

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Asilomar Conference Grounds

and/or common Asilomar

2. Location

street & number Asilomar Boulevard _____ not for publication

city, town Pacific Grove _____ vicinity of

state California code 06 county Monterey code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			___ private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Recreation (Conference Center)

4. Owner of Property

name California Department of Parks and Recreation

street & number P.O. Box 2390

city, town Sacramento n/a vicinity of state California 95811

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Monterey County Courthouse

street & number 240 Church Street

city, town Salinas state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Buildings Survey
title Asilomar Conference Grounds has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date August 1984 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Resource Management and Protection Division
California Department of Parks and Recreation

city, town 1950 - 20th Street, Sacramento 682 state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date 1913-28
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The historic core of the Asilomar Conference Grounds contains 11 buildings, all designed by the noted American architect, Julia Morgan, in a rustic "Craftsman" mode intended to fit sensitively into the scenic oceanside location. Built among the dunes and Monterey pines of Asilomar Beach, the buildings utilize compatible materials such as redwood shingles and shakes, exposed stone foundations, porch piers, and fireplaces.

The focal point of the complex is the large circle flanked on the three land sides by the Administration Building (east), the Chapel (north), and the Crocker Dining Hall (south). Dormitory facilities lie to the east and north of this core. Access roadways, following Morgan's plan, wind through the complex from the massive stone entrance gates, also designed by her; retaining walls are of exposed stone; and pathways are often lined with stone where they cut into the grade. New construction, described at the end of this section, has occurred around the edges of the historic core. It does not obscure the view from the historic structures to the sea.

The features that remain from the historic period are:

- the Entrance Gates (1913)
- Administration Building (Phoebe A. Hearst Social Hall) (1913)
- Crocker Dining Hall (Mary A. Crocker Kitchen and Dining Room) (1918)
- Memorial Chapel (1915)
- The Lodge (Visitor's Lodge) (about 1918)
- Scripps Lodge (1927-28)
- Viewpoint (originally the "Health Cottage") (about 1918)
- Hilltop ("Stuck-Up Inn") ("House of Happiness") (about 1918)
- Outside Inn (about 1913)
- Merrill Hall (1927-28)
- Tide Inn ("Pirates Inn") ("Reserve Cottage") (1923)
- Pinecrest (David Visel's Cottage) (1927-28)

Along with the road plan, the Morgan-era structures are all judged to contribute to the historic significance of the complex. They are described individually below:¹

Entrance Gates

The entrance gates, at the intersection of Asilomar and Sinex Avenues, consist of two square rough-cut granite columns positioned at an angle which leads the visitor into Asilomar. Craftsman-style ironwork, containing lighting, surmounts the columns.

The entrance gates, among the earliest of Morgan's features on the grounds, introduce the informal Craftsman ethic employed by her throughout the complex.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social/
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration-settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		X other (specify)
				Recreation (women's)
Specific dates	1913-36	Builder Architect	Julia Morgan	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

Asilomar (Spanish for "retreat" or "refuge by the sea") was designed as the Young Women's Christian Association's national camp and conference grounds in the West. It is significant for its role in the work of the Association and in the development of the Monterey peninsula as a resort area. It is also notable architecturally, as an example of its style and as an outstanding work by Julia Morgan, a noted California architect, who was one of the first women to achieve eminence in the architectural profession in the United States.

History

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which pioneered in recreation and leadership training for young women, established Asilomar in 1913. Previously, the YWCA's western conferences had been held at Mills College, near Oakland, California, in 1897; at the Hotel Capitola ("Guardamar"), in Santa Cruz, which burned in 1912, in 1900-11; and in tents at the "hacienda" of Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst, of the publishing family, in 1912. In 1913, Mrs. Hearst, a vigorous supporter of the YWCA movement, motivated the Pacific Improvement Company (a predecessor of the present-day Del Monte interests), to donate to the "YW" 30 undeveloped seaside acres in Pacific Grove that became the nucleus of Asilomar.

Mrs. Hearst made substantial monetary contributions and gifts, including camping equipment, to Asilomar, as did Mary A. Crocker, of the San Francisco banking family (for whom Crocker Hall would be named). Donations from members of the Huntington, Doheny, Baldwin, Merrill, and Scripps families; funds raised through the sale of food at the Palace of Food Services at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915; and other fundraising efforts permitted the YWCA to meet stipulations set by the Pacific Improvement Company for the enhancement of the property.¹

The task of developing Asilomar fell to Julia Morgan (1872-1957). Morgan was the first woman to receive an architect's license in California. She had also been the first woman accepted in the architecture section of L'Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris. When she took on the Asilomar project, Morgan had already designed the main buildings at Mills College and additions to Mrs. Hearst's "hacienda."²

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 9

Quadrangle name Monterey, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 1 0 5 9 5 1 0 0 4 0 5 3 0 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

B 1 0 5 9 5 6 0 0 4 0 5 3 2 6 0
Zone Easting Northing

C 1 0 5 9 5 4 0 0 4 0 5 2 8 6 0

D 1 0 5 9 6 0 0 0 4 0 5 2 8 6 0

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries are drawn to encompass the remaining historic structures and their setting. They are indicated on the attached site plan. The boundaries recommended are identical to those proposed for the National Register.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James H. Charleton

organization History Division, National Park Service date September 27, 1984

street & number 1100 "L" Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8165

city or town Washington state DC 20240

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

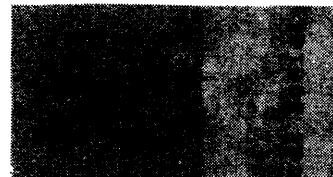
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Administration Building (Phoebe A. Hearst Social Hall)

The Administration Building is Morgan's earliest Asilomar building. It was designed and constructed of local natural materials in 1913. The structure, which established the architectural style Morgan employed on the other buildings, is a 1-1/2-story, long, rectangular split log and post-and-beam building surmounted by a cross gable and hip roof. The front facade is punctuated with a large central cobblestone chimney and projecting hip-roofed rooms at either end. The projecting eave line is emphasized by post-and-beam and vertical split log detailing which runs across the facades directly below the eave line. The roofline is accented by a central open hip-roofed cupola. Fenestration consists of banks of three- and five-row casement windows.

The rear facade has a modern deck addition. The interior has been somewhat modified; besides housing the Center's business offices and central lounge, it also contains two conference offices.

Crocker Dining Hall

Crocker Hall is a 1-1/2 story rectangular building of rough random-size granite and redwood shakes. It is surmounted by a gable end roof with wide eave overhangs that is pierced by dormers. The five-bay front facade is punctuated by a broadly projecting central entrance porch. The roof line is accented by a central square cupola with hip roof. Fenestration consists of banks of casement windows grouped in threes. The east and west facades contain large central granite chimneys. Additional dining rooms at the rear and sides ("Seascape," "Woodlands," and "The Nook") were added in a compatible design in 1961.

Memorial Chapel

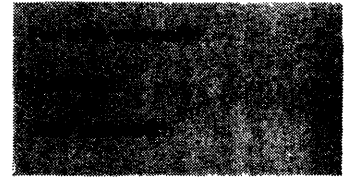
The Chapel is a 2-story redwood shingle/vertical split log rectangular building with a dominant front facade featuring an enclosed porch supported by five large granite pillars. The porch's flat roof resembles a pergola. The entrances are at both sides of the front facade. The building is surmounted by a hip and gable end roof. Fenestration consists of banks of casement windows grouped in twos and threes. The rear facade contains a projecting central room with a large granite stone chimney. The altar window, regarded by many visitors as especially notable, frames a natural picture of pines with the sea and sand dunes behind them in the distance.

The Lodge

The Lodge, which provided the first hotel-style lodging on the grounds, is northeast of the Administration Building. It is a 2-story rectangular building surmounted by a hip and gable end roof. It is clad with brown shingles. The

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front facade is distinguished by a central 2-story projecting room surmounted by a gable end roof and central granite chimney. Four large granite pillars support the second-story projection and verandas. The verandas surmount the entrances which flank both sides of the central projection. The west facade features a long second-story redwood beam open balcony. Fenestration consists of banks of casement windows.

In 1953 the building's interior was remodeled to provide private baths for every room. New floors and carpeting were also laid.

Scripps Lodge

Scripps Lodge, adjacent to The Lodge on the north, is a 2-story U-shaped brown shingle dormitory surmounted by a combination hip and gable end roof. Fenestration consists of banks of casement windows. The western front facade entrance appears altered; the original interiors, however, remain intact. Scripps Patio, southeast of the building, contains its original cement benches. The building is in need of restoration.

Viewpoint

Viewpoint, east of the Administration Building, is a 1-story long rectangular redwood shake building surmounted by a combination gable end and hip roof. A bank of four casement windows projects from the center of the front facade. The entrance doors are to either side of this projection. The central front entrances are flanked by two original cement benches; the cement benches emphasize the entrances, enhancing the building's symmetry. In 1956 the interior was altered for meeting room space and new, larger wings in compatible styling replaced the original wings on the east and west.

Viewpoint was originally known as "Health Cottage," because it served as the sick bay for the camp. In 1936-41, it was known as the Paulsen Visel Cottage for its occupant, one of two brothers who had taken a lease-option on the Asilomar property.

Viewpoint remains an integral part of the historic building cluster at Asilomar, visually tying together the Administration Building and Hilltop in a broad vista. It is now used for meetings.

Hilltop

Hilltop, farther east of Viewpoint to the south of the entrance gates, is a unique 1-story shake shingle building enclosing a central courtyard garden. Two long rectangular wings extend east from both ends of the section which forms the front facade. These two extensions are joined to the rear portion

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by gable-end covered walkways. The building, in its entirety, forms an open square, and is surmounted by a combination hip and gable-end roof. The front facade contains a central projection punctuated with a central brick chimney. Casement windows run the length of this central projection as they do the other building extensions. The wide eave overhangs all around the building are supported by bark-covered log rafters which project from the interior rooms.

Hilltop acquired its nicknames, "Stuck-Up Inn" and "House of Happiness," because it served during the 1920s as living quarters for the "Stuck-Ups," college women who worked at Asilomar during summer vacations.

Hilltop is in good condition, except for the interior garden, which has been allowed to deteriorate.

Outside Inn

The Outside Inn is a rectangular 1-story shake shingle and board-and-batten building surmounted by a gable end roof. It contains a five-bay facade with an indented entranceway. Its fenestration consists of casement windows in groups of twos and threes.

Outside Inn presently houses park staff. It has served as staff housing throughout its history; it was originally the Engineer's Cottage and later (about 1938) served as the Superintendent's residence. It stands near the southeast corner of the original Asilomar reservation.

Merrill Hall

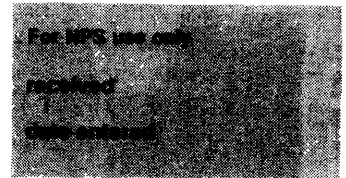
To the southeast of the Administration Building, Merrill Hall is an imposing rectangular 2-story wood frame and rough-cut granite building surmounted by a gable end roof. Wood shakes and vertical planed logs embellish its exterior. The building's west facade is punctuated with a broad, soaring granite central chimney and flanks of Gothic arch windows. The front facade consists of a long row of Gothic arch windows above a shed roof which projects over a series of casement door and window openings at ground level. The rear facade repeats this theme.

Designed to seat 1,000 people, the acoustically excellent hall was, at the time of its construction, the largest auditorium on the Monterey peninsula. Large convocations and dances are still held here.

The building commemorates Mrs. John F. Merrill, head of the Asilomar Committee between 1913 and 1925.

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Tide Inn

Tide Inn is a broad 2-story brown shingled building that descends the hillside to the south of Merrill Hall. It is surmounted by a cross gable-end and hip roof. A cobblestone chimney punctuates the north facade. Its fenestration consists of a series of casement windows.

Tide Inn was known as "Pirates Inn" during the 1920s, and served as the counterpart to Hilltop, the "Stuck-Up Inn." The "Pirates" were college men who worked at Asilomar during summer vacations.

In the late 1930s, Tide Inn served as a guest building on the conference grounds and acquired from that use the sobriquet of "Reserve Cottage."

Pinecrest

Pinecrest is a rectangular 2-story brown shingled cottage surmounted by a cross gable-end roof. Its fenestration consists of banks of casement windows. In 1936-41, it served as David Visel's cottage. Pinecrest is situated in the woods between the later Long View Group and the central portion of the Morgan-era complex.

Other Features

In addition to Class Hall, which burned in 1955, all of the Morgan-era "long-houses," basically open-air structures with canvas sides, have been demolished. The last of them was taken down in 1971.²

The sites of the longhouses, as well as other portions of the Asilomar grounds, now feature more modern facilities. These structures, which do not contribute to the historic significance of the complex, have generally been placed in sections away from the central core (and have been excluded from the boundary of this nomination). They are listed here for purposes of reference:

- "Surf" and "Sand" and the new Corporation Service Yard (1959);
- the "Sea Galaxy" (1964), a miniature conference center, by John Carl Warnecke and Associates, including three guest houses (Windward, Shores, and Cypress) and two conference buildings (Triton and Nautilus);
- Housekeeping Headquarters Building (1965);
- Long View Group (North, Middle, and South) (1966), erected on the sites of old longhouses 8, 9, and 10;
- View Crescent (1968), a complex of seven buildings, including three guest lodges (Whitecaps, Breakers, and Spindrifft) and four meetingrooms (Marlin, Curlew, Dolphin, and Sanderling), that rest on the sites of longhouses 1 through 5;

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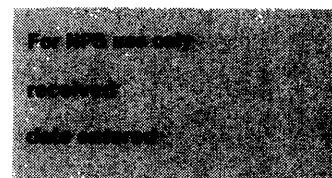
- North Woods (1973), a complex of three lodges (Manzanita, Oak Knoll, and Willow Inn) and three meetingrooms (Toyon, Acacia, and Heather), designed by the firm of Smith Barker Hanssen; and
- the State Park Training Center (the William Penn Mott, Jr., Training Center) (1973), on newly acquired land across Asilomar Avenue from the historic complex. The Center includes three lodges and a headquarters building.

Footnotes

- 1 The description of the Morgan-era structures at Asilomar is adapted from the draft National Register of Historic Places nomination form, by Kent L. Seavey, as verified by on-site inspection on May 12, 1984. Ms. Pamela McGuire, an historian for the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, conducted the physical examination and photographing of the structures on which the National Register form was based, on August 11, 1983. She consulted the Julia Morgan Collections at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, and at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California, for historic photographs, maps, brochures, and other documents (including the original blueprints of the Asilomar buildings, at the latter location). Ms. McGuire also interviewed Ms. Sara Holmes Boutelle, who has written extensively on the career of Julia Morgan.
- 2 The following summary of the features that have been added at Asilomar since its acquisition by the State has been prepared from the summary given in Hazel-Ann Hunt, Asilomar at Sixty (Monterey: Lee Printing Company, 1973), pp. 8-14.

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Morgan would continue her association with Asilomar from 1913 through to its "completion" in 1928, and design all its buildings. She revised her 1913 plan over the years, but, despite the changes, retained the same essential "rustic" or "Craftsman" style. The Social Hall (present Administration Building), constructed in 1913 of local timbers and stone, was the first permanent building and established the "rustic" theme of those that followed.

The lack of permanent facilities at Asilomar had not prevented its being put into almost immediate use. In 1913, ten redwood "tent-houses," or "longhouses," with striped canvas awnings, were put up. Although the "longhouses" were open to the elements except for the awnings, they did have wooden floors and roofs and electricity and running water. A huge circus tent served as the dining room. (The use of the "long houses" continued until the last of them was taken down in 1971.)

The second major structure, the Chapel, dedicated to Grace H. Dodge, national chairwoman of the YWCA board, was completed in 1915, the year after Mrs. Dodge died. Crocker Dining Hall, finished in 1918, replaced the circus tent used earlier. The Health Cottage (present Viewpoint), which served as the infirmary; Hilltop; and The Lodge were also completed in about 1918. Other structures were added at various times up until 1928. Merrill Hall, the last of the Morgan buildings, is architecturally the most impressive and complex of them.³

Beginning in 1921, the YWCA kept Asilomar open on a year-round basis. Expenses, however, tended to outweigh income. During the Depression, when the YWCA decided to dispose of many of its real estate holdings, the fate of Asilomar was much debated. In 1936-41, it was leased to David and Paulsen Visel with an option to purchase, which was never exercised. Then, during World War II, the National Youth Authority utilized the facility as a training center.⁴

In 1946, after a temporary lease to a nearby motel expired, the YWCA again assumed operation, this time with more favorable financial results. By 1952, however, the YWCA renewed its program of disposing of its real estate. Local citizens formed a "Save Asilomar" Committee that lobbied with the "YW" and the State to preserve the property. This effort culminated in the purchase of the property by the State in 1956. The "YW" sold the property for one-half its assessed value and donated its remaining interest to the State.⁵

Joined to a picturesque mile-long strip of beach (the Asilomar State Beach) adjacent to it, the Asilomar unit of the State park system now includes 95 acres. Since its acquisition by the State, a modernization program has added substantially to the facilities. Measures have also been taken to preserve the natural features that attracted the YWCA to the site and continue to charm visitors to the Monterey peninsula.

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Conclusion

The YWCA's efforts on behalf of recreational and educational opportunities for women are quite noteworthy. They have reached into hundreds of communities in many nations. In the United States, though its earliest efforts as a grass-roots movement date from the late 1860s, it became a coordinated national organization only in 1906.⁶ Asilomar represents one of the early common efforts of the national organization.

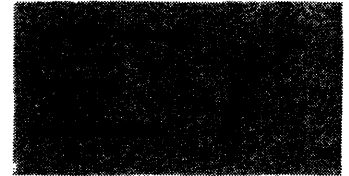
Asilomar also marks a major achievement in the career of architect Julia Morgan, who, among her more than 700 commissions, designed a number of individual YWCA structures in the cities of California, Utah, and Hawaii. She is probably best known for her work at the Hearsts' San Simeon, but her sophisticated training and facile ability to work with clients gave her buildings a great diversity of style, in projects for residences as well as for complexes of large scale. Asilomar is Morgan's most celebrated complex in the "Craftsman" or "rustic" mode.

Footnotes

- 1 Hazel-Ann Hunt, Asilomar, The First Fifty Years, 1913-1963 (Monterey: Lee Printing Company, 1963), pp. 3-5.
- 2 Sara Holmes Boutelle, "Julia Morgan," vol. 3, pp. 238-239, in Adolf K. Placzek (ed.), The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects (New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1982).
- 3 Hunt, op. cit., pp. 6-9.
- 4 Ibid., p. 11.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 11-13.
- 6 Mary S. Sims, (YWCA) Executive Committee for National Interpretation and Support, "Young Women's Christian Association," Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1953), 29, 665.
- 7 Boutelle, op. cit., p. 239.

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_____. "The Long-Distance Dreamer Who Altered the Look of California," California Monthly, 86, 6 (April 1976), pp. 12-14.

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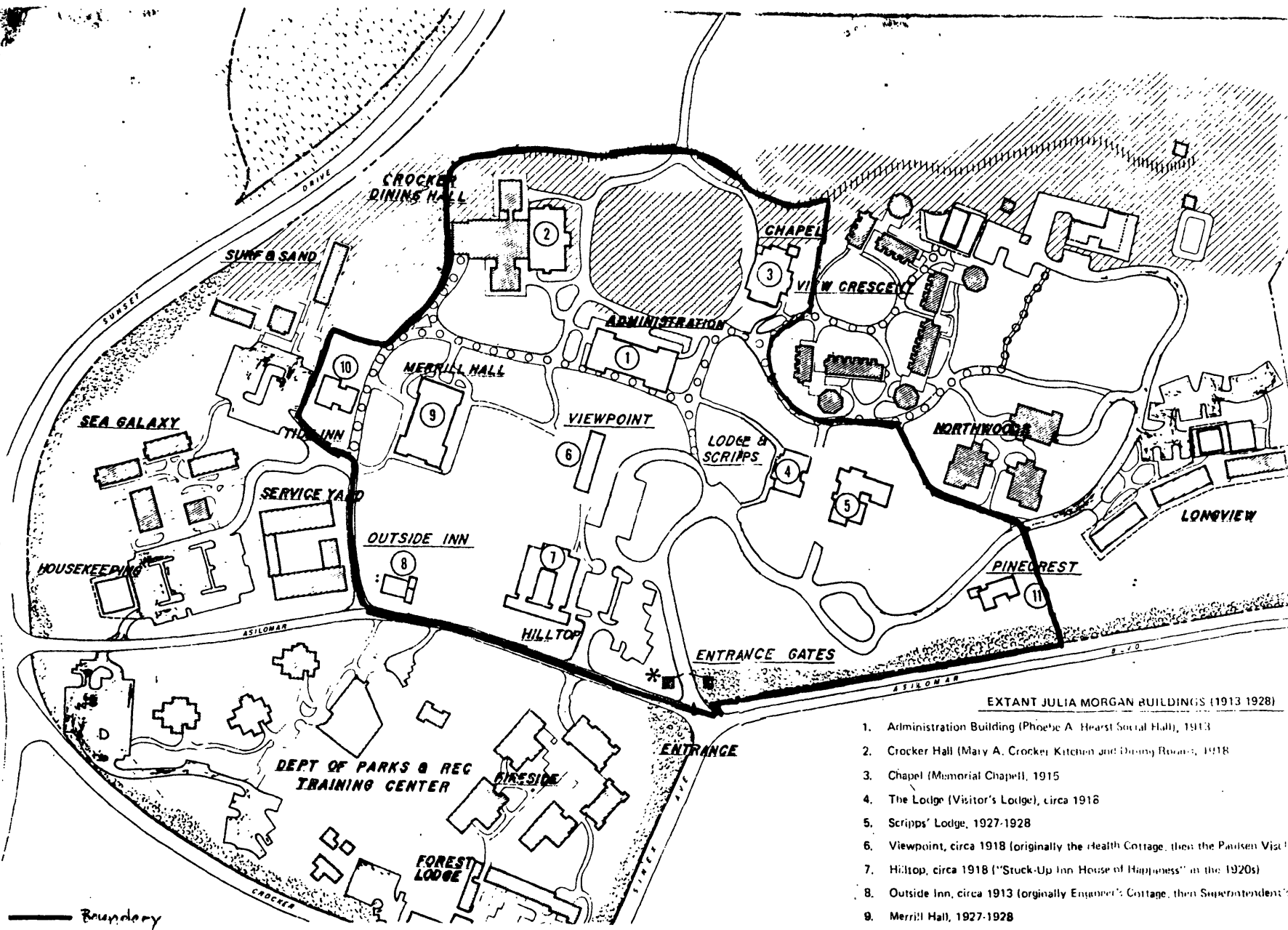
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Hunt, Hazel-Ann. Asilomar: The First Fifty Years, 1913-1963. Monterey: Lee Printing Company, 1963.

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Sims, Mary S. "Young Women's Christian Association," Encyclopedia Americana. New York: Americana Corporation, 1953. 29, 665-666.

Steilberg, Walter. "Some Examples of the Work of Julia Morgan," The Architect and Engineer of California, LV, 2 (November 1918), pp. 90-103. Contains a reproduction of the original 1913 plan for Asilomar (p. 103), which is copied at the rear of this nomination.



EXTANT JULIA MORGAN BUILDINGS (1913-1928)

1. Administration Building (Phoebe A. Hearst Social Hall), 1913
2. Crocker Hall (Mary A. Crocker Kitchen and Dining Room), 1918
3. Chapel (Memorial Chapel), 1915
4. The Lodge (Visitor's Lodge), circa 1916
5. Scripps' Lodge, 1927-1928
6. Viewpoint, circa 1918 (originally the health Cottage, then the Pausen Vista)
7. Hilltop, circa 1918 ("Stuck-Up Inn House of Happiness" in the 1920s)
8. Outside Inn, circa 1913 (originally Engineer's Cottage, then Superintendent's)
9. Merrill Hall, 1927-1928

— Boundary