UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# 0221279 DATA SHEET RECEIVED ANG 2 1975 DATE ENTERED

AUG 2 8 1975

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
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SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	_TRANSPORTATION
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#### CONDITION

CHECK ONE

**CHECK ONE** 

LEXCELLENT

\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_ALTERED

CORIGINAL SITE

\_\_GOOD

\_\_RUINS
\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_MOVED

DATE\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Filoli is an estate encompassed by the San Francisco Water Company's watershed reserve and in the midst of a State Fish & Game Refuge. Polk was given the commission to design the house in 1914 and his plans for it are dated September 28, 1915. Construction was completed and the Bourns occupied the house in September 1917. The landscaping, tea house, garden walls, etc. were not completed until after World War I, or about 1919.

The two-storied house is built of warm red brick. The house is U-shaped Georgian Revival. It covers 18,000 square feet, and is frequently described as having forty rooms.

The roof is hipped with three segmental arched dormer windows on each side. The roof is red pan-and-roll tile, an obvious regional influence. Beneath the eaves are classical, white stone, carved modillions, or cornice blocks. Four huge, stone-capped-arched, brick chimneys contribute to the over-all symmetry.

The main entrance is featured with Doric columns and a stone balustraded portico. All the full length French windows on the ground floor are arched. Each second floor window has an ornamental wrought iron balcony.

The proportion and sense of space in each room are superb. Architectural keynotes of each room are the fireplaces, the doors, the cornices, and the friezes. The ceilings are lofty--throughout the main floor, twenty feet. Wood floors are works of art in contrasting parquetry. There are several magnificent interior doorways. Entrances off the great hall and stair hall are Corinthian pilaster and attached columns under a pillow-block-style entablature and a swan-neck pediment with carved scrolls.

The entrance hall is oval with a domed ceiling, white marble floor and limestone walls and is illuminated by the sidelights and fanlight of the entry. Opposite the main door are heavy, mahogany double doors; the arch above is glazed. On the long axis of the vestibule are arched doorways leading to cloak and powder rooms. Wide halls lie transverse the entire width of both floors. Downstairs the hall is divided into four segments by pilastered arches. Such a treatment gracefully breaks up the impression of length. Two sections have barrel ceilings; the great hall and the stair hall have flat ceilings.

The stair hall is most magnificent. A wide, dark green marble staircase with polished wood rail and filigree black ironwork balusters ascends dramatically to a Corinthian pilastered landing. The stair hall is impressive because of its open spaciousness.

The foyer to the ballroom is under the stair landing. The ballroom, which can accommodate several hundred guests, occupies all of the right wing. Here are the famous Killarney-Muckroos murals by Ernest Peixotto, the renowned crystal chandeliers which hung at the signing of the Versailles peace treaty, and the "walk-in" size, ormulu-decorated green marble fireplace.

Recently the great hall was referred to as a drawing room. Its white marble fireplace has Ionic columns. The side walls are thick fire walls of solid brick.

To the right is the library. Its walls are paneled in straight grained walnut. It has a simple, white marble fireplace.

On the left of the great hall is a large room, which Polk designated as the drawing room. Recently it was referred to as the "French Room" because of the exceptional rare collection of French prints and furnishings. The fireplace with its carved white marble mantel and console-style pillars is proportioned to compliment the fabric-covered wall panels.

(Continued on Continuation Sheet, p. 2)

### PERIOD

### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHIS	TORIC ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTO	RICCOMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1	499 MLARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1	599 AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1	699 MARCHITECTURE	<b>EDUCATION</b>	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1	799 <b>Æ</b> _ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-18	899COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
<b>1</b> 900-	COMMUNICATIONS	LINDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

### SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Willis J. Polk

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This application in its original form in 1974 was presented as a house nomination. In the past year the boundaries have been expanded. Therefore, the original nomination has been abridged, and authorities in significant areas were asked to present pertinent comments. Mai K. Arbegast, landscape architect, has presented a brief statement about the grounds and ecology of the estate. (Continuation Sheets, pp. 4-5) Eldon Earnhardt, archeologist, likewise discussed some of the archeological and anthropological aspects of the grounds. (Continuation Sheet, p. 6) The San Mateo County Historical Association was asked to give a description and comment on the significance of the overall estate's history.

Being concerned with local history I would note that there were probably two or more sawmills in the 1850s included within the historic district. Documentation is meager, but there is evidence that the area was logged. There are persons who can identify the mill sites. Also, as noted on the USGS map the road on the northwest side of the valley floor was the original wagon road up the valley and is now identified as the "Old Canada Road."

Filoli is the last large estate in Northern California of such sumptous magnitude and pristine, original beauty which survives unblighted by the intrusion of subdivisions.

Filoli provides California with its most triumphant specimen of Georgian Revival tradition.

The house and grounds came into existence at the climax of a period when the wealthy, social leaders of San Francisco and California were out-doing each other in grandeur of country houses and gardens. Prior to creating Filoli Mr. Bourn leased the Crocker estate in Hillsborough. He had ample opportunity, especially as president of the company, to make the best choice from the vast acreage of the Spring Valley Water Company's watershed lands.

The house is considered by architectural historians to be an outstanding example of country house architecture in the United States. It was one of Willis J. Polk's last and finest domestic designs. Polk, a leader in the "First Bay Tradition," was one of California's outstanding architects. The house was built for William B. Bourn, II, a financial giant and a leader in civic affairs. Bourn was a second generation owner the Empire Mine, the richest gold ore in California. He was President of the San Francisco Gas & Electric Company, which with others became the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Bourn reorganized the Spring Valley Water Works, thus creating the foundation for the San Francisco Water Company. Bourn helped to finance the Panama Pacific International as: Exposition, and undoubtedly was responsible for Polk's appointment as chairman of its architectural committee.

(Continued on Continuation Sheet, p. 3)

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPH	ICAL REFER	ENCES		
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Includes house, gardens, an	d remainder o	f estate in	Roth ownershi	p.
			·	
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNT	IES FOR PROPERTIE	S OVERLAPPING	STATE OR COUNTY	BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
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FORM PREPARED BY				
NAME / TITLE				
Dorothy F. Regne	ery			
ORGANIZATION			DATE 18 June 1	0.75
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE	7/3
488 Westridge Dr	rive		415-854-5	074
CITY OR TOWN			STATE	
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STATE HISTORIC PRES	SERVATION	OFFICER	CERTIFICAT	ION
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NATIONAL	STATE		LOCAL	
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As the designated State Historic Preservati				
hereby nominate this property for inclusio criteria and procedures set forth by the Nat		gister and certify	ınat it nas been evali	rated according to the
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SIGNATURE	Flerhe	all the	AUG . Lek	1 1975
TITLE State Historic Preser	vation Office	r	DATE	
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## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Description, continued.

The dining room beyond the drawing room has walnut paneled walls and a massive variegated marble fireplace.

The left wing of the U-shape is for kitchens and servants' quarters.

At the opposite end of the main floor is an attractive study paneled in wood, and across the hall Mrs. Roth used the paneled lounge to display horse trophies, hence the later designation "trophy room."

Off the main stair landing there is one of the most charming bedroom suites. On the second floor there are eight large bedrooms each with its own fireplace. The end bedrooms have adoining sitting rooms.

The service unit designed by Brown harmonizes well with the mansion. Atop the open, graceful clock tower of the garage there is a distinguished crowing gilt rooster overlooking the brick paved yards and on the axis of the pools in the sunken garden. Anticipating a new trend in transportation an eight car garage was provided in the addition with chauffeur's quarters.

The only addition to the original house was made in 1928. To appreciate the sunset and the lakes a two-story, wrought iron, enclosed porch was attached to the mistress' second floor sitting room. James Mitchell, who had been in Polk's office, designed the porch.

Arthur Brown, Jr., designed the tea pavillion of classic design with arched French windows and a flat, stone-balustraded roof. It is located between the sunken garden and the walled garden.

Matson Securities Co. purchased Filoli, Incorporated (including the furnishings, art works, etc.) for the William P. Roths in 1937 after the death of William B. Bourn, II. The Roths have been the only other occupants of Filoli.

As shown on the map in the foothills back of the house overlooking the chain of lakes and the long sweep of the valley in both directions, the Bourns have a private cemetery. (This land is not owned by S.F. Water Co. nor by the Roths.) Mr. and Mrs. Pourn, II, their infant son, and their married daughter are buried here. The terrace is dominated by a large 20 foot carved Arboe cross.

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Filoli Estate includes the meadow fronting the present Canada Road, where there are two entrances, the only means of reaching the focus of the estate. They are generally referred to as the South and North Gates. Guests, tradesmen, and owners felt that they had reached Filoli when they entered the gates. The meadow roads are the only access to the mansion. The entry roads circle through the oak-studded, undulating meadow, crossing a small creek via two attractive bridges built by Bourn. neadows provide the appropriate setting and create a mood for one's arrival at the mansion, and the meadows are necessary to maintain the integrity of the setting of the country house. Since William B. Bourn was president of the Spring Valley Water Company at the inception of the estate, the usage of adjoining property was congenially coordinated with the company, and this relationship obviously continued between the owner after it became a public utility. The "corporation yard" is a perfect example of the undefined "estate" boundaries owned by the Water Department of the County and City of San Francisco. The frontage is also owned by the water department, yet for a half century the meadow and its access roads have been considered a part of the estate.

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PAGE 7

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(provides a very adequate bibliography of landscaping, etc. items)
Richard W. Longstreth, written statement, 23 November 1974.

Geographical Data, continued.

In addition to the property which has been submitted by Wm. P. Roth, Jr., for this nomination there is a small area located directly to the southeast of the greenhouse area and adjacent to it. The area is owned by the San Francisco Water Company. It is known as the "corporation yard" and contains trucks and large equipment used to maintain the house, gardens, and estate owned by the Roth family. The corporation yard was enclosed by Bourn with a wall and gates. Southwest of the walls are some auxiliary buildings: workshop, chicken coop, and corral for a horse. The entire area comprises approximately 6 to 8 acres.

The preparator of this application has been advised by Mai Abregast, who is involved with the maintenance of the gardens that these buildings and corporation yard are essential and should be included in the nomination even though they are not included in the Filoli lease.

The request for inclusion of this area beyond the Roth property is  $\underline{\text{not}}$  being made by the Roth family, but by persons interested in preserving the house and gardens as a logical, complete unit.

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Significance, continued.

According to Richard W. Longstreth, architectural historian:

"As a design, Filoli is a very distinguished free interpretation of English Georgian architecture, refined in proportion and detail, and unusually simple for eclectic houses of its date. While an entirely formal statement and of considerable dimensions it is neither pompous nor self-conscious. The order and dignity characteristic of Georgian work is attained while using many details that were very personal to its architect. Viewed within the context of buildings of its type throughout the country, it compares favorably with the best examples of such leading country house designers as Charles Adams Platt, John Russell Pope, David Adler, Carrere and Hastings and Horace Trumbauer.

"The house is of further interest by virtue of the fact that relatively few of its kind have survived so well preserved. The large majority of comparably sized country houses have been either demolished or converted to institutional use. Filoli stands as a first rate example of what is now a very rare breed."

A personal tiff arose regarding the manner in which Bourn chose to pay Polk and caused Bourn in 1917 to commission Bakewell & Brown. Arthur Brown, Jr., was responsible for the design of the adjoining service and garage portion, the garden pavillion, gardener's house, etc.

The landscaping by Bruce Porter is an important part of the composition of Filoli. In 1919 the landscaping was completed. Mrs. Roth, a horticulturist, has encouraged the maintenance of the original gardens and her additions have compliment them. The addition of a swimming pool at the end of one garden axis has not detracted from the landscaping.

To scan the names of the artisans and craftsmen responsible for the creation of Filoli is like reading a "Who's Who in California."

When the United Nations was considering San Francisco for its possible head-quarters, it was proposed that the Filoli estate should be a part of the United Nations' complex. A highlight of the United Nations charter session was a luncheon at Filoli for the international dignitaries.

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Significance, continued

The Landscape Setting and Landscape Design of Filoli Gardens

The gardens of Filoli are outstanding for a number of reasons which make them very special for a number of reasons. They were designed during 1916 by Bruce Porter, landscape designer, under the close direction of the owner, Mr. William B. Bourn, II, and with the aid and assistance in the selection of some of the plants by Isabella Worn. The major garden layout exists to this day, although the plants have developed over the fifty or more years of growth, and many additional plants have been added to the garden because of the great interest in horticulture and unusual plants of its most recent ower, Mrs. Lurline P. Roth. Since 1937 Mrs. Roth has been the major guiding force in the continuation of the gardens, and developing new and more exotic plant collections within the frame of the garden design.

The original owner, Mr. Bourn, was a very strong-minded man, and the dramatic visual effect of views to the water, to the ridge of hills behind (the Sierra Morena). and the elegant entrance court were the result of his wishes to view the larger landscape in the most dramatic way possible. The lakes which were so special and which are now somewhat hidden from view due to plant growth within the garden were called the Spring Valley Lakes (now called Crystal Springs Reservoir) and are to the north of the house and garden. The ridge of hills with an extremely rich and diverse native flora lie to the west and are a part of the State Fish and Game Refuge. The marshy areas have become well known to migrating Canadian Geese who stop there, sometimes in numbers such as two or three hundred at one time. There is a rich native population of blacktailed deer, hawks, eagles, and other smaller creatures. The wild flowers in the meadows where deer and horses graze are magnificent examples of ntive flora which can be seen easily and close to heavily populated areas. The watershed provides a setting which is incomparable for such a beautifully landscaped garden. The native Valley Oak (Quercus lobata) are some of the few remaining natural stands of this tree in such a lowland area so close to the coast, and the coast redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) and Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) grown in many of the canyons which are part of the Sierra Morena hills. Many kinds of chaparral growth merge with the woods of Coast Live Oak, Black Oak, California Bay or Laurel and California Buckeye which intermingle with the manzanita, coyote bush, and bush lupine.

One outstanding feature of Filoli is the careful setting or positioning of the house, particularly as it relates to landscape design in California. The house is situated amongst some of the largest California Coast Live Oaks (Quercus agrifolia) to be found in any garden or in any native situation anywhere. The trees in some cases which surround the house on all sides must be from 100 to 350 years old or more. These trees are subject to slow decay and eventual death if root systems are disturbed to any extent. The vigorous growth of these trees in spite of the fact that the house has been placed so close to them on all sides indicates the great care and artistry of the placement of the house. From a landscape design point of view this one feature is absolutely outstanding. Also, the size of the trees is the one memory which all come away from the garden with.

There are two parallel walkways which run from north to south, one across the (Continued on Continuation Sheet, p. 5)

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Significance (Landscape), continued

front of the house which is emphasized by allees of Irish Yews which narrow and emphasize the view from the southern end which is raised and is backed by Roman columns with Irish Yews, and a sitting place to the north which ends in a view of the lakes. This most dramatic view is punctuated throughout its length by the crossing of beautiful wrought-iron gates which enclose the walled garden. The other walkway begins from one of the doors of the dining room on the south side of the house and parallels the other walkway in a less formal manner, at the same time bisecting the same walls with wrought iron gates which are housed in beautiful arched openings through the walls of brick which surround certain portions of the garden.

The gardens are extremely varied, yet formal in their aspect. A sunken garden with clipped boxwood hedges, and formal parternes of bedding plants. A completely walled garden with much variation within it is one of the outstanding gardens within the total complex. Here, a Dutch maze garden, along with a garden with a clipped boxwood pattern and bedding plants which imitate some of the patterns of the windows in Chartres Cathedral on the ground, blend in with many other fine details which accompany the elegant garden design. Jardineres of terra cotta, sundials, fountains, bird baths, and decorative plaques have been carefully selected and placed throughout the garden. The garden can be seen as a group of compartments or outdoor rooms which are linked together by the two major parallel walkways, and are extremely versatile throughout.

Outstanding plants of unusual species can be seen throughout. There are very few examples of such grand gardens which still remain, particularly where the setting is protected by a mountain range, a watershed and a meadow situation as at Filoli. This particular garden, house and natural setting is an ideal one for training people, young and old, to enjoy, appreciate and to learn how to make gardens and to preserve their natural heritage.

Prepared by Mai K. Arbegast, Landscape Architect, Berkeley.

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Significance, Continued

We would like very much for you to consider the need for inclusion in the National Registry of Historic Sites, the archeological material found on the Filoli Estate in the Canada Valley of San Mateo County. This site is registered as San Mateo 125 in San Mateo County. California.

The site is a Coastal Indian site which has been carbon 14 dated to be in excess of 1,000 years B.P. We have been excavating for over four and one-half years and have found that the artifacts yielded to be extensive when compared with other sites in Northern California. The uniqueness of some of the artifactual materials is critically important to the reconstruction of the life ways of the peoples living here 1,000 years ago and is also important to archeological theory regarding our early populations in California.

The site was occupied for a period in excess of 500 years and we feel the site's significance to be scientifically and academically of the highest importance. This particular site indicates a habitation time period prior to European contact. The osteological data recovered indicates cultural differences in mortuary practices which are unique in this area = men were buried and women were cremated. The number of artifacts in association with burial factors is extraordinary. One particular burial included approximately 2,000 artifacts.

We feel that every effort should be made to prevent any destruction to this site and surrounding sites in the entire Canada Valley.

Letter to State Parks & Recreation from Eldon Earnhardt, June 16, 1975

