600-acre estate and was inspired by time spent in Egypt by Goldberg, in part for health reasons—he was stricken with tuberculosis, which the arid climate helped to alleviate—but also due to his interest in Egyptian archaeology and architecture.²⁹

By 1920 Walter and Louise Wilder had become estranged; Walter remained at Balderbrae while Louise took up new accommodations in Bronxville with the couple's two daughters, Harrison and Nancy. Walter Wilder's travels back and forth to Washington State to oversee the capitol project between 1911 and 1928 were probably a contributing factor to the couple's separation. In 1930 the partnership of Wilder & White was dissolved, and Wilder became increasingly isolated at his home in Rockland County, a situation exacerbated by the architect's considerable loss of money in the 1929 Stock Market Crash and by the development of a hand tremor that hindered his ability to draw effectively.³⁰ Early in 1934 Walter Wilder took his own life; his obituary in the *New York Times* noted the following: "Stanford White's Ex-Associate Found Dead on Estate Near Suffern. He had been ill for 18 months."³¹ As for Louise Wilder, she died in Bronxville in 1938 of natural causes.

In her contextual study of New York State school architecture, Susanne Warren described the school architecture of the early twentieth century period as maturing into a fairly uniform set of practices. These practices consolidated a range of desired reforms that sought to create an optimal and healthy learning environment for students. By 1910,

²⁷Carole Morrill, "Walter and Louise Wilder: A Legacy," *South of the Mountains*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Historical Society of Rockland County, 2002), 6.

²⁸Morrill, "Pig Knoll," 8.

²⁹Jean-Marcel Humbert and Clifford Price, eds, *Imboteq Today: Egyptianizing Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 145-46.

³⁰Morrill, "Walter and Louise Wilder," 17-18.

³¹As cited in Morrill, "Walter and Louise Wilder," 3.

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concerns relative to proper ventilation, lighting, and architectural style were to some measure codified, either through legislation or standardization of what were identified as best practices. From the late nineteenth century to 1900, educators and architects who came to specialize in school design focused increasingly on the link between sanitation, hygiene, and the proper means of ventilation, in hopes of combating contagious disease. There emerged complicated formulae about proper ventilation, in order to dispel carbon dioxide and other impurities thought to be toxic in expelled air, while uniform natural lighting provided by banks of large closely spaced windows was deemed best if cast from the left of students. Restraint in exterior design was also extolled, with ornamentation used conservatively to evoke a particular architectural effect.³² With those concerns to some extent settled, fire safety became a preeminent concern after the turn of the twentieth century, and it emerged as a subject of increasing focus among architectural practitioners and government legislators. Building specifications increasingly called for outer and interior bearing walls to be built of brick or stone masonry or otherwise reinforced concrete; stairwells were to be similarly built, with fire-retardant steel employed for stairs. Fire safety was also evident in terms of spatial layout, with distinctly separated stair halls situated to facilitate rapid and effective egress during fire and other emergencies. This new standard was spelled out in 1904 in New York State law, which mandated that “all halls, doors, stairways, seats, passage-ways and aisles ... (be) arranged to facilitate egress in case of fire or accident.” School design also required state oversight and review beginning in 1904.³³ Thus school design in the state arrived at the “one best way” to define the optimal educational building.³⁴

Wilder’s design for the Pig Knoll School deviated stylistically from the grand Beaux-Arts classical tradition within which he was immersed in the McKim, Mead & White office and the work on the Washington State capitol complex fielded with his later partner, Henry K. White. He instead turned to a decidedly rustic stone exterior envelope which related well to the building’s natural environment, in part through its use of locally sourced stone; nevertheless, the school was composed on rational terms with rigidly symmetrical elevations, elements which relate to his Beaux-Arts training. The building lacks any pretense to architectural style outside of the rustic qualities which relate it to the Arts & Crafts movement; instead, it relies in large measure on its natural local materials and distinctive if not unusual massing for effect. The school must have brought considerable personal and professional satisfaction to Wilder, given his and his wife’s investment in the affairs of the community and the interest they took in local school-aged children. Many aspects of the building’s design satisfied period school mandates, among them its construction from durable and fireproof stone masonry, its limited architectural elaboration, and a classroom

³²Susanne R. Warren, “The Schools of New York State Development of the School as a Building Type” Context Study, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (1990), 192.

³³Warren, “Schools of New York,” 169.

³⁴Warren, “Schools of New York,” 154.

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which received abundant natural lighting provided by a large window bank. Other features, such as the absence of indoor restrooms—toilet facilities were instead located outside—are indicative of the building’s provincial nature and its location in what remained at that time a rural environment. It was in many ways both a forward and backward looking work, progressive in some respects but still bound to the limitations imposed by its location and by the resources of the community.

Although the conversion of the interior of the school in 1952 to accommodate new civic functions was attended to by necessary changes, the school’s original spatial configuration remains largely interpretable, and vertical circulation between the two floors remains as designed by Wilder.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Cole, Rev. David. *History of Rockland County, New York*. New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884.

Humbert, Jean-Marcel and Clifford Price, eds. *Imboteq Today: Egyptianizing Architecture*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Johnson, Norman J. "The Washington State Capitol Campus and its Peripatetic Planning." *Columbia Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1999).

Morrill, Carole. "Pig Knoll: The Lives of a School." *South of the Mountains* vol. 46, no. 1. Historical Society of Rockland County: 2002.

Shepard, Douglas H. "The Common School System in New York State," 2000. <http://chautauqua.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/6928/The-Common-School-System-in-New-York-State-PDF>, accessed 4 February 2019.

Warren, Susanne R. "The Schools of New York State Development of the School as a Building Type." Context Study, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (1990).

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.32 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>578231</u> Easting	<u>4558095</u> Northing	3	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing
2	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing	4	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing

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

The boundary for this NRHP nomination is shown on the enclosed mapping, which was drawn at a scale of 1: 24,000, 1: 12,000 and 1: 4,000; all maps are entitled "Pig Knoll School, Pomona, Rockland Co., NY."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary reflects historic circumstances and remains unchanged from the time the school was erected and functioned as an educational venue. No additional or "buffer" land is included in the boundary.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Krattinger
organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation date February 2019
street & number PO Box 189 telephone (518) 268-2167
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188
e-mail William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs:

Photographs by William E. Krattinger, May 2019; original digital files at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford, NY 12188.

- 001 EXTERIOR, view looking roughly eastwards showing west and south elevations
- 002 EXTERIOR, view looking east to west elevation
- 003 EXTERIOR, view looking to southeast showing west and north elevations
- 004 EXTERIOR, view looking roughly westwards showing east elevation
- 005 EXTERIOR, view looking to northwest showing east and south elevations
- 006 INTERIOR, first floor, classroom, view towards northwest corner
- 007 INTERIOR, first floor, classroom, view towards southeast corner
- 008 INTERIOR, basement, view looking towards northeast corner

Property Owner:

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

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 18 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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ABOVE, original District No. 11 school ca. 1914; BELOW, Pig Knoll School 1915

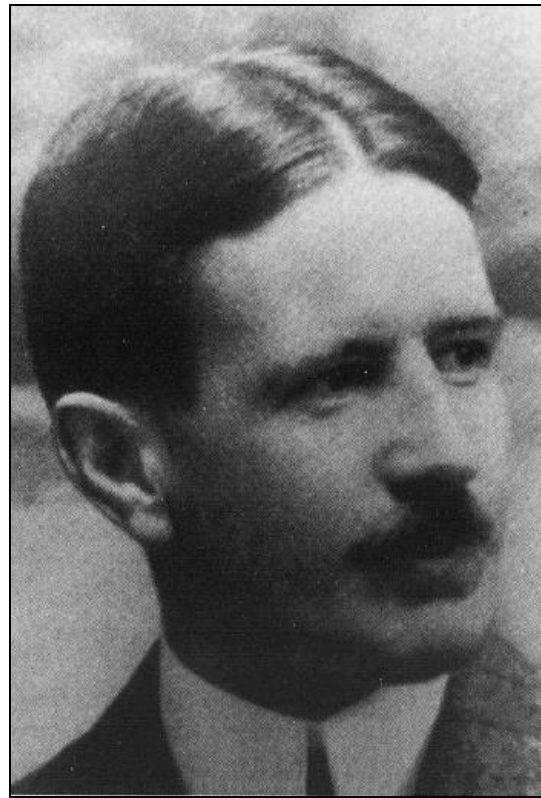


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ABOVE, left and right, Walter R. Wilder; BELOW, Egyptian Revival house, Wesley Hills

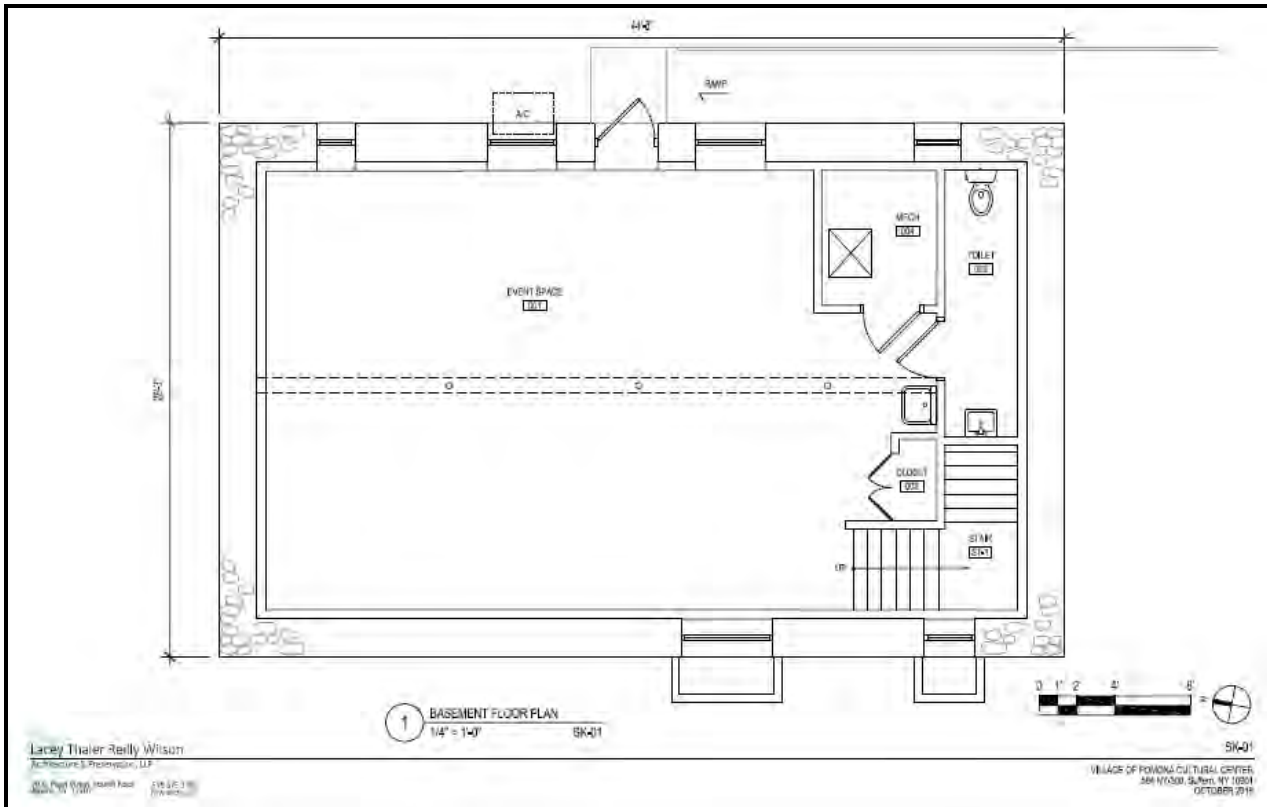


PIG KNOLL SCHOOL

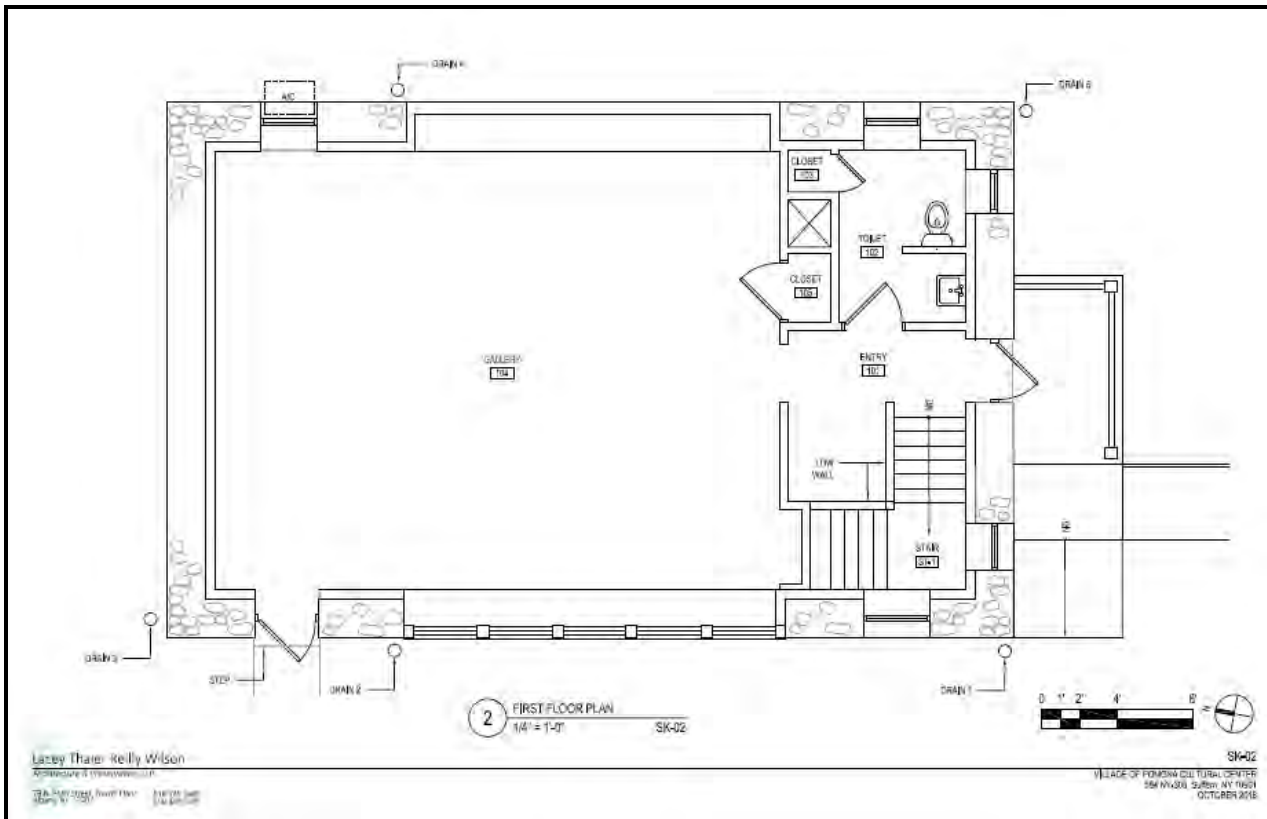
Name of Property

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ABOVE and BELOW, basement and first-floor plans



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ABOVE and BELOW, west and east elevations



PIG KNOLL SCHOOL

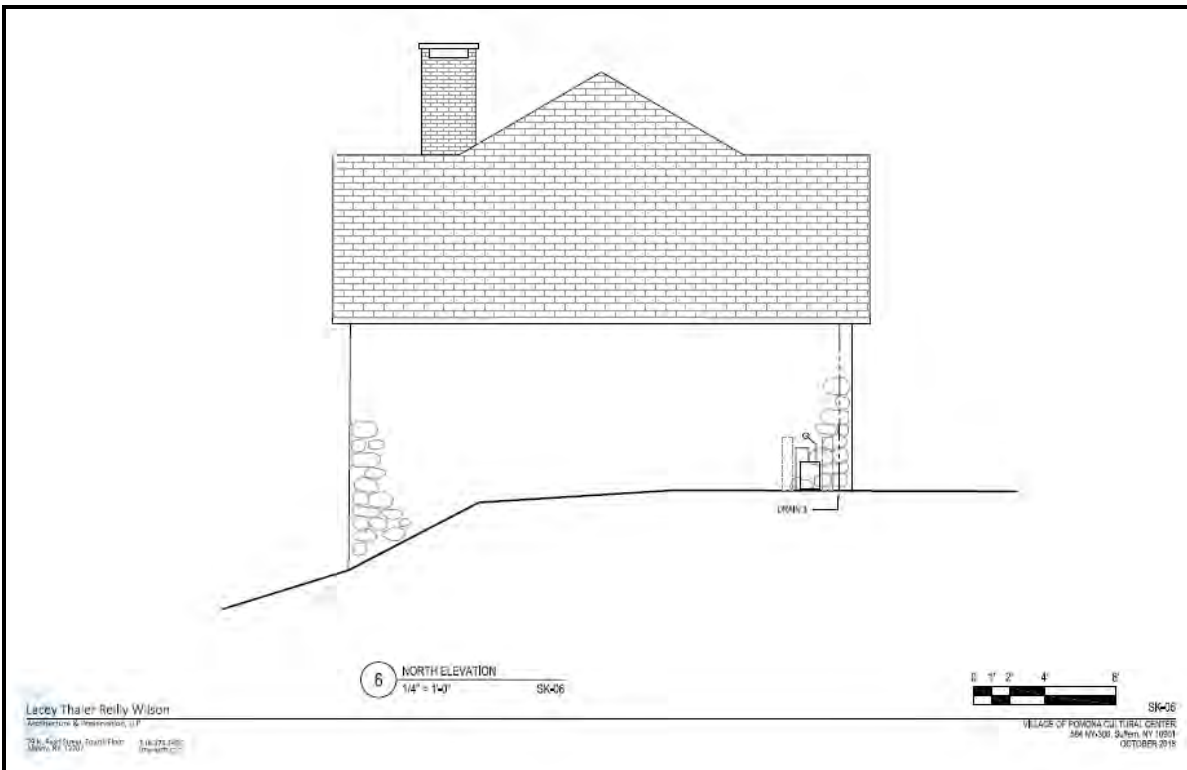
Name of Property

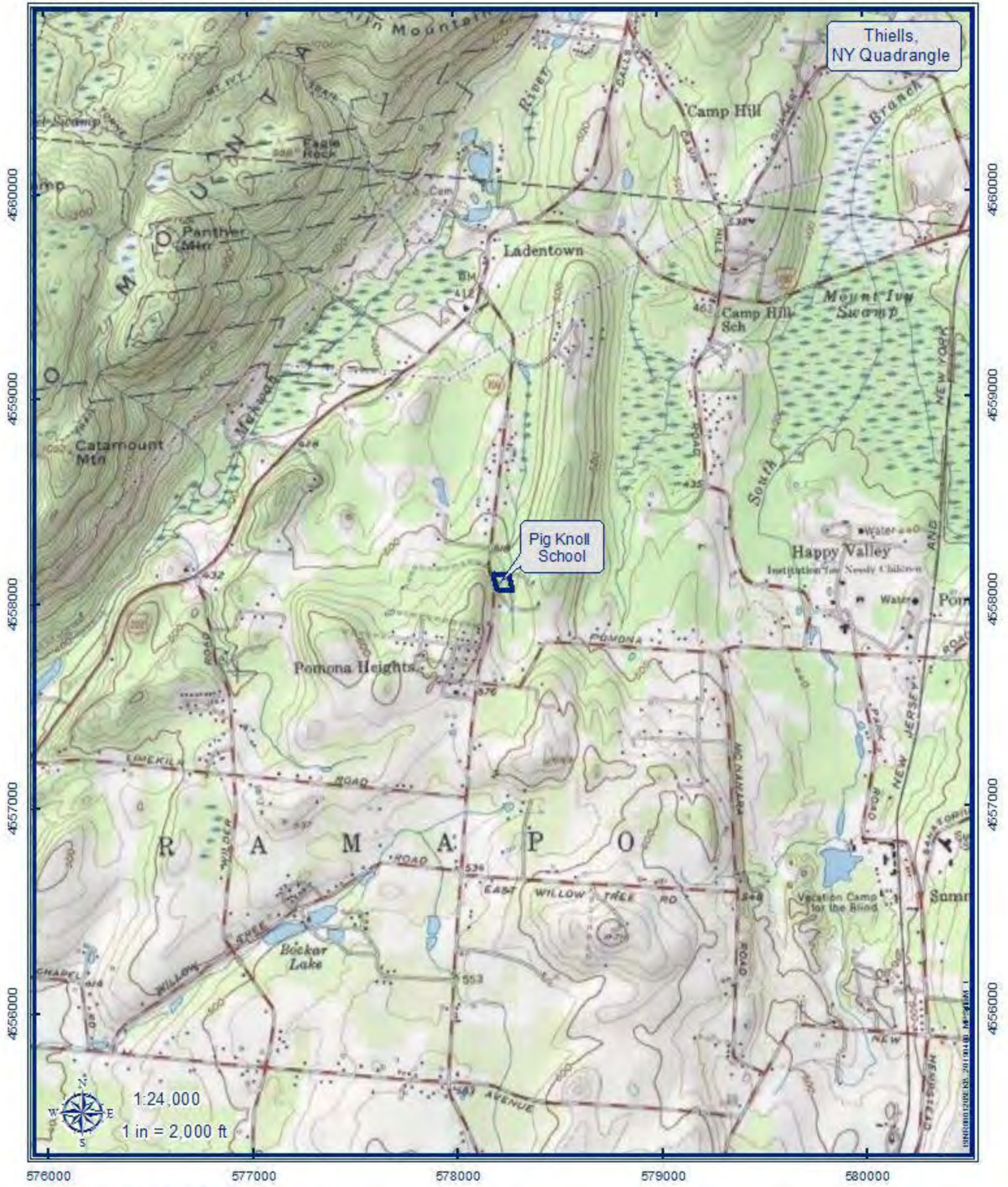
ROCKLAND CO., N.Y.

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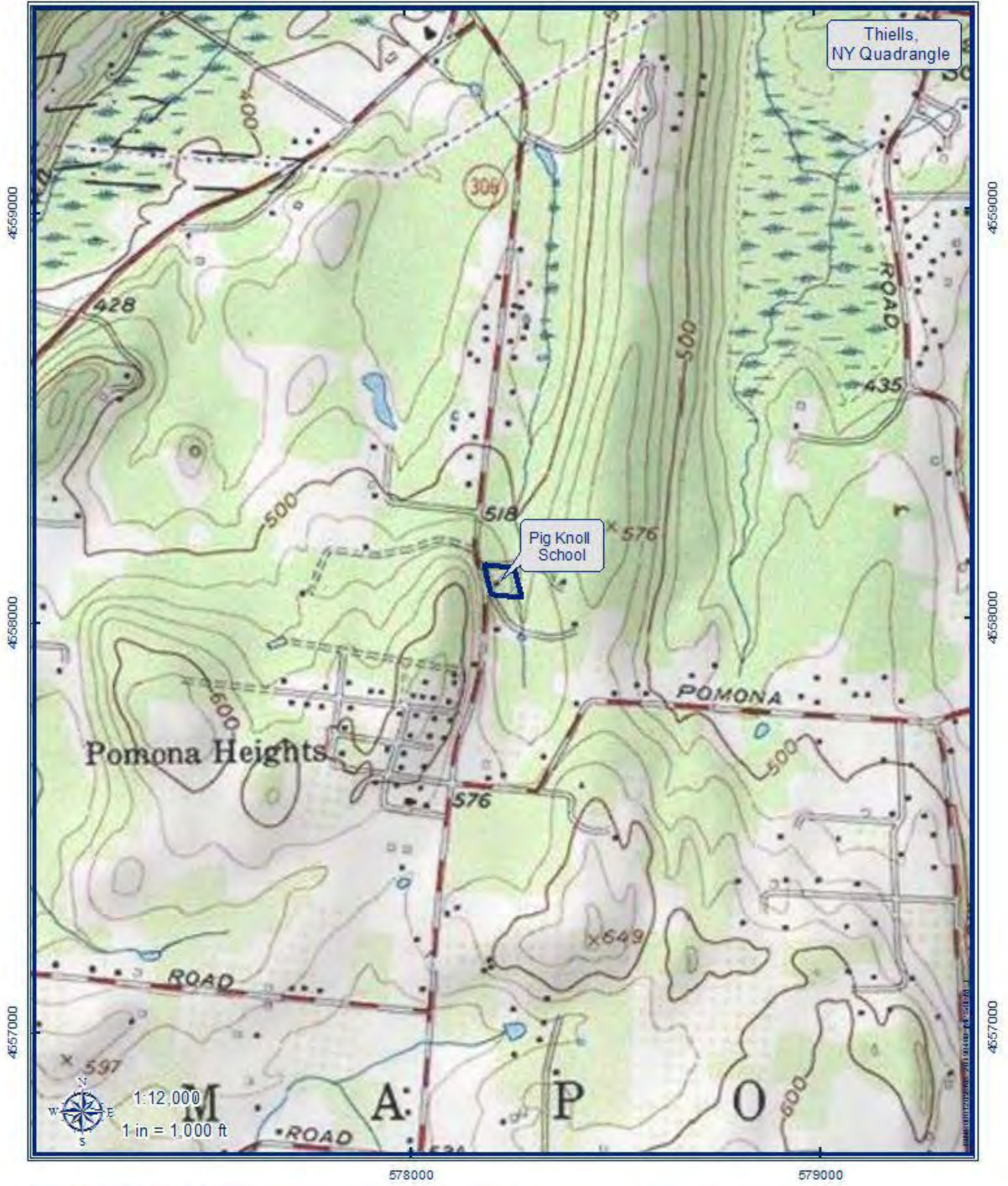
ABOVE and BELOW, south and north elevations





Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter





Thiels,
NY Quadrangle

Pig Knoll
School

Pomona Heights

POMONA

1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 380 760 1,520 Feet

Pig Knoll School

NEW YORK STATE Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation





Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter





VILLAGE OF POMONA
50th
anniversary
1967 - 2017





SCHOOL

...





POMONA
CULTURAL CENTER

POMONA
CULTURAL CENTER



EXIT







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: 5/30/2019 Date of Pending List: 6/19/2019 Date of 16th Day: 7/5/2019 Date of 45th Day: 7/15/2019 Date of Weekly List: 7/12/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 7/8/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Acting Commissioner

24 May 2019



Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following two nominations, both on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Whedon-Schumacher House, Syracuse, Onondaga County
Pig knoll School, Pomona, Rockland County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office