

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.

1. Name of Property **DRAFT**

Historic name: Marconi Wireless/ Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District
 (Additional Documentation, Boundary Increase, Name Change)

Other names/site number: Station KPH- Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America
Historic District (Old Name); Synanon "Bay Ranch"

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 18500 CA-1

City or town: Marshall State: California County: Marin

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ 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**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:	_____ Date
_____ 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

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION/BOUNDARY INCREASE, NAME CHANGE

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 5

Four buildings are NRHP listed in the Station KPH - Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America Historic District. The Station KPH Operating Station was individually listed on the NRHP due its distance from the original boundary of the district. The boundary increase proposes inclusion of the Operating Station as a contributing resource.

Number of Resources within Property: ORIGINAL KPH – Marconi Historic District

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry/Communications, Waterworks, Powerhouse

Domestic/Hotel, Single dwelling

Social/Commune

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Hotel

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Mid-Century Modern Residential: A-Frame, Third Bay Tradition

Late Modern: Third Bay Tradition, Prefabricated

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Stucco, Metal, Wood

Narrative Description and Purpose of this Amendment

The Station KPH - Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1989. The district encompassed approximately seven acres of a much larger property (approximately 62 acres) and included four contributing resources. Due to its distance from the contributing resources associated with the Station KPH historic district, one additional resource on the subject property was individually listed on the NRHP in 1989, the Station KHP Operating Station (see Maps 3 and 6). The period of significance for the nomination encapsulated only the period in which the property was occupied by Marconi Wireless (1914-1931) and was focused on the property's significance under Criterion A: Communications.¹

This amendment presents a justification for expanding the NRHD to reflect the historically significant development of the property after it was acquired by the Synanon organization in 1964. The amendment includes additional areas and periods of significance, an expansion of the historic district boundary to encompass the entire legal parcel, the addition of ten contributing resources and four non-contributing resources, and changing the status of one resource from non-contributing to contributing. The amendment also proposes a name change (Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District) to reflect the added areas and periods of significance associated with Synanon's occupation of the property.

A Part 1 application for the Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District was approved by the National Park Service on November 14, 2023. The property is currently undergoing a phased rehabilitation for use as a hotel in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. All work has been approved by the California Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.

¹ Station KPH- Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America, Marshall, Marin County, California, National Register of Historic Places, Reference Number #88003223; Station KPH Operating Station, Marshall, Marin County, California, National Register of Historic Places, Reference Number #89000819.

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See **Table 1** and **Map 6** for an inventory of the contributing and non-contributing resources associated with the proposed expanded historic district boundary.

Table 1. Inventory of Resources Located on the Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District Property

Res. #	Historic Name	Alternate Name	Year Built	Listed/Contributing/Non-Contributing Status
1	Station KPH Inn	Hotel	Ca. 1913	NRHP-Listed
2	Powerhouse	Buck Hall	Ca. 1913	NRHP-Listed
3	Pinecrest Cottage	McCargo Hall	Ca. 1913	NRHP-Listed
4	Bayview Cottage	Bayview Cottage	Ca. 1913	NRHP-Listed
5	Station KPH Operating Station; Cliff House	Operations Building	Ca. 1913	NRHP-Listed
6	Cliff House Garage/Shed	N/A	Ca. 1970	Contributing
7	A-frame Cave	A-frame	1971	Contributing
8	Green Caves	Pelican Lodge	1970	Contributing
9	White Caves	Heron Lodge	1969	Contributing
10	Blue Caves	Seagull Lodge	1969	Contributing
11	Red Caves	Sandpiper Lodge	1969	Contributing
12	Super Cave A	Pine Lodge	1972	Contributing
13	Super Cave B	Cypress Lodge	1972	Contributing
14	Super Cave C	Redwood Dining Hall	1972	Contributing
15	Water Storage Tank	Water Storage Tank	Ca. 1965	Contributing
16	Thickened Sound	Maintenance Building	1972	Contributing
17	Mobile Building	NA	Post-1986	Non-contributing
18	Mobile Building	NA	Post-1986	Non-contributing
19	Mobile Building	NA	Post-1986	Non-contributing
20	Water Treatment Plant	NA	Ca. 2000s	Non-contributing

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Setting

The proposed Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District (as amended) is in western Marin County along the shore of Tomales Bay. The property is northeast of State Route (SR) 1, approximately two miles south of Marshall, an unincorporated community. The 62.29-acre parcel (Marin County Tax Assessor Parcel # 106-210-54) consists of steep, heavily wooded slopes full of dense vegetation. A paved road extends northward from SR 1 to wind throughout the property. The surrounding area is largely undeveloped, except for a handful of domestic buildings located on a small peninsula across SR 1 from the subject property and scattered residential and agricultural properties located north and south of SR 1.

Site

The main entrance driveway to the property is accessed via SR 1, and initially leads to four buildings dating to the Marconi Wireless era (NRHP 1989): the Station KPH Inn/Hotel (Resource 1), the Powerhouse Building (Resource 2), Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3), and Bayview Cottage (Resource 4). A small, paved parking lot is immediately south of the Powerhouse. A fifth Marconi-era structure, the Operating Station (Resource 5), is near the northwest corner of the parcel. Four multi-unit residential buildings known as the “Caves” (Resources 8-11) are northwest of the four historic Marconi buildings and are situated on a hill overlooking Tomales Bay. The main, paved parking area for the property is immediately north of the Caves. Three large, prefabricated metal buildings known as the “Super Caves” (Resources 12-14) are northeast of the Synanon Caves. The Super Caves are located on a densely wooded hill along the roadway. Several non-historic mobile buildings are located northeast of the Super Caves along the northeastern boundary of the property (Resources 17-19).

A ca. 1965 water storage tank (Resource 15) and adjacent shed are southeast of the mobile buildings. The A-Frame “Cave” (Resource 7) is southeast of the Synanon Caves directly above SR 1 along a cliffside overlooking Tomales Bay. A small, paved parking lot is just west of the A-Frame. An additional Synanon-era prefabricated metal building is near the southeast boundary of the property, currently in use as a maintenance building but was historically the “Thickened Sound” building during the Synanon era (Resource 16). A modern wastewater treatment plant (Resource 20) and an “Activity Meadow” are immediately adjacent to the Thickened Sound building, and the area between the buildings is paved. A series of trails wind through the property, creating pedestrian paths between the buildings. Much of the site is occupied by pine groves. The oldest grove is northeast of the Marconi buildings and was planted in 1939 as a wind barrier, while the Synanon organization planted additional pine groves along the hillslope near the property’s main entrance. Additional tree groves were planted throughout the site following California State Parks’ acquisition of the property.

Station KPH Inn/Hotel – Resource 1 (NRHP-listed 1989)

The Station KPH Inn is a two-story concrete building with an attic and is the largest structure on the Tomales Bay property (Photos 1, 9, and 10). Constructed on a hillside, the Inn is roughly U-shaped with a long central section flanked by two perpendicular wings on the west and east ends

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of the building. It has a steeply pitched tile roof with perpendicular gable roof ends. A five-lite dormer window projects from the center of the roof and a series of six-over-one and ten-over-one windows line the first, second, and attic floors of the primary elevation. The windows in the central section are not historic, while the windows on the perpendicular wings appear to be original. A wide veranda wraps around the front and side elevations of the first floor, covered by a shed tile roof supported by concrete pillars. The rear of the building is characterized by rows of six-over-one double hung windows (many of which appear to be original) along the first and second floor, and three small dormer windows at the attic level. Except for some window replacements, the exterior of the Marconi Hotel has been largely unaltered since its construction.

Alterations

The Station KPH Inn has been largely vacant since the 1980s. Though some windows have been replaced, particularly on the primary elevation, the building has been minimally altered on the exterior since its construction. The Station KPH Inn retains sufficient historic integrity to maintain its contributing status in the district.

Station KPH Powerhouse – Resource 2 (NRHP-listed 1989)

The Station KPH Powerhouse is rectangular in plan with a red clay tile hipped roof (Photos 11-12). Two conical vents rise above the roof peak. Exterior walls are smooth stucco applied to concrete and fenestration is asymmetrical. Most of the windows are six-over-six, double hung, wood frame windows, with the sashes painted dark green. Non-historic, nine-lite, double barn doors serve as entrances to the building. Fabric awnings have been installed above the primary entrances. A large chimney is located on the southeast facade of the building, and copper gutters and downspouts are along the perimeter of the roof.

Alterations

The Station KPH Powerhouse has been minimally altered since its construction. The few notable changes to the exterior include the removal of a non-original wood pergola, installation of in-kind-replacement doors, and the addition of cloth awnings and a second roof vent. The Powerhouse retains sufficient historic integrity to maintain its contributing status in the district.

Station KPH Pinecrest Cottage – Resource 3 (NRHP-listed 1989)

Pinecrest Cottage is a one-story, concrete building with a hipped tile roof (Photo 13). A wide veranda supported by seven concrete columns is a character defining feature of the building. A concrete staircase leads from the sidewalk to the veranda. Non-historic aluminum frame windows are located on the primary elevation, while a few original windows have been retained on the rear elevation. Copper gutters and downspouts are along the perimeter of the roof.

Alterations

Pinecrest Cottage has been minimally altered on the exterior, with most changes taking place on the interior under Synanon and California State Parks ownership. It retains sufficient historic integrity to maintain its contributing status in the district.

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Station KPH Bayview Cottage – Resource 4 (NRHP-listed 1989)

Bayview Cottage is a one-story, concrete building with a hipped tile roof (Photo 14). Though the cottage originally featured an open veranda identical to Pinecrest Cottage, it has been partially enclosed at the northern corner to create an additional interior room. The cottage retains several original six-over-six double hung windows, though some have been replaced with one-over-one aluminum windows. An original concrete staircase leads to a non-historic sliding glass door on the primary elevation. On the rear elevation, a concrete staircase leads to a recessed rear entrance.

Alterations

The primary exterior alteration consists of the enclosure of a portion of the veranda, part of which took place prior to NR listing and is depicted in the nomination photos. The original veranda openings were retained and are clearly discernible, and the change could be easily reversed. In addition, many of the original wood frame windows have been replaced with aluminum frame windows, though they are largely located on the rear elevation. Bayview Cottage retains sufficient historic integrity to maintain its contributing status in the district.

Station KPH Operating Station/ Synanon Cliff House– Resource 5 (NRHP-listed 1989)

The Station KPH Operating Station is a one-and-a-half story, concrete building with a hipped tile roof (Photos 15-16). Its form is roughly rectangular with an enclosed veranda facing the bay. A paved driveway leads to the northeast elevation of the building. This elevation is one story and features a row of six, evenly spaced wood frame windows. These are original six-over-six windows, and the central windows feature overhead transoms. The northeast corner of the building is partially enclosed with a wood lattice fence. The north and south elevations feature three evenly spaced windows. The southwest elevation is one-and-a-half stories and is characterized by the enclosed veranda. Both the main floor and basement levels of the veranda were enclosed during the Synanon era. Three-part aluminum frame windows are in the main floor veranda openings, while doors and windows of varying sizes infill the basement level veranda openings. Concrete steps lead to a non-original sliding glass door in the southern end of the veranda.

Alterations

The primary alteration to the Station KPH Operating Station was the enclosure of the veranda during Synanon's occupation of the property. The original veranda openings are clearly discernible despite their enclosure, and this alteration did not preclude the building from being individually listed in 1989. The remaining three elevations have been minimally altered. The Station KPH Operating Station therefore retains sufficient historic integrity to retain its individual listing in the NRHP as well as to contribute to the amended district.

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Cliff House Garage/Shed– Resource 6

A small 1970s garage sits near the northeastern corner of the building (Photo 17). Though identified as non-contributing in the 1989 NRHP nomination, it was constructed c. 1970 while occupied by the Synanon organization. The garage is a simple rectangular building with vertical-groove plywood siding found on other Synanon buildings, including the Caves and the A-Frame Cave. It has a small square shed appended to the rear. Directly adjacent to the Cliff House, which operated as Dederich’s office, it reflects the utilitarian and economical approach of many of Synanon’s contributions to the site and is recommended as contributing to the amended district.

Alterations

No historic photos of the garage have been found, but it appears to have been minimally altered since its construction by Synanon.

A-Frame Cave (1971) – Resource 7

The 1,000 square-foot A-Frame Cave was constructed on a rectangular, reinforced concrete foundation with wood sill plates (Photo 18). Irregularly spaced vents are located along the foundation of the building. The building features a steeply pitched, gable (“A-Frame”) roof that extends almost to ground level on the southeast elevation and is clad in non-historic composite shingles designed to mimic the original wood shingles. A shed-roof dormer extends from the southeast side of the roof, and contains a small, rectangular non-historic window surrounded by vertical-groove plywood. A carport is located on the northwest elevation, created by a horizontal extension of the roofline. The northeast and southwest gables feature wide, open eaves. The primary (northeast) elevation is clad with vertical-groove plywood. Though replaced at an unknown date, it is compatible with the plywood depicted on the original plans. Three wood steps lead to a non-historic front door. The rear (southwest) elevation overlooks Tomales Bay and largely consists of windows and glass sliding doors to maximize the scenic view. The peaks of the gable ends on both the southwest and northeast elevations feature four-part clerestory windows with wood mullions. A small wood porch extends from the southwest elevation of the building, with access provided from sliding glass doors.

Alterations

The A-Frame Cave has experienced some alterations, including the compatible replacement of exterior cladding on the primary (northeast) elevation with vertical-groove plywood and the replacement of original shake shingles with compatible composite replacements. These alterations do not overly detract from the building’s ability to convey its significance.

The Caves (1969-1970) – Resources 8-11

The “Caves” consist of four multiple-unit building complexes designed by Ellis Kaplan in the Third Bay Tradition style of architecture (Photos 19-33). The buildings were designed to serve as dormitories. Unlike the other buildings and structures on the property, which were constructed by Synanon members, the Caves were built by Olsen Construction Company.

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Clustered together on a bluff overlooking Tomales Bay, the Caves are configured around a central courtyard (Photos 19-20). Each of the four Caves were built on elevated concrete foundations and feature irregular footprints consisting of one-, two-, and three-story shed roof sections connected by exterior stairs and walkways. The Caves are clad in vertical-groove plywood siding that is painted dark green. The staircases are clad with grooved plywood to match the exterior of the building. Unit entrances are sheltered either by shed roof awnings or by second story staircases. The buildings feature shed roofs with composition shingles and eaves that are flush with the exterior walls. Windows on the Caves are placed at irregular intervals. They largely consist of anodized metal or aluminum sash, though some windows feature wood surrounds. A variety of window types are evident on the Caves, including ribbon windows and irregular “L” shapes. All doors on the Caves have been replaced with modern metal or wood doors.

The interior of the Caves consist of multiple units with a bedroom and private bathroom (Photos 29-30). Originally, the Blue, White, and Red Caves each contained between 12 to 14 units. The Caves retain their character defining open ceilings with exposed rafter beams and tongue-in-groove boards. Many of the units also feature a loft area accessible by staircases. Non-historic gypsum board walls and engineered hardwood floors are throughout.

The Blue Caves is distinct due to the presence of a large 2005 addition which contains a reception area, lobby, and administrative offices, making it is larger than the other Caves (Photo 26). The addition was designed to be compatible with the historic building, while also clearly differentiated from the original structure through the use of distinctive shapes and its location at the rear of the building. The addition has five sections, four of that have shed roofs, and one with an arched roof. The addition was clad in vertical-groove plywood to match that of the historic structure. Windows on the addition are fixed-pane, vinyl windows with wood surrounds.

The Green Caves was originally designed as a single-family residence for Charles Dederich but was converted to a four-unit dormitory shortly after its construction, within the period of significance. It has three roughly rectangular sections oriented around a triangular-shaped central section, which features a domed skylight on the roof. As the Green Caves building was originally designed as a single-family home, rooms are not accessed via external courtyards like the Red, Blue, and White Caves. A three-story, split-level antechamber with a central, interior stairwell is in the central, triangular portion of the Green Caves, and provides access to each of the guest rooms. The Green Caves is approximately 1,000 square feet smaller than the other Caves. It also has several features that are not present on the other Caves buildings, including a small wood patio at the southwest corner of the building, skylights, and two modern ramps. Lastly, the Green Caves features three unique mosaic tile showers, at least two of which are known to date to the Synanon era (Photo 33).

Alterations

The Caves have experienced minimal exterior alterations since their initial construction. The most significant change took place in the late 1990s or early 2000s under California State Parks

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ownership when the originally unpainted vertical groove plywood siding was painted. Though painted bold, bright colors at that time, the Caves have since been painted a more subdued dark green to blend with the natural surroundings, and the overall integrity of the complex has not been significantly impacted. All exterior doors and lighting were also replaced during this period. The roofs on each of the caves were recently replaced with compatible cladding materials. Lastly, in 2005 an addition was sensitively constructed at the rear of the Blue Caves using compatible but differentiated building forms to create a reception and administrative area for the property. On the interior, original flooring, poor quality drywall, and bathroom finishes were removed in the 1990s.

The Super Caves (1972)- Resources 12-14

The Super Caves are three single-family residences that were erected for Synanon leaders, known as Super Cave A, Super Cave B, and Super Cave C, (Photos 34-37). The Super Caves are “Butler type” prefabricated buildings, a reference to the Butler Manufacturing Company, a prolific producer of prefabricated buildings in the postwar period. To make the buildings habitable as housing for Synanon members, wood frame walls and partitions were constructed on the interior of the prefabricated structure. This change took place almost immediately upon the building’s erection during the period of significance.

The Super Caves are prefabricated metal buildings that sit on reinforced concrete foundations, with low-pitched gable roofs with flush eaves. Super Caves A and B are rectangular, while Super Cave C features a T-shaped plan due to a 420-square foot addition on the southeast side of the building, constructed ca. 1974. The exterior walls of each Super Cave have ribbed-metal siding. Utility boxes were appended to the exteriors and are clad with plywood. Fenestration includes multiple types of aluminum-sash windows, including single, paired, and ribbon-type windows.

Several sliding windows have been painted over on Super Caves A and B. Super Cave A has a non-historic pergola above glass and aluminum sliding doors on the south elevation, while Super Cave B has a non-historic pergola above glass and aluminum sliding doors on the west facade. Super Cave C features a non-historic wraparound wood deck that surrounds much of the exterior and has a wood-frame pergola near the southeast corner. Each of the Super Caves feature a secondary entrance on a secondary or rear elevation, sheltered beneath a wood-frame, shed-roof awning. Several non-historic functional spaces are at the rear of Super Cave C to support its function as a dining hall, including “barbeque gazebo,” a utility shed, and fenced dumpster enclosure.

Alterations

Originally functioning as housing, Super Cave A presently serves as office and conference space. This function did not necessitate significant alterations to the interior configuration of the building. Primary alterations include the construction of a wood-frame pergolas on each of the three Super Caves, as well as a wraparound porch on Super Cave C. Several windows were painted on Super Caves A and C, a reversible change. Because Super Cave C is presently used as

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a dining facility, several functional spaces are located at the rear of the building, including a “barbeque gazebo,” a utility shed, and fenced dumpster enclosure.

Water Storage Tank (ca. 1965) – Resource 15

Ca. 1965, Synanon constructed a 500-gallon capacity water tank with two tanks and two pumps, as well as an adjacent small shed. These structures are surrounded by a chain link fence. The water tank is a utilitarian, spherical concrete tank (Photo 38). The shed is a small structure with vertical board siding on the exterior and a flat roof. No known alterations have been made. Though little documentation regarding the ca. 1965 water tank and adjacent shed have been found, they appear to have been minimally altered since the period of significance and retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic function.

Thickened Sound Building (1971) – Resource 16

The “Thickened Sound” building is an approximately 2,250-square foot Butler-type prefabricated building that was constructed by Synanon in 1971 (Photo 39). It is a rectangular building with a very low-pitched gable roof and ribbed metal cladding on the exterior walls. A utility box is located on the northwest side of the building. When it was originally constructed, the building had four rooms and a carport on the northwest side. Several aluminum-sash, horizontal sliding windows are on the northwest and southwest elevations of the building.

Alterations

Under California State Parks ownership, the Thickened Sound building was repurposed as a Maintenance Building in the early 2000s. The exterior of the building appears to have been minimally altered, except for exterior paint and the infill of an entrance.

Non-contributing – Resources 17-20

There are four non-contributing resources located on the property. They include three non-historic mobile buildings (Resources 17-19) and a non-historic water treatment plant (Resource 20), all of which were constructed after the period of significance.

Integrity

The Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District, as amended, retains sufficient integrity to convey the property’s function during the Station KPH-Marconi Wireless period of significance (1914-1931), as well as the Synanon Headquarters period of significance (1964-1975). While some changes have taken place over time, the district retains sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings associated with the Station KPH-Marconi Wireless Station and the Synanon organization remain in their original **Location** on the property, in their historic **Setting** on a cliffside overlooking Tomales Bay.

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The introduction of paved parking near some buildings and the removal of the large “Shed” building during the California State Parks period of ownership have minimally impacted the setting. The original five Marconi buildings each retain their original Craftsman style with overhanging roofs and wide verandas, retaining integrity of **Design**. The Caves reflect their original **Design**, through the retention of Ellis Kaplan’s excellent interpretation of the Third Bay Tradition of architecture, characterized by split-level, multi-sectional massing, shed roofs, vertical-groove plywood cladding, and windows of various sizes, shapes, and types. Similarly, the A-Frame retains its original **Design** through the retention of its steeply pitched “A-Frame” roof form, and a southwestern wall largely consisting of windows to maximize views of the bay. As prefabricated metal buildings, the Super Caves (A, B, and C) and the Thickened Sound building each retain their original utilitarian **Design**, characterized by their rectangular metal box forms.

A remarkable number of historic **Materials** are intact within the district. The original five Marconi Buildings have experienced minimal exterior alterations and retain many original **Materials** including smooth concrete exterior walls, tile roofs, and many original wood frame windows. The Caves retain their character defining vertical-groove plywood exterior walls and tongue-in-groove boards and rafter beams on the interior. The Super Caves and Thickened Sound buildings all retain their character defining exterior metal walls.

Workmanship is expressed throughout the site, particularly through exterior and interior woodwork, as well as three original mosaic tile showers in the Green Caves. The vast majority of the buildings provided housing and meeting spaces for the Synanon organization and continue to serve a complementary function as a hotel that provides guest lodging and meeting spaces. While presently occupied by staff and short-term visitors as opposed to the members of an alternative community, the buildings clearly convey their historic functions and relationship to one another. The district continues to provide lodging within a rustic, coastal property, thereby retaining integrity of **Feeling** and **Association**.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Criterion A: Communications (National)

Criterion A: Social History (Local)

Criterion C: Architecture (Local)

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Period of Significance

1914-1970

1914-1931 (Criterion A: Communications)

1964-1975 (Criterion A: Social History)

1969-1970 (Criterion C: Architecture)

Significant Dates

1912-Property acquired by Marconi Wireless

1913-Construction of Marconi Wireless buildings

1964 – Synanon acquires property

c. 1968 – Synanon II era begins

1969-1970 – Construction of Synanon Caves

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

J.C. White, Engineering Company

Ellis Kaplan (Kaplan & McLaughlin/KMD Architects)

William F. Olin (Wisser/Olin Architects)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1989 under Criterion A for Communications at the national level of significance. The period of significance is 1914-1931, the period in which the property operated as a receiving station. The proposed Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District Amendment expands the existing district to include the buildings associated with the Synanon Tomales Bay headquarters between 1964 and 1975. The amended district is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A: Social History for its role in promulgating the Therapeutic Community (TC) model of drug rehabilitation treatment in the post-war era and as the largest known “service” oriented utopian community of the 1960s. The district is also eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C, Architecture, as a significant example of the Third Bay Tradition style. The combined period of significance for the expanded Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District is 1914-1975.

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The Station KPH - Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1989 under Criterion A for Communications at the national level of significance due to its role in making trans-Pacific radio communication possible, a technological advancement with a significant international impact. The period of significance is 1914-1931, the period in which the property operated as a receiving station. The district has four buildings: The Station KPH Inn (Resource 1), the Powerhouse (Resource 2), Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3), and Bayview Cottage (Resource 4). A fifth Marconi-era building was individually listed in the National Register due to its physical distance from the other buildings: the Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5). All five of the Marconi buildings on the property were constructed by the J.G. White Engineering Company of New York City in 1913.

The proposed Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District would expand the existing district to include the historically significant buildings associated with the Synanon organization. The property served as the notorious and controversial Synanon Foundation headquarters from 1964 to 1975. Led by infamous founder Charles "Chuck" Dederich, the Synanon headquarters at Tomales Bay became a pivotal incubator in the organization's evolution from drug rehabilitation center to utopian community in the 1960s. Founded at a time when drug addiction treatment was largely limited to incarceration, Synanon provided an alternative treatment model that was soon emulated in prisons, mental health institutions, and numerous outpatient programs throughout the U.S. When the organization converted to utopian "lifestyle" or alternative community in 1968, it adopted many of the commitment mechanisms of nineteenth century utopian communities, but incorporated aspects of post-war capitalism to fund, maintain, and expand its operations. Under Criterion A: Social History, the Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District is significant at the local level for its role in promulgating the Therapeutic Community (TC) model of drug rehabilitation treatment in the post-war era and as the largest known "service" oriented utopian community of the 1960s.

Several of the buildings on the property are also significant under Criterion C at the local level for Architecture. The Synanon "Caves" complex (Resources 8-11) is an excellent example of the Third Bay Tradition style of architecture, designed by San Francisco architect Ellis Kaplan of Kaplan & McLaughlin (later KMD Architects).

In addition to the period of significance established under the 1989 National Register nomination (1914-1931), an additional period of significance is recommended from 1964-1975 to encapsulate the period in which Synanon operated the property as its headquarters. Synanon acquired the Tomales Bay property in 1964 and relocated their organizational headquarters to Camp Badger in Tulare County, CA in 1975.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

CRITERION A: Social History

History of Substance Addiction Treatment in the U.S.

Victorian Era Moral Model

The understanding of substance use, addiction, and treatment has evolved substantially in the U.S. over the past two centuries, often impacted by the prevailing social, cultural, economic, and political climate of the era. In the mid-nineteenth century, global immigration increased, opium was imported to the U.S., injectable morphine was synthesized into heroin, and opiates were widely distributed with virtually no government regulation.² At the same time, the proliferation of cocaine and other amphetamines were heralded as wonder drugs by physicians, including the U.S. Army Surgeon-General. By 1902, an estimated 200,000 people were addicted to cocaine in the U.S.³ Soon, efforts emerged to outlaw the illicit use of opiates and amphetamines, and many state legislatures passed laws to prohibit their use.⁴

During the Victorian era, moral character was judged through self-restraint and spiritual purity. Thus, moral failings could only be cured through rigid adherence to a healthy, purposeful lifestyle. Sanitariums, lodges, and institutes were established to treat “inebriates,” including the New York State Inebriate Asylum and the Walnut Hill Asylum in Hartford, CT, which emphasized pastoral setting, hard physical labor, recreation, and spiritual guidance as their ‘moral model’ of treatment.⁵ At the turn of the century, drug use and addiction were considered a private matter, and there was little governmental involvement in its treatment.

In the early twentieth century, the rapid industrialization, urbanization, and economic stratification in the U.S. led to rising fears of urban vice. The evolving social and political climate of the U.S. resulted in an era of reform known as the Progressive Era. The Progressive-era temperance movement, which espoused abstinence from drugs and alcohol, viewed those using substances as deviants and dangers to society, and sobriety became a moral imperative.⁶ Thus, addiction was seen as a “vice, not a disease,” and legal restriction was the only cure.⁷

² Jill Jonnes, *Hep-cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams: A History of America's Romance with Illegal Drugs* (United States: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 17; “A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs,” *PBS.org*, accessed July 24, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/buyers/socialhistory.html>.

³ “A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs.”

⁴ Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams*, 29.

⁵ Claire D. Clark, *The Recovery Revolution, the battle over addiction treatment in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 12-13 (Ebook).

⁶ PBS.org, “Roots of Prohibition,” accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/prohibition/roots-of-prohibition#:~:text=The%20temperance%20movement%2C%20rooted%20in,of%20alcohol's%20influence%20in%20America.>

⁷ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 13 (Ebook).

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Prohibition Era Narcotics Farms

The 1914 Harrison Narcotics Tax Act regulated the use of opiates and cocaine for non-medical purposes, while the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919 prohibited the use and sale of alcohol. The Prohibition era saw offenders incarcerated rather than treated in medical facilities.⁸ In 1923, of the 1,482 prisoners sentenced to the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas, 717 (48 percent) were drug act violators, and of those, 299 (20 percent) were reportedly addicted to drugs.⁹ By 1925 the professional association for inebriate care practitioners disintegrated and many of the Victorian-era care treatment facilities shuttered.¹⁰

However, in 1928 Republican Congressman Stephen Porter introduced a bill to establish addiction rehabilitation programs in special penitentiaries, based on Victorian-era models of reform through labor and recreation. In 1929 the Narcotic Farms Act authorized the establishment of two facilities for the treatment of habit-forming narcotics. The onset of the Great Depression dampened the nation's resolve against alcohol use, and in 1933 Prohibition was officially repealed, ushering in the era of "addiction hypocrisy" where alcohol was permitted but narcotics were vilified.¹¹ In 1935, the Lexington "Narcotics Farm" opened in Kentucky, the first addiction treatment prison of its kind, followed by the Fort Worth Narcotics Farm in 1938.¹² Unfortunately, the treatments at these new facilities were ineffective, and they reported high recidivism rates. Studies showed that somewhere between 75 and 90 percent of patients released from Lexington relapsed soon after their departure.¹³

Mid-century Hipsters and Beatniks

In the post-Prohibition era, a new cultural phenomenon gave rise to another wave of drug addiction. The hipster culture of the 1930s and 1940s saw marijuana and heroin use skyrocket. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the booming post-war economy, expanding middle class, and corporate consumer culture became the status quo. The Beatniks, or "Beats," emerged as an anti-consumerist subculture of writers, musicians, and creatives including Jack Kerouac, Ken Kesey, and Allen Ginsberg who co-opted the earlier drug culture of the hipsters.¹⁴

The rise in drug use in the post-war era cast doubt on the success of so-called narcotics treatment in specially designed penitentiaries and "farms." Their "technocratic" methodologies had failed to cure addiction and prevent relapses. Patients receiving treatment for drug addiction recognized

⁸ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 13 (Ebook).

⁹ Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams*, 57.

¹⁰ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 12 (Ebook).

¹¹ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 13 (Ebook).

¹² Institute of Medicine (US) Committee for the Substance Abuse Coverage Study; Gerstein DR, Harwood HJ, editors. *Treating Drug Problems: Volume 2: Commissioned Papers on Historical, Institutional, and Economic Contexts of Drug Treatment*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1992. A Century of American Narcotic Policy. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK234755>, 15; Will Maddox, "What was the Fort Worth Narcotic Farm?" *D Magazine*, June 7, 2022, accessed July 21, 2023, <https://www.dmagazine.com/healthcare-business/2022/06/what-was-the-fort-worth-narcotic-farm/>.

¹³ Institute of Medicine, "A Century of American Narcotic Policy," 16.

¹⁴ Jonnes, *Hep-Cats, Narcs, and Pipe Dreams*, 120.

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that time spent in specialized government-run narcotics facilities and penitentiaries was not working, and thus “the few midcentury treatment institutions unwittingly primed addicts for an alternative cure.”¹⁵

Post-war Alternative Treatment

During the post-war era, the United States adopted an increasingly tough-on-crime approach toward drug related offenses. In 1951, the Boggs Act imposed mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders, and average prison sentences doubled from two to four years. In 1956, the Narcotic Control Act further lengthened sentences from an average of four to six years.¹⁶ With heroin use on the rise, several new treatment centers opened, including the Riverside Hospital in New York and the California Rehabilitation Center in Corona, however they were generally regarded as failures with high relapse rates.¹⁷ By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the increasingly technocratic and carceral models of addiction treatment were questioned, and new models of treatment were introduced. This included the use of therapeutic communities (TCs), which posited that addiction was a social problem, and thus required a social cure.¹⁸ It was within this framework that in 1958 Charles “Chuck” Dederich founded Synanon, an alcohol and drug addiction treatment program that was one of the earliest residential programs in the U.S. to utilize social interaction as drug addiction therapy.

By 1965, other than prisons and state psychiatric facilities, addiction treatment programs consisted solely of Synanon, the Corona Center, and several small hospital-run programs in New York.¹⁹ That year, it was reported that 34 states in the U.S. still had no facilities specifically for drug rehabilitation.²⁰ Thus, perhaps unwittingly, Synanon found itself at the forefront of the evolving fields of psychology and social psychology that were emerging in the post-war era. By the late 1960s and 1970s addiction treatment facilities typically took the form of one of three modalities: abstinent out-patient programs, outpatient methadone maintenance programs, and long-term, abstinent, residential TC programs (including Synanon).²¹

In the early 1970s, amid reports that 10 to 15 percent of servicemen stationed in Vietnam were addicted to heroin, then-President Richard Nixon announced a “war on drugs.”²² In response to the introduction of “crack” cocaine and the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan furthered these efforts through increasing minimum sentences for drug offenses. The emphasis also shifted from treating adults addicted to drugs to prevention of drug use amongst youth, and numerous “troubled teen” TC programs opened across the country, many

¹⁵ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 14 (Ebook).

¹⁶ Drug Enforcement Administration, “The Early Years,” accessed July 26, 2023, <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2018-05/Early%20Years%20p%2012-29.pdf>, 22.

¹⁷ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 37.

¹⁸ Tims, Frank M, George De Leon, Nancy Jainchill, eds. *Therapeutic Community: Advances in Research and Application* (Maryland: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1994), 2.

¹⁹ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 37.

²⁰ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 28.

²¹ Tims, De Leon, Jainchill, eds. *Therapeutic Community*, 1.

²² “A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs.”

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based on the Synanon model. In the latter decades of the twentieth century, drug rehabilitation for adults returned to the carceral model and an abundance of new legislation was passed increasing penalties and sentences for drug offenses.²³ However, when George W. Bush, recovering from alcohol addiction himself, was elected president, he introduced funding and block grants for peer-based recovery programs. His successor, President Barack Obama, furthered reforms in drug use policies. In 2010, the Affordable Care Act expanded addiction-treatment coverage to tens of millions of Americans, although it consolidated treatment into mainstream medical settings rather than specialized treatment programs.²⁴

Post-War Alternative Living and Intentional Communities

Nineteenth century origins

Communal living, utopian societies, and intentional communities have a long history in the U.S. In the mid-nineteenth century, the country experienced a surge in alternative colonies, in large part due to rising immigration and the opening of the western frontier.²⁵ Of these early utopian communities, several were deemed to have had long-term success, including the Shakers, Amana, Oneida, Zoar, and Jerusalem. In 1972, Sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter argued that successful nineteenth century utopian communities, those that lasted several decades or more, were founded on five core commitment mechanisms: Sacrifice, Renunciation, Communion, Mortification, and Transcendence.

Kanter established that many of the commitment mechanisms adopted by early utopian communities were later revived during another surge in communal living in the 1960s.²⁶ The Oneida, in particular, had many similarities to Dederich's eventual alternative community, Synanon II. John Humphrey Noyes formed the Oneida in 1848 and established a communal living practice that included complex marriage, shared work and living, and mutual criticism.²⁷ The Oneida Community Mansion House in New York is listed on the NRHP (1985).

Mid-century Hipsters and Beats

Although various alternative communities persisted through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a series of social and political events in the mid-twentieth century served as a breeding ground for an increase in alternative communities in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1948 American psychologist, philosopher, and Harvard professor B.F. Skinner published *Walden Two*, a utopian vision for post-war America that became a rallying cry for many of the emerging alternative communities of the era.

²³ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 69.

²⁴ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 84.

²⁵ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (United Kingdom: Harvard University Press, 1972), 60-62.

²⁶ Kanter, *Commitment and Community*, 64.

²⁷ Richard Greenwood, *Oneida Community Mansion National Register Nomination*. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1986, 4.

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In the 1950s the Beats emerged out of earlier bohemian countercultures and drew inspiration from the nineteenth century transcendentalists and Walden Two. Centered primarily in Greenwich Village, New York and North Beach, San Francisco, the Beats espoused authenticity, individuality, and anti-establishment ideals through their refusal to adhere to societal norms such as traditional marriage and their experimentation with a new psychedelic mind-altering substance, LSD. Prominent Beat Ken Kesey established a pseudo-alternative society, the “Merry Pranksters,” who lived communally on properties in Oregon and California.²⁸

In addition to the Beats, some post-war alternative communities were founded or promoted by “red diaper babies,” children who were raised in Communist families during the 1930s, including Lou Gottlieb, who later founded the “open land” Morning Star Ranch commune in California.²⁹

The Hippies of the 1960s

In the 1960s, the unprecedented rise of the middle class, the coming of age of the Baby Boomers, and social unrest instigated by a myriad of foreign wars resulted in a backlash against mainstream culture. In the mid-1960s over half the U.S. population was under 25. More youth were entering college than ever before, and between 1946 and 1970 the student population at American universities increased from 1.7 million to 8 million.³⁰ Furthermore, the optimism of the Kennedy era, access to new contraceptives, the escalation of the Vietnam War, and the rising Civil Rights Movement catalyzed a generation of alienated youth into seeking alternative modes of living.³¹

A wide variety of alternative communities emerged in the 1960s. Some aimed to subvert the dominant culture of the 1950s and involved drug use, nudity, and sexual exploration. Others emphasized self-sustained subsistence farming and living off the grid. Similarly, some groups were dedicated to ecological sustainability and practiced veganism and pacifism. Others focused on spiritual awakening and religious values, while some groups also espoused radical social change and reform.³² As author Timothy Miller states, these communities helped create hippie culture:

Catalyzed by shifts in American culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the new generation of communes was not initially a product of hippiedom but rather a crucible that played a major role in shaping and defining hip culture. In other words, the urban hippies did not create the first 1960s-era communes; it would be closer to the truth to say that the earliest communes helped create the hippies.³³

²⁸ Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*. (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 12.

²⁹ Miller, *The 60s Communes*, 12.

³⁰ Philip Wallmeier, “Exit as Critique. Communes and Intentional Communities in the 1960s and Today.” *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 42, no. 3 (161) (2017): 147–71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44425366>, 154.

³¹ W.J. Rorabaugh, *American Hippies*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 21.

³² Sutton, *Modern American Communes*, xvii-xxiv.

³³ Miller, *The 60s Communes*, 2.

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While Drop City in Colorado is oft cited as the true start of 1960s hippie communalism, many alternative communities, including Synanon, were founded beforehand.³⁴ These communities represented a response to the capitalist hegemony that dominated post-war society.

Synanon – “Today is the First Day of the Rest of Your Life”

The evolution of the Synanon organization has been classified into three distinct eras. Synanon I (1958-1968) encompasses the establishment of the community as an addiction treatment program and its expansion into communities, penitentiaries, hospitals, and other programs across the U.S. Synanon II (1968-1974) defines the period when the organization began admitting individuals without addiction (squares) and shifted its emphasis from treatment program to an alternative community. Synanon II was also notable for the organization’s increased emphasis on its business enterprises and real estate holdings, adopting many of the marketing and public relations strategies of post-war corporate America. Synanon III (1974-1991) was a period of radicalization, when Synanon attempted to evolve into a religion and became precipitously restrictive, paranoid, and violent. Synanon’s occupation of the Tomales Bay Headquarters property originated in the Synanon I era and lasted throughout Synanon II.

Synanon I: Therapeutic Community (1958-1968)

Synanon was founded in 1958 by Charles “Chuck” E. Dederich in Santa Monica, California. After becoming disillusioned with his manufacturing job in Santa Barbara, Dederich, a former salesman recovering from alcohol addiction, decided to strike out on his own. Initially founded as an offshoot of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) after his attempt to overtake his local AA Chapter failed, Dederich envisioned a club where recovering alcohol users could find social activity within a safe environment. However, inspired by transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay “Self-reliance,” Dederich soon diverged from the AA model, which was not designed to treat drug addiction, and developed his own community-driven approach. Synanon was later referred to as a Therapeutic Community (TC), although Dederich disliked the term since no actual therapists were involved. Initially called “Tender Loving Care,” the new group began meeting in Dederich’s apartment following AA meetings, and soon members of the group were meeting regularly and even lodging there. They quickly outgrew the space, so they rented a neglected Santa Monica storefront, funded by Dederich and other sufferers of alcohol addiction who split from AA with him.³⁵

Unlike people facing alcoholism (or “alkies” as Dederich dubbed them), people facing drug addiction often lacked wider support networks or community, and many didn’t even have a place to stay. As Sociologist and Professor Richard Ofshe stated:

For the derelicts and addicts who lived, slept, and ate at the store, the organization was something very different. For them it was their way of life, and they depended on it for

³⁴ Sutton, *Modern American Communes*, xxi.

³⁵ Rod Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 10-12.

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their existence. Unlike the A.A. member who is typically employed and uses A.A. as a support for maintaining some larger pattern of life, the addicts had no life apart from the club.³⁶

Synanon's early treatment model was conceived as a two-year recovery program in which a person experiencing drug addiction immediately ceased using substances and went through withdrawal within the supportive Synanon network. Initially, the program saw patients through detoxification, rehabilitation through labor, workforce training, and eventually job placement and residence outside the program or in a staff position within the organization.³⁷ During the two-year recovery period members of Synanon adhered to strict social and work routines.

Dederich also developed his own approach to addiction treatment, a form of "attack therapy" known as "the Game" in which the group "verbally challenged a selected individual until the subject acknowledged their own failings and resolved to improve."³⁸ Dederich's "treatment" posited that those facing addiction could only find freedom from addiction, and what he dubbed 'character disorders,' by facing their deepest truths through criticism and shame. Inspired by the mortification and mutual criticism practices of the Oneida community, the Game was predicated on the premise that confrontation and criticism allowed a person experiencing addiction to find personal growth. In fact, there were numerous parallels between Synanon and the Oneida, including the fact that they owned and operated businesses, had dynamic and authoritarian leaders, espoused mutual criticism, developed their own unique music, dances, jargon, and symbolism, and had a series of rituals.³⁹ The Game usually took place two or three times each week, and each session lasted for several hours.⁴⁰

While Synanon's Game was controversial, Dederich claimed it was highly effective and members stayed clean in greater numbers than those who participated in conventional drug treatment models, although this was never verified by outside sources.⁴¹ Synanon's Game, however, likely came to serve a more underhanded purpose. Frequent verbal attacks on members from others in their community resulted in a significant loss of self-esteem, mistrust of one's own judgement, and intense vulnerability. These conditions primed members to question their ability to live successfully outside of the community, creating an increasing pool of members who transitioned into "lifestylers," devoting all their energies into Synanon businesses, expansion, recruitment, and labor force.

Soon after establishing Synanon, Dederich quickly sensed its potential, and within months of its foundation, Synanon underwent several significant changes. The organization incorporated,

³⁶ Richard Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult: The Managerial Strategy of Organizational Transformation," *Sociological Analysis* 41, no. 2 (1980): 109–27. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3709903>, 116.

³⁷ Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult," 110.

³⁸ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 1; Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 19.

³⁹ Kanter, *Commitment and Community*, 202.

⁴⁰ Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 14.

⁴¹ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 32.

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allowing Dederich to create a board of directors whom he could dominate and control. Over the subsequent decades, Dederich continued to manipulate the Board's membership to suit his needs, placing members in power who imitated his leadership style, known as his "trained seals."⁴² During this early shift from voluntary club to therapeutic community, many of the original former AA members who had helped finance the project in its early days were pushed out.⁴³

Within a few years, Synanon opened communal-living treatment facilities near Santa Monica, Oakland, and San Francisco. Dederich's background as a salesman was a key factor in the organization's rapid expansion.⁴⁴ He recognized Synanon's financial potential and sought to capitalize on the lack of non-institutional treatment centers for addiction sufferers in the U.S. at a time when there was a rapidly growing need. While Dederich's motives have been questioned by many, most early adherents to the program believed it was a truly revolutionary breakthrough in addiction treatment and were keen to promote and expand its perceived benefits.⁴⁵

In 1961 Synanon started a prison pilot program at Terminal Island prison near Los Angeles, where they operated a Synanon-type program led by members who were former inmates. The program lasted two years and was credited as one of the earliest implementations of TC treatment in a U.S. prison.⁴⁶ In 1962 *Life Magazine* featured a multi-page spread on Synanon, introducing the program on a national level.⁴⁷ The *Life* feature was followed by numerous newspaper articles extolling its virtues, serving as free publicity and attracting the attention of scholars, politicians, and psychologists searching for radical new ways of combating the growing drug epidemic.⁴⁸ By the mid-1960s, Synanon boasted several large corporations as investors, including Singer, Maidenform, and Burlington Industries.⁴⁹ Some former Synanon members later utilized or adapted the program's marketing strategies and treatment approach to form their own TC programs, some of which are still extant in some form today.⁵⁰

As Synanon's influence grew, in 1965 they phased out the graduation stage of treatment, keeping members within the program to continue supporting its growth through marketing, fundraising, and staffing its expanding facilities.⁵¹ This change marked a clear delineation between Synanon's initial stated mission as a treatment program, and its eventual mission as a life-long alternative lifestyle, or commune.

⁴² Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult," 117.

⁴³ Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult," 117.

⁴⁴ Janzen, Rod. *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 10

⁴⁵ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 41.

⁴⁶ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 27.

⁴⁷ Grey Villet, "Synanon House Where Drug Addicts Join to Salvage Their Lives," *Life Magazine*, Vol. 52, No. 10 (54-67), March 9, 1963.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 25.

⁴⁹ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 26.

⁵⁰ Lewis Yablonsky, *The Therapeutic Community: A Successful Approach for Treating Substance Abuse*, (New York: Gardner Press, 1989) 36-38.

⁵¹ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 22.

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Synanon grew exponentially during its first decade of existence: with 40 members in 1958 to 1,400 by 1969. They acquired a vast real estate portfolio of treatment centers, with properties in California, New York, Detroit, and Reno. In Santa Monica, they acquired approximately \$5 million in local real estate, including the ocean-side Casa del Mar Hotel (NRHP 2000). Though praised for its success as an addiction treatment program, residents of communities where Synanon acquired real estate frequently protested their presence, both because they didn't want people recovering from addiction in their neighborhood and because Synanon held progressive racial integration policies for the time.⁵²

Synanon achieved a largely positive reputation during its first decade, and some courts sent convicted individuals recovering from addiction to Synanon as a condition of their parole. In 1967, the State of California began placing juvenile offenders at Synanon treatment facilities, paying \$400 a month per placement. As evidence of its cultural relevance, in 1965 a feature length film, "Synanon," was released, starring Eartha Kitt and Chuck Connors.⁵³

Synanon – Tomales Bay and Marin County Properties

In 1964, Synanon purchased a sprawling hillside property in rural Marin County overlooking Tomales Bay. The property remained sparsely populated in its early years as a handful of members made improvements to the property.⁵⁴ However, in 1967, Dederich and his wife Betty, along with a several dozen high ranking members, made the permanent move to the property at Tomales Bay with lofty plans for the organization's next phase.

For more information, see **Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District - Property Development** below.

Synanon II: Alternative Community (1968-1974)

During Synanon's occupation of the Tomales Bay headquarters, the organization transitioned from operating as a therapeutic community for addiction to selling an alternative lifestyle community, aka a "commune." This phase was referred to as "Synanon II." The expansion of Synanon in the early 1960s capitalized on an era of vast social instability and backlash against post-war consumer culture that resulted in numerous alternative communities. During this transition, the purported therapeutic community distinguished itself from other alternative communities through claiming "resisting, not ingesting, drugs was countercultural."⁵⁵

Dederich's new vision for Synanon was a self-sustaining communal society that focused on human improvement and offered an alternative to drug addiction as well as to mainstream society that, in his stated view, encouraged addictive behavior.⁵⁶ Although the purported mission

⁵² Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 19.

⁵³ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 19.

⁵⁴ Megan McDonald personal correspondence with David Gerstel, May 24, 2024; Janzen, *Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 81.

⁵⁵ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 115.

⁵⁶ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 34.

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of Synanon had changed, they continued to advertise as a treatment facility, largely to maintain their tax-free status as a non-profit and to aid in fundraising efforts.

As early as 1964, Dederich envisioned big plans for the Tomales Bay property, including expanding the campus to accommodate up to 5,000 residents and constructing housing, a library, science laboratories, shops, a lecture hall, auto repair, gardening center, athletic fields, an open-air stadium, orchards, and numerous other amenities to make the property a self-sufficient “town.”⁵⁷ According to Dederich, the plans emphasized communal living, with private quarters, (called caves in reference to the sleeping habits of bears) solely for sleeping, alone time, or intimacy and all other living conducted in communal spaces.⁵⁸

When Synanon I evolved into Synanon II, Dederich asserted his total control over the organization. After some long-time members in San Francisco defied his directive to purchase a property, Dederich cleaned house and rid many “old-timers” (a term used within Synanon to refer to long-time members with status) from the organization. Prior to that event, seniority within the organization had held considerable power and advantage. Soon, however, seniority was replaced with an unquestioned allegiance to Dederich and his vision.⁵⁹

Under this new organizational model, individuals not facing addiction (known as “squares” within the organization) were recruited to join the alternative community, many of whom were successful professionals who donated large sums to Synanon and assumed influential positions within the organization. Synanon recruited squares with business acumen to help run the organization, as well other specialized fields including craftsmen, lawyers, architects, and others who could assist in the mission of a self-sustaining alternative community. Eventually, many of the “dope-fiends” were pushed out of management and replaced with squares.⁶⁰ To reduce tension between old-timers and squares, an intensified version of the Game was implemented, the ‘Perpetual Stew,’ involving longer rounds of targeted attacks on old-timers, intended to break down any remaining resistance to the organization’s new direction.⁶¹

The influx of squares also resulted in the introduction of more children living on Synanon campuses. In 1966 Synanon’s school at Tomales Bay, which was highly influenced by the Israeli kibbutzim system of communal child rearing, became accredited. At Tomales Bay, infants would stay with their mothers at the “hatchery” for the first 6 months, and then were transferred to a separate residence from their parents, often only seeing them a few times per month.⁶²

⁵⁷ “Synanon Gets Marin Deadline,” *San Francisco Examiner*, November 11, 1964.

⁵⁸ “Synanon Officials Dream of A Unique 20,000 Community,” *Marin County Daily Independent Journal*, January 9, 1970, P19; Lydecker, Mary. “Ghost lives at ex-Synanon home,” *Sonoma Independent Journal*, September 13, 1982, A3..

⁵⁹ “A Brief Synanon History: highlights of the change,” *Point Reyes Light*, October 19, 1978.

⁶⁰ “A Brief Synanon History: highlights of the change,” *Point Reyes Light*, October 19, 1978.

⁶¹ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 86.

⁶² Janzen, Rod. *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 74

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The Academy

In addition to the children's school, in 1968 Dederich established the Synanon Academy to train youth as leaders and managers for future Synanon II facilities. Thus, the Tomales Bay campus was referred to as the "tip of the Synanon arrow," and all members living at Tomales Bay were considered members of the Academy.⁶³ In reality, the Academy became a testing ground for many of Dederich's new theories on communal living, including new forms of the Game and lifestyle innovations, most of which he admitted may not even be successful.⁶⁴ According to former member David Gerstel, the Academy at Tomales Bay was "an advanced prototype of an advanced society," to be utilized on future Synanon model cities that would redefine society and community.⁶⁵

Synanon's transition to alternative lifestyle organization was promoted on radio, television, and in newspapers, and by 1968 had reportedly amassed 3,400 nonresident members.⁶⁶ Synanon reached its peak membership of about 1,700 live-in residents during the late 1960s, roughly 200 hundred of whom lived at the Tomales Bay property.⁶⁷

During its time headquartered at Tomales Bay, the organization continued to grow financially, soliciting contributions from wealthy donors throughout the country and expanding their fundraising ventures to include advertising gifts and novelty items for corporations under Synanon Industries. Synanon Industries was highly lucrative, eventually grossing \$1.2 million in sales in 1968-1969, \$5.6 million in 1974-1975, and \$8.7 million in 1975-1976. By August 1975 the Synanon Foundation reported it had \$16.3 million in total assets, although Dederich estimated that assets controlled by the foundation were closer to \$30 million.⁶⁸ As the organization's purported utopian ideals shifted towards a more overtly for-profit business, Dederich became increasingly authoritarian. In 1972, when Kanter wrote her treatise on Utopian communities, she noted that "for nineteenth century communities at least, financial prosperity may be associated with the decline of community."⁶⁹ The observation was prescient, as Synanon's increased financial assets in the 1970s signaled a shift in Synanon's priorities, and ultimately led to its demise.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Synanon expanded their Marin County landholdings, acquiring two large ranch properties west of Tomales Bay: Walker Creek Ranch (1969) and Maggetti Ranch (1971) (see Map 7). Though Synanon continued to operate drug rehabilitation facilities elsewhere, Dederich and other Synanon leaders were largely focused on the alternative society at Tomales Bay and adjacent Marin County properties, becoming increasingly isolated from mainstream society.⁷⁰ Synanon started implementing controversial new policies during this

⁶³ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 43.

⁶⁴ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 44.

⁶⁵ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 89.

⁶⁶ Clark, *Recovery Revolution*, 29.

⁶⁷ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 20.

⁶⁸ Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult," 113.

⁶⁹ Kanter, *Commitment and Community*.

⁷⁰ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 20.

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period. First, after Dederich quit smoking, smoking was banned from Synanon in 1970. As a common habit among those recovering from addiction, this was a challenging policy for many members. Second, Synanon established highly contentious policies regarding children and families, attempting to redefine the family unit.⁷¹ In 1972, Synanon implemented part of their new plan for a utopian community when all children within the organization were sent to Walker Creek in Marin County, including those from Synanon sites in southern California. For some parents, this was the breaking point, as their children were no longer housed nearby, and it was estimated that 200-300 members left as a result.⁷² However, for some members, particularly those who had suffered from addiction, fear of relapse and loss of their support system overpowered potential resistance to stricter reforms. In Synanon's new direction, members were indoctrinated to believe that leaving Synanon would result in relapse, incarceration, or death.⁷³ For squares, many had donated all of their financial resources to the organization and lacked any safety net to return to in the outside world.

According to former member David Gerstel:

By 1972, the trisettlement of the Bay, Ranch, and Walker Creek, while it could not yet have been called a model city, was on its way to becoming a small and sophisticated town. It included dental and medical clinics, a barbershop, sewage treatment plants, a theater that played first-run Hollywood movies, a TV reception tower with cable hookups to many buildings, and artists' studios, libraries, and architects offices.⁷⁴

By 1973, there were reportedly 558 residents residing at the three Synanon properties in Marin County.⁷⁵

Synanon III: Radicalization and Religion (1974-1991)

In the mid-1970s, the Synanon organization continued to radicalize. Under this third phase, Synanon III, they voted to become a tax-exempt religious organization in 1974, with Dederich as "the highest spiritual authority of the Synanon religion."⁷⁶ Leadership felt that religious status would shield some of Synanon's increasingly restrictive behavior from legal regulation under the First Amendment and would secure their financial assets.

After Synanon acquired the Maggetti Ranch and Walker Creek in the early 1970s, Dederich focused his efforts into expanding those facilities, quickly erecting new lodging and boosting their ranching capacity. Many of the young, able-bodied members relocated to Maggetti Ranch, leaving the middle aged and elderly members at Tomales Bay. The Academy was ultimately dissolved to focus on the new mission.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 53-54, 73-76, 118-119.

⁷² Rod Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 93.

⁷³ Ralph Craib, "How Synanon Built an Empire," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 14, 1979, p4.

⁷⁴ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 117.

⁷⁵ "Concern over Future Planning," *Independent Journal*, October 24, 1973, P1.

⁷⁶ Ofshe, "The Social Development of the Synanon Cult," 114.

⁷⁷ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 117.

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Though it had initially been prohibited, violence became increasingly acceptable and ultimately encouraged, and a martial force known as the “Imperial Marines” was established.⁷⁸ Synanon’s rehabilitation program for juveniles also evolved when the organization created a controversial boot camp rehabilitation model at Walker Creek Ranch, where juvenile placements were sent either by their parents or public agencies. Referred to as the “Punk Squad,” the program was a military-style training program involving marching, extreme exercise, manual labor, and strict regimental hierarchy. Physical violence became a key component in its “treatment” model to “correct” behavior and achieve obedience. Eventually, the Punk Squad program expanded, and many of its strict policies were extended to all the children at Synanon, not just those with “behavioral issues.”⁷⁹

Some of the juveniles sent to Synanon’s Walker Creek Ranch escaped to neighboring ranches and reported their abuse, leading to investigations by the Marin County Civil Grand Jury. Synanon increasingly came into conflict with Marin County neighbors during the late 1970s. As confrontations between Synanon and locals escalated, Synanon acquired \$75,000 worth of firearms and ammunition.⁸⁰

In 1975 Synanon moved its headquarters to Camp Badger, a 360-acre property in the Sierra Foothills referred to by Synanon members as “Homeplace.”⁸¹ Soon, the long-held tenet of communal property waned, and luxury items for Synanon elite became commonplace. Dederich began purchasing private items for himself and favored Synanon leadership, including expensive motorcycles and cars, luxurious private quarters, a fleet of airplanes, and other large expenses.⁸² Dissent at the Marin properties was easily quelled, but those at the urban Synanon facilities began to resist, and this time it was not the old-timers, but the squares.⁸³

In the new phase as a pseudo-religious organization at Camp Badger, Synanon established some of its most well-known authoritative policies. Male members in residence for over five years were required to undergo a vasectomy, romantic partners were switched every three years, and members were told to shave their heads. In March of 1978 membership had declined to less than 1000.⁸⁴

During the 1970s Synanon was also involved in several high-profile legal battles, filing lawsuits against the Hearst Corporation and Time Publishing, both of which published articles critical of Synanon. The San Francisco Examiner (a Hearst newspaper) referred to Synanon as “the racket of the century” while Time Magazine called it a “kooky cult.” The Hearst case was settled out of

⁷⁸ “Synanon: Two face trial in snake attack,” *Tulare Advance-Register*, July 25, 1979, p6.

⁷⁹ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 160.

⁸⁰ Anthony O. Miller, “Authorities Confirm Gun Sale to Synanon,” *Petaluma Argus-Courier*, January 26, 1978, 1; “Child Abuse Charges at Synanon Probed,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1977.

⁸¹ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 195.

⁸² Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 161.

⁸³ Gerstel, *Paradise, Incorporated: Synanon*, 165.

⁸⁴ Ofshe, “The Social Development of the Synanon Cult,” 115.

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court while the Time lawsuit was dropped in 1980.⁸⁵ In 1978, attorney Paul Morantz won a lawsuit against Synanon after members of their Imperial Marines put a rattlesnake in his mailbox causing serious injury. Subsequently, Dederich was fined \$5,000, sentenced to five years' probation, and "ordered to recuse himself from active participation in the Synanon organization."⁸⁶ In the backdrop of these high-profile events and the recent death of his wife, Betty, Dederich relapsed and began drinking alcohol again. When he was arrested for his involvement with the rattlesnake incident, Dederich was unconscious, "sprawled out in front of an empty bottle of Chivas Regal."⁸⁷

As their membership and financial holdings decreased, in 1981 Synanon sold all their Marin County properties. At that time there were reportedly 375-400 people living at the various Synanon properties in the county.⁸⁸ The organization continued to face public scrutiny and legal battles throughout the 1980s, when the IRS sued Synanon for \$17 million in back taxes. Eventually the government confiscated the organization's property, and it ultimately dissolved in 1991. The organization's founder, Charles "Chuck" Dederich, died six years later in 1997 at the age of 83.⁸⁹

Synanon's Legacy

Sociologist Richard Ofshe, who spent much of his career examining Synanon, stated, "What set Synanon apart from all the other programs was not success but public relations. Synanon's secret was not in any extraordinary cure but in Dederich's mastery of salesmanship."⁹⁰ Journalist Ann Neumann noted, "[The] ingenious melding of self-administered personal redemption and the marketing directives of modern capitalism marks Synanon as an instructional missing link in the American therapeutic narrative."⁹¹

Addiction Treatment

Synanon's brief success benefited from fortuitous timing, Dederich's charisma, and ingenious marketing. However, the primary explanation for the organization's initial success was its radical treatment methodology. Though it subsequently evolved away from a focus on drug rehabilitation, Synanon's early role as a drug rehabilitation program influenced many later treatment models across the U.S., for better or worse. Thus, the organization played a substantial role in the social history of addiction treatment in the U.S. in the latter half of the twentieth century. The National Institute of Mental Health reported that in 1968 alone a minimum of 40

Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 21.

⁸⁶ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 21.

⁸⁷ "A Portrait of Untempered Power," *Michigan Daily*, January 20, 1979, 4.

⁸⁸ Dave Mitchell, "Synanon soon to say goodbye," *Point Reyes Light*, April 2, 1981, p1.

⁸⁹ Myrna Oliver, "Chuck Dederich, Sr., Synanon Founder, Dies," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1997, p25.

⁹⁰ Dave Mitchell, "How Synanon founder put together his cult," *Point Reyes Light*, Spring 1990, P11.

⁹¹ Ann Neumann, "Taking Liberties: Cults and Capitalism," *The Baffler*, no. 30 (2016): 109.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43959206>.

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new Therapeutic Community treatment centers were in operation in the U.S.⁹² Synanon's methodology was adapted or modified to form second generation TCs, including Daytop Village (est. 1963), Phoenix House (1967), Odyssey House (1967), Covenant House (1972), Delancey Street (1971), Reality House (1970), and Gateway Foundation (1968), among others. By 1975, there were reportedly 300 addiction treatment programs in the U.S. that were founded upon the Synanon TC model.⁹³

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, Synanon's model was increasingly applied to programs targeting the "troubled teen" industry. The use of attack (or punishment) therapy popularized by the Synanon Game was widely utilized in boarding schools, wilderness camps, and addiction treatment programs (such as Tough Love and Scared Straight), forming the backbone of what would become a billion-dollar industry for the residential treatment of teenagers.⁹⁴ In recent decades, these programs have come under scrutiny for their harsh, and often abusive, policies. According to journalist Maia Szalavitz, "Creating situations in which the severe treatment of powerless people is rewarded inevitably yields abuse... This is especially true when punishment is viewed as a healing."⁹⁵

In the 1980s and 1990s, amidst the nationwide "War on Drugs" and federal policies that emphasized deregulation and privatization of addiction treatment, the troubled teen industry grew substantially. By the twenty-first century, many of the programs targeting "troubled teens" were eventually shuttered due to reports of child abuse, however, the industry continued to operate virtually unregulated. In recent years, adult survivors of these programs have begun speaking out against the industry and urging lawmakers and activists to provide oversight and reform to an industry heavily influenced by Synanon's controversial approach to treatment.⁹⁶

Alternative Community

The Synanon II era provides deep insight into the sociological evolution of alternative, utopian, and intentional communities in the United States and has been studied by scholars in a variety of fields since its early foundation through present day.

During Synanon II, headquartered at Tomales Bay, Synanon's expanded vision was of a model city that upended the traditional notion of society and community. Dederich's personal motives notwithstanding, many of Synanon's members believed wholeheartedly in the mission, which seemingly offered an alternative to post-war consumer culture, racial discrimination, back-to-back foreign wars, and the broader global anxieties of the mid-century. Synanon was thus a byproduct of its time, and a manifestation of post-war fears mixed with idealism.

⁹² Kerwin Kaye, *Enforcing Freedom: Drug Courts, Therapeutic Communities, and the Intimacies of the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), Ebook, p51.

⁹³ Kaye, *Enforcing Freedom*, Ebook, p51.

⁹⁴ Neumann, "Taking Liberties: Cults and Capitalism."

⁹⁵ Maia Szalavitz quoted in Neumann, "Taking Liberties: Cults and Capitalism."

⁹⁶ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 31-32.

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Founded in the late 1950s before the eventual passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s, Synanon was fairly progressive in its racial integration policies. In 1964, it was reported that 77 percent of Synanon's membership was White, 12 percent was Black, and 10 percent Hispanic/Latino. Interracial marriage was not discouraged, as Dederich and his wife Betty were themselves in an interracial marriage. However, despite its progressive views on race, the organization maintained a patriarchal order, with few women reaching leadership levels and often relegated to domestic tasks. Similarly, while some LGBTQ+ residents entered Synanon in the early years, nonconformity to heterosexual norms was generally not accepted in the organization.⁹⁷ In 1972, the racial and ethnic makeup of the organization was similar to that of the 1960s, with membership that was 76 percent White, 17 percent Black, and 7 percent Hispanic/Latino.⁹⁸

By the 1980s, as the Baby Boomer generation reached middle age, many of the post-war communes and alternative communities shuttered or were greatly diminished. Those still in existence began to morph into intentional cooperatives. With the passage of more than 30 years since the end of Synanon, former members, journalists, documentarians, historians, psychologists, and public health specialists continue to grapple with the organization's legacy, both as a social experiment and as a drug rehabilitation treatment methodology. It is undeniable that Synanon had a profound impact on those involved, as well as broader implications in public policy related to substance use. Despite its emphasis on communal living, it appears that none of the former members, or those tangentially associated with the organization, share the same perspective about their experience with the organization and its lasting influence. It is likely that Synanon will be a source of study for many years to come, as evidenced by the proliferation of books, television series, and movies that have been made about the organization well into the 21st century.

CRITERION C: Architecture

Prior to acquiring the Tomales Bay property, Synanon largely repurposed pre-existing buildings to meet their needs. When Synanon moved to the Tomales Bay, the organization was shifting to become an alternative lifestyle community and the property's vast acreage offered an opportunity to construct buildings that would meet this new vision. Synanon occupied the pre-existing Marconi Wireless buildings for several years while planning for future construction. Though the organization would later embrace a purely utilitarian approach to building construction, the first four buildings constructed by Synanon at Tomales Bay, known as the "Caves," were master works of architecture that are eligible for listing under Criterion C. A complex of four multi-unit residential buildings, the Caves (Resources 8-11) were designed in the Third Bay Tradition style of architecture, also known as "Shed" style. They were designed by San Francisco architect Ellis Kaplan, a founding partner of the architectural firm of Kaplan & McLaughlin (later KMD

⁹⁷ Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 96.

⁹⁸ Janzen, Rod. *The Rise and Fall of Synanon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 96.

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Architects). The Synanon Caves are an excellent example of the Third Bay Tradition and retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level, with a period of significance of from 1969-1970.

Marconi Wireless/Synanon Headquarters Historic District - Property Development

In 1964, Synanon purchased the Tomales Bay property from Dr. Carlos Fernandez for \$175,000.⁹⁹ The property was initially 42 acres, although Synanon purchased additional acreage in 1966, expanding the site to approximately 62 acres.¹⁰⁰ Between 1964 and 1967, the property was primarily occupied by a crew of Synanon members who worked on infrastructure and building improvements.¹⁰¹ In late 1967, however, Dederich and his wife Betty moved to the site with 35 Synanon members and began making plans for its future use.¹⁰² As Dederich described it, Synanon's new home on Tomales Bay: "may very well be the most gorgeous site on the planet."¹⁰³

Initially, Synanon members focused on renovating the existing Marconi buildings. The 1913 Marconi Hotel (Resource 1) was the first renovated, with approximately \$25,000 worth of alterations in 1965. Prior to construction of the "Shed" (no longer extant) in the 1970s, the Marconi Hotel served as Synanon's administrative center at Tomales Bay. The third-floor attic was a dormitory known as "Outer Limits" by Synanon members, with bunkbeds, bathrooms, and common living spaces.¹⁰⁴ Synanon "old-timers" and those who curried favor with Dederich, lived in single rooms on the second floor. Meals were served communally in the hotel dining room, the first-floor great room served as a living room, and the concrete cellar hosted the Synanon Games.¹⁰⁵ The 1913 Marconi Operating Station (Resource 5, known as "Cliff House" to Synanon members) functioned as office space for Dederich and other leaders.¹⁰⁶ At different periods, the 1913 Marconi Powerhouse (Resource 2) was an auto shop and the "Social Center."¹⁰⁷ It also hosted Synanon Games and Perpetual Stew, with microphones suspended from the ceiling to record and broadcast the proceedings.¹⁰⁸ Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3) was "Staff Housing" and Bayview Cottage (Resource 4) was the "Acoustical Center" by 1967.¹⁰⁹ One of the cottages was later an archive for Synanon books, articles, and audio recordings of Synanon Games and lectures.¹¹⁰ Buildings and spaces at the Tomales Bay property shifted in use

⁹⁹ William Earle, "Marin's Synanon by the Bay," *The San Francisco Examiner*, August 26, 1964; "Synanon Needs Permit to Use Marconi Land," *Daily Independent Journal*, August 4, 1964; "Synanon Has Water Troubles," *Daily Independent*, September 1, 1964.

¹⁰⁰ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 21.

¹⁰¹ Megan McDonald personal correspondence with David Gerstel, May 24, 2024.

¹⁰² Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 51, 80.

¹⁰³ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 67.

¹⁰⁴ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 69.

¹⁰⁵ Garavaglia Architecture, "Marconi Hotel Historic Structure Report," 27.

¹⁰⁶ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ "Bay Area at Your Feet: Villa with a Past-and Future," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 12, 1967.

¹⁰⁸ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 68; Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 119.

¹⁰⁹ "A Place in the Sun for Synanon," *Progressive Architecture*, (May 1967): 164-5.

¹¹⁰ Garavaglia Architecture, "Marconi Hotel Historic Structure Report," 28.

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as renovations and construction took place, with classes and the Game taking place in multiple locations over time.

Synanon also made several site improvements to the property, including the construction of a pond (extant), three sheds, a barn, and a greenhouse (none of which are extant).¹¹¹ Members cleared brush, built a road, constructed wells and cisterns, and developed springs by laying over one mile of underground pipe.¹¹² By 1967, Synanon had constructed a sewage treatment plant (no longer extant) and an accompanying industrial fuel storage and pumping facilities. Portions of the internal road network were paved by the early 1970s. Site improvement work was generally slow, as Synanon depended upon donations to finance the work.¹¹³

Shortly after purchasing the property, San Francisco architect and Synanon member, Ellis Kaplan, began assisting the organization in their planning. Kaplan created a series of site plans for “Synanon City,” initially envisioned as a \$5 million four-phase project. However, little of his original vision was realized aside from the Caves buildings. Plans initially included a “town hall,” which Kaplan designed as a large recreational-assembly center with an outdoor amphitheater built into the hillside.¹¹⁴ Though the town hall was partially built, construction lagged and Synanon ultimately scrapped the project. As architect and Synanon member William Olin recalled, Dederich’s intervention in the project spelled its demise:

When I was called in, it [the town hall building] had been sitting, partially constructed, ever since the Old Man [Dederich] had decided to lop off the kitchen wing. The problem was that the hillside site was near an earthquake fault, and a grid of foundation beams would have to be demolished and new ones built due to the loss of bracing provided by the deleted wing...I wrote a report that included an estimate of the enormous costs required by the change...The Founder ordered the structure torn down and the project abandoned.¹¹⁵

Two large wood decks were constructed on the site instead, later demolished by the California State Parks in the 1990s to expand a parking lot.¹¹⁶ Though the town hall and most elements of the proposed “Synanon City” project were never realized, Kaplan’s designs for dormitory housing and a single-family home for Dederich were brought to fruition. He designed four split-level buildings in the Third Bay Tradition style of architecture, completed between 1969 and 1970 (Resources 8-11). While most construction at the Tomales Bay property was carried out by Synanon members, the Caves were constructed by the Olsen Construction Company, which had no affiliation with the organization. The “Blue Caves,” “White Caves,” and “Red Caves” were

¹¹¹ “Bay Area at Your Feet: Villa with a Past-and Future,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 12, 1967.

¹¹² Healy, Mike. “Synanon House, A Place of Wonder By the Sea,” *Mill Valley News*, August 1, 1965, P1.

¹¹³ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 23-4.

¹¹⁴ “A Place in the Sun for Synanon,” *Progressive Architecture*, (May 1967): 164-5; “‘Town Hall’ for Synanon,” *Daily Independent Journal*, November 10, 1967; “Synanon Founder Expects Aid,” *Oakland Tribune*, November 30, 1964.

¹¹⁵ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 149.

¹¹⁶ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 24-6.

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designed as 12-14 unit complexes. The fourth Cave was originally designed as a private residence for Dederich. Though praised by design critics for their harmony with the surrounding landscape, Dederich apparently despised the Caves, and never resided in the unit designed especially for him. The building was quickly converted to a four-unit complex known as the “Green Caves.”¹¹⁷ At one point, it housed over 20 children of Synanon members who were raised communally.¹¹⁸

Former member David Gerstel surmised that Dederich’s ire with Kaplan’s buildings came down largely to their cost and the use of poor-quality materials (specifically cheap drywall and aluminum windows). Though the contractors hired to erect the buildings were likely chosen due to a low bid, and Dederich’s reticence to pay for high -quality materials was likely to blame, Dederich nonetheless directed his frustration at Kaplan, often targeting and ridiculing him during Games.¹¹⁹

Following the completion of the Caves complex, Dederich espoused a new attitude toward architects and the construction of buildings on Synanon properties. He decreed that the word “architect” would no longer be used, favoring the term “translators” to describe individuals who would *translate* the needs of Synanon into buildings. He insisted that: “The best buildings have always been built without blueprints, anyway. All that’s required is a big chalkboard set up at each construction site so that everyone involved can work out details together.”¹²⁰

Subsequently, Synanon’s construction at Tomales Bay was largely utilitarian, and they erected several prefabricated metal buildings of the Butler-type, dubbed ‘tin tents.’¹²¹ Preferred because they were inexpensive and adaptable, the first was the “Shed” (no longer extant), purchased from Kaiser Industries. So large it required bulldozing a portion of the hillside, the Shed was a multipurpose building with a theater, kitchen, dining hall, school, industrial shop, and office space. However, the building caused tension with local Marin County residents who considered it an eyesore.¹²² Several subsequent prefabricated buildings, mobile homes, and temporary shelters were erected during the 1970s, as well as a geodesic dome. These buildings were used for housing, classroom and office space, and Game space. None are extant.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Roger Montgomery, “Synanon City,” *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.

¹¹⁸ Ellis Kaplan, Territory and Status: The Uses of Environment Within a Communal Society—Synanon,” Synanon Foundation Inc.

¹¹⁹ Rebecca Wallisch personal correspondence with David Gerstel, May 22, 2024; Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 103.

¹²⁰ Olin, *Escape From Utopia*, 147.

¹²¹ Rebecca Wallisch personal correspondence with David Gerstel, May 22, 2024; Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 114.

¹²² Roger Montgomery, “Synanon City,” *Architectural Forum*, November 1970; “Synanon Status Bewilders Many,” *Marin Independent-Journal*, October 26, 1973, 10.

¹²³ Rod Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon: A California Utopia*. (Baltimore Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 102-4; Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 29.

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The architecture and design of the buildings at Tomales Bay was reflective of the ideals of the Synanon II era, which was focused on founding an alternative, communal society. Prefabricated buildings could be used flexibly for a variety of purposes and were adorned with recycled or donated materials. Electrical and plumbing systems were left exposed, both for economical reasons and, as Dederich claimed, as a “learning” opportunity for apprentices.¹²⁴

In 1971, the “A-Frame Cave” was constructed as a residence for Synanon board member Ed Siegel (Resource 7), designed by Synanon member William Olin, who described it as his “favorite project at the time.” Siegel evidently did not reside at Tomales Bay full time, and the A-Frame was commonly used as a “VIP guest room” or for couples on their honeymoon.¹²⁵

In 1972, three Butler-type prefabricated buildings were erected on “prime sites as VIP residences” for Synanon leadership and prestigious guests, called the “Super Caves” (Resources 12-14).¹²⁶ Though their exterior shell consisted of a metal prefabricated building, architect William Olin recalled that: “in order to hide the nasty old steel, wood buildings were, in effect, constructed within the metal ones.”¹²⁷ The construction of single-family residences at Tomales Bay was a departure from the philosophy of communal living previously espoused by the organization. Olin expressed that “the idea of custom-designed, single-family homes with kitchens, wardrobe closets, and carports was the antithesis of what had attracted me to the communal Synanon lifestyle...” He also recalled the difficulties of pleasing one of the VIP Super Cave residents who: “[forced] me to locate every window in his cave at a different height...” Super Cave C became the largest of the Super Caves ca. 1974 when a 400-square-foot-addition was added to the building.¹²⁸ Prefabricated metal buildings would subsequently be used at Synanon’s other Marin County properties.¹²⁹

The Tomales Bay property operated in close relationship with Synanon’s other Marin County properties: “the Ranch” and “Walker Creek.” A fleet of vans and buses operated between the three properties, and also offered daily transportation to Oakland.¹³⁰ Residents of the Synanon properties had access to “dental and medical clinics, a barbershop, sewage treatment plants, a theater that played first-run Hollywood movies, a TV reception tower with cable hookups to many buildings, and artists’ studios, libraries, and architects’ offices.”¹³¹ The two inland ranch properties became increasingly important to Synanon, where members performed ranch work as a teaching tool and form of occupational therapy, and the fruits of their labor became an important revenue stream for the organization.¹³²

¹²⁴ Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon*, 103.

¹²⁵ Olin, *Escape From Utopia*, 147-8.

¹²⁶ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 149.

¹²⁷ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 150.

¹²⁸ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 30.

¹²⁹ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 114.

¹³⁰ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 118.

¹³¹ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 117-118.

¹³² Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 34.

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Dederich's early vision for the commune was that of a self-contained city that could support a population of 20,000 people. As planned, the endeavor would involve a multi-million-dollar construction program, building additional dormitories and education buildings, a public marina, post office, hospital, and fire department. Synanon encountered stiff resistance from the Marin County Planning Commission, who issued the organization a use permit in 1965, limiting it to 200 people. In response, Synanon announced plans to grow the population to 500 to qualify for incorporation, which would exempt it from the county's review.¹³³ However, the property likely never exceeded more than a few hundred permanent residents and the population was in decline by 1972 as the organization acquired new properties.¹³⁴ Synanon member David Gerstel recalled: "...it was apparent that the three settlements would never be more than a village, not the nucleus of a Synanon City. There were not, and it seemed likely that there would never be, enough people in the community to make a city."¹³⁵ Synanon relocated its headquarters to Camp Badger in Tulare County in 1975, at which time the Tomales Bay was used as a recreational facility and guest housing, as well as housing for middle-aged and elderly members of Synanon. The population of the property dwindled until it was almost entirely vacant by the time of its sale in 1981.¹³⁶

In 1981, Synanon sold the Tomales Bay property, along with "the Ranch" and "Walker Creek," to the San Francisco Foundation for \$6.4 million.¹³⁷ The San Francisco Foundation considered several proposals for the site, before ultimately conveying the property to the California State Parks Foundation in 1984.¹³⁸ Shortly afterwards, volunteers demolished or removed several temporary buildings at the site, and five buildings were sent to the Rural California Broadcasting Corporation.¹³⁹ The remaining buildings (both from the Marconi and Synanon eras of occupation) were renovated for use as a conference center. The property operated as the Marconi Conference Center State Historic Park (MCCSHP) until 2022, when the California State Parks entered into a long-term lease agreement with Oliver Hospitality, who plan to pursue historic tax credits to rehabilitate the building as the upscale Lodge at Marconi.

The Synanon Magetti Ranch (5600 Marshall Petaluma Rd, Marshall, CA 94940) is approximately 2.9 miles west of the Tomales Bay property (see Map 7). It is now owned by the Straus Family Creamery and Arborica / Evan Shively wood supplier. Prior to Synanon's purchase of the property, it consisted of a large farmhouse and several agricultural outbuildings.

¹³³ "Marin 'City' for Drug Addicts Planned," *The San Francisco Examiner*, November 7, 1964; "Planners Back Synanon Permit," *San Rafael Daily Independent Journal*, August 17, 1965; "Synanon Plans Marin County Commune City of 20,000," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 8, 1969.

¹³⁴ Megan McDonald personal correspondence with David Gerstel, May 24, 2024; "Synanon: Concern Over Future Planning," *Marin Independent-Journal*, October 24, 1973, 1; "Synanon Plan may be Foiled," *Pt. Reyes Light*, October 27, 1973.

¹³⁵ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 157.

¹³⁶ Gerstel, *Paradise Incorporated*, 117; "Synanon May Sell its Tomales Bay Property," *The Press Democrat*, August 23, 1979.

¹³⁷ "Synanon's West Marin Property in Transition." *Petaluma Argus-Courier*, December 24, 1981, 1.

¹³⁸ Garavaglia Architecture, "Marconi Hotel Historic Structure Report," 27.

¹³⁹ "Channeling the Community's Energy at KRCB-TV," *Petaluma Argus-Courier*, February 29, 1984, 2B-3B.

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When Synanon occupied the property, it erected numerous Butler-type prefabricated structures, some of which are extant, some of which have since been demolished. The Synanon Walker Ranch (1700 Marshall Petaluma Rd Petaluma, CA 94952) is approximately 3.9 miles northwest of the Tomales Bay property. The property was vacant for nearly a decade from when the San Francisco Foundation purchased it in the 1980s until 1990 when the Marin County Office of Education moved their outdoor education program to the Walker Creek property. Since then, it has been home to an outdoor school, conference center, and summer camp.

Camp Badger (50616 Hwy 245 Badger, California 93603) is located approximately 237 miles southeast of the Tomales Bay property. Synanon retained ownership of the property until 1990 when the organization sold it to a local realtor. Much of the property is currently in use as the Sequoia Resort and RV Park, as well as the HATCHERY art spaces, located in the former Synanon airplane hangar.

Third Bay Tradition

The Third Bay Tradition is the third iteration of a regional vernacular style of architecture that originated in the San Francisco Bay area, known as the Bay Region Tradition. Characterized by buildings that are “woody, informal, and anti-urban,” the Bay Region Tradition evolved over the course of a century and is generally divided into three periods: the First, Second, and Third Traditions. The “First Bay Tradition” (1880s to 1920s) was a reaction to Beaux-Arts historicism and Victorian styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and rejected extensive use of ornament. Architects of the First Bay Tradition developed a style that was more closely linked to nature, with special emphasis placed on the building site and climate. Craftsmanship was highlighted, and local materials were used extensively, including redwood. Buildings of the First Bay Tradition were typically asymmetrical and emphasized volume and form. Unpainted wood shingles were commonly used as cladding. The First Bay Tradition has been described as a regional interpretation of the Shingle Style, which was most popular on the East Coast of the United States. Examples of the First Bay Tradition are concentrated in the San Francisco Bay area, particularly in the East Bay.¹⁴⁰ Several examples are listed in the National Register, including First Church of Christ Scientist, designed by Bernard Maybeck (NRHP 1977), and Girton Hall by Julia Morgan (NRHP 1991), both in Berkeley.

Architects of the Second Bay Tradition¹⁴¹ (ca. 1930s- 1960s) applied the rustic qualities of the First Bay Tradition (use of redwood, unpainted shingles, and emphasis on craftsmanship) to Modernist forms. Examples of the Second Bay Tradition are typically small in scale and feature flat or low-pitched roof forms, wood exterior cladding, and overhanging eaves. More emphasis was placed on open spaces and natural lighting than in the First Bay Tradition, and examples therefore often contained large expanses of glass. As was the case with the previous tradition, the

¹⁴⁰ Mary Brown, “San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement” (San Francisco, 2011), 82.

¹⁴¹ Also known as “Bay Region Style,” “Second Bay Region Tradition,” “Bay Area Style,” “Bay Region Domestic,” and “Bay Region Modern.”

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Second Bay Tradition emphasized the use of natural building materials and a sensitivity to the site and environment, and landscape architects were commonly involved in the planning and design. Most examples of the style are residences in suburban or semi-rural areas of the San Francisco Bay area.¹⁴² Several examples have been listed in the National Register, including the Marin Art and Garden Center by the firm of Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons (NRHP 2021).

The Third Bay Tradition of the Bay Region Tradition dates to the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to plain wood siding and wood shingle cladding, examples of the Third Bay Tradition were characterized by their shed roofs and unique vertical “mine-shaft” building forms. Because of its character defining shed roofs, the Third Bay Tradition is often referred to as the “shed style” of architecture. The construction of The Sea Ranch (NRHP 2005), a condominium complex along the coast in Sonoma County, led to a proliferation of the style. The Sea Ranch featured a number of clustered buildings situated alongside areas of communal open space. Because the condominiums were second homes for most of the inhabitants, they were “small but spacious, congregated together like a northern New England farmstead.”¹⁴³ The Sea Ranch is considered a “masterwork” of Third Bay Tradition, and was designed, in part, by Charles Moore, whose writings were highly influential in promoting the style. Moore would later serve as dean of the Yale School of Architecture, which furthered the proliferation of the style.¹⁴⁴

The Third Bay Tradition was commonly applied to condominiums and other forms of multi-unit housing, and most examples were constructed in the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴⁵ Outside of California, the Third Bay Tradition is often referred to as the “Shed” style of architecture, which still traces its roots to the Sea Ranch.¹⁴⁶

The Synanon Caves (Resources 8-11)

The Synanon “Caves,” designed by San Francisco architect Ellis Kaplan, are excellent examples of the Third Bay Tradition of architecture, exhibiting the style’s character-defining shed roofs, complex building footprints, and distinctive “mine shaft” building forms. The Caves were integrated into the landscape, following the natural contours of the surrounding hill slope. The Caves historically featured unpainted vertical-groove plywood siding, which has since been painted, likely to protect the material from the harsh sea air. On the interior, the Caves are multi- and split-level buildings. The Synanon Caves were heavily influenced by The Sea Ranch in Sonoma County, considered to be a “masterwork” of the Third Bay Tradition. As was the case with the Sea Ranch, the Caves were clustered tightly together to create a sense of community, while leaving much of the surrounding site open. The Caves also mirrored the Sea Ranch with their shed roofs and flush eaves. One difference between the two properties, likely related to

¹⁴² Brown, “*San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970*,” 179-187.

¹⁴³ Condominium 1, Sonoma County, California, National Register of Historic Places, Reference #05000731.

¹⁴⁴ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2013), 649-650.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, “*San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970*,” 139.

¹⁴⁶ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2013), 649-650.

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Synanon's financial constraints and/or the availability of materials, is that the Synanon Caves utilized vertical-groove plywood as exterior cladding in lieu of redwood.

In contrast to other buildings on Synanon's Tomales Bay property, Synanon did not design or construct the Caves buildings themselves. Kaplan's firm, Kaplan & McLaughlin, served as architects for the project, with Rutherford & Chekene as structural engineers and Conviser Associates as mechanical engineers. Douglas Baylis, a prominent San Francisco area landscape architect, worked on the landscape design surrounding the Caves.¹⁴⁷ However, no documentation of his landscape design has been found, and it is unknown what landscape features remain from Baylis' original plans. Other professionals were hired for roads and grading, site drainage, and sanitary engineering. Olsen Construction Company carried out the construction as general contractor. The project cost \$383,000 (equivalent to approximately \$3.2 million in 2024), in addition to \$67,000 in materials and equipment provided by Synanon.¹⁴⁸

Charles Dederich was not pleased with the Caves buildings upon their completion. Though Dederich's approval was undoubtedly attained prior to construction, he later expressed that the Green Caves, which was built as a single-family home specifically for his use, was out of line with the organization's developing philosophy about community and family: "The new Synanon community has no nuclear families, hence no single-family houses. Instead, it consists of the two repetitive modules—cave and community facility—at the two social scales of individual and tribe."¹⁴⁹ In addition, Dederich espoused the belief that "The single-family house is destroying the world."¹⁵⁰ Dederich also apparently harbored disdain for the architectural style of the Caves. A former Synanon member recalled Dederich stating that the Caves were: "an effete 'House Beautiful' abomination...totally inadequate to our needs," and that as "country houses," the Caves should have included porches.¹⁵¹ Following construction of the Caves, all other new construction at Synanon was inexpensively obtained and utilitarian in nature.

Ellis Kaplan

Ellis Kaplan was born in Boston, Massachusetts on August 18, 1925, the grandson of Russian Jews who immigrated to the United States.¹⁵² He served in the Navy during World War II aboard the USS Wadleigh. Following his military service, Kaplan enrolled in Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, ultimately dropping out to design projects in Pakistan, India, and

¹⁴⁷ "Douglas Baylis," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, Accessed July 25, 2023: <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/douglas-baylis>; "Civic Center Landscape Architects: Douglas Baylis," San Francisco Planning Department, Accessed July 25, 2023: https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/cultural_landscape/CLI_bio_Douglas_Baylis.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Roger Montgomery, "Synanon City," *Architectural Forum*, (November 1970): 53-56.

¹⁴⁹ Montgomery, "Synanon City," 53-56.

¹⁵⁰ Montgomery, "Synanon City," 53-56.

¹⁵¹ Olin, *Escape from Utopia*, 85-6.

¹⁵² Ellis Kaplan, 1930 census, Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Available on Ancestry.com; U.S. "World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947," digital image s.v. "Ellis Kaplan," Ancestry.com.

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Burma through a grant from the Ford Foundation.¹⁵³ Kaplan would later credit this experience as being instrumental in his development as an architect. He moved to San Francisco by the mid-1950s, where he practiced architecture for several years with the firms of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Warnecke & Becket, and Mario Corbett. While working with Corbett, Kaplan employed several design elements that he would also include in his designs for the Synanon Caves, including split-level massing and the use of natural wood cladding on Modernist forms.¹⁵⁴ He began a partnership with Herbert P. McLaughlin in 1963: Kaplan & McLaughlin. With the addition of James Diaz in 1970, the firm became KMD Architects. KMD was San Francisco's "first multi-ethnic all-Ivy League architecture firm: a Harvard Jew [Kaplan], a Yale Irishman [McLaughlin], and a Princeton Hispanic [Diaz]."¹⁵⁵

Kaplan was first introduced to Synanon when he lived next door to Synanon's first base in San Francisco during the 1960s and went on to join the organization for approximately ten years.¹⁵⁶ During that time he donated between \$60,000-\$70,000 (approximately \$400,000-\$500,000 in 2024) to the organization.¹⁵⁷ Kaplan would ultimately leave the organization in late 1977 because he: "didn't like the lifestyle anymore, and I didn't trust the younger leadership that was coming up to have respect for the older members." Though Kaplan expressed that he had "no regrets" about his time in Synanon, upon leaving the organization he reflected that prior to leaving the organization: "I stood by and watched things that were despicable..."¹⁵⁸

Kaplan & McLaughlin (known as KMD Architects after 1970) became well known for their research-driven design methodology, which they performed as a part of their commissions. One of the firm's earliest projects was for the National Institute of Mental Health, in which they created national design guidelines for the construction of community mental health facilities. *Planning & Programming and Design of the Community Mental Health Center, Vol. 1* was published in 1965 and the firm employed the guidelines in two subsequent commissions: the Marin County Community Mental Health Center and Resthaven CMHC in Los Angeles. When the firm was hired to design a low-income apartment complex in San Francisco, Martin Luther King Square, Kaplan & McLaughlin hired a team of social scientists to interview future residents about what they wanted in their new home. As KMD partner Jim Diaz later recalled: "This resulted in family units being placed on the ground floor, with porches so that parents could keep an eye on their kids...[with] units for singles on upper floors, away from the clamor of the kids."¹⁵⁹ The resulting building won an AIA design award in 1972. Similarly, when

¹⁵³ "Ellis Kaplan [obituary]," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Accessed July 24, 2023:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/ellis-kaplan-obituary?id=19090272>.

¹⁵⁴ Larson and Skowe, *Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation*, 78.

¹⁵⁵ "Ellis Kaplan [obituary]," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Accessed July 24, 2023:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/ellis-kaplan-obituary?id=19090272>.

¹⁵⁶ Roger Montgomery, "Synanon City," *Architectural Forum*, (November 1970): 53-56.

¹⁵⁷ "A Portrait of Untempered Power," *The Michigan Daily*, January 20, 1979, 4.

¹⁵⁸ "Synanon: Has it been drowned in a bottle of booze?" *Wichita Falls Times*, January 10, 1979, 13; "A Portrait of Untempered Power," *The Michigan Daily*, January 20, 1979, 4.

¹⁵⁹ "Herb McLaughlin, 1934-2015," *The Architect's Newspaper*, Accessed July 24, 2023: <https://www.archpaper.com/2015/07/herb-mclaughlin-1934-2015/>.

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commissioned to design a correctional facility in Nebraska, both guards and prisoners were consulted during the research process. The firm also began to include follow up research in their process, conducting interviews with occupants of their designs months and years after construction.¹⁶⁰

Kaplan continued to work as an architect with KMD through at least the 1980s. He designed the San Rafael Commons during the 1980s, which featured subdued elements of the Third Bay Tradition.¹⁶¹ Kaplan died in 2012 in Mill Valley, California.¹⁶²

Conclusion

The Station KPH - Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1989 under Criterion A for Communications at the national level of significance, with a period of significance of 1914-1931. A fifth Marconi-era building, the Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5), was individually listed in the National Register due to its physical distance from the other buildings.

This amendment proposes to expand the existing district to include the historically significant buildings associated with the Synanon Foundation, which owned and operated the property as its headquarters from 1964 to 1975. The Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District is significant under Criterion A: Social History, at the local level for its role in promulgating the Therapeutic Community (TC) model of drug rehabilitation treatment in the post-war era and as the largest known “service” oriented utopian community of the 1960s. The Synanon “Caves” (Resources 8-11) are also significant under Criterion C at the local level for Architecture, as excellent examples of the Third Bay Tradition style of architecture. The caves were designed by San Francisco architect Ellis Kaplan of Kaplan & McLaughlin (later KMD Architects).

In addition to the period of significance established under the 1989 National Register nomination (1914-1931), an additional period of significance is recommended from 1964-1975 to encapsulate the period in which Synanon operated the property as its headquarters. Synanon acquired the Tomales Bay property in 1964 and relocated their organizational headquarters to Camp Badger in Tulare County, CA in 1975.

¹⁶⁰ “Herb McLaughlin, 1934-2015.” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, Accessed July 24, 2023: <https://www.archpaper.com/2015/07/herb-mclaughlin-1934-2015/>.

¹⁶¹ Diane Y. Carstens, *Site Planning and Design for the Elderly: Issues, Guidelines, and Alternatives* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, Inc., 1985), 72, 99-100.

¹⁶² “Ellis Kaplan [obituary],” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Accessed July 24, 2023: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/ellis-kaplan-obituary?id=19090272>.

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- “Synanon Plans Marin County Commune City of 20,000.” *The Sacramento Bee*, December 8, 1969.
- “Synanon Needs Permit to Use Marconi Land.” *Daily Independent Journal*, August 4, 1964
- “Synanon Will Close Its Doors.” *Daily Independent Journal*, February 13, 1965.
- “Synanon Gets Marin Deadline.” *San Francisco Examiner*. November 11, 1964.
- “Synanon Officials Dream of a Unique 20,000 Community.” *Marin County Daily Independent Journal*,” January 9, 1970.
- “Synanon Has Water Troubles.” *Daily Independent*, September 1, 1964.
- “Synanon Founder Expects Aid.” *Oakland Tribune*, November 30, 1964.
- “Synanon Status Bewilders Many.” *Marin Independent-Journal*, October 26, 1973, 10.
- “Synanon: Concern Over Future Planning.” *Marin Independent-Journal*, October 24, 1973,
- “Synanon Plan may be Foiled.” *Pt. Reyes Light*, October 27, 1973.
- “Synanon May Sell its Tomales Bay Property.” *The Press Democrat*, August 23, 1979.
- “Synanon: Two face trial in snake attack.” *Tulare Advance-Register*, July 25, 1979.
- “Synanon’s West Marin Property in Transition.” *Petaluma Argus-Courier*, December 24, 1981.
- “Synanon: Has it been drowned in a bottle of booze?” *Wichita Falls Times*, January 10, 1979.
- “‘Town Hall’ for Synanon.” *Daily Independent Journal*, November 10, 1967.

Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency (California State Parks)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 62.29 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.146019° | Longitude: -122.882441° |
| 2. Latitude: 38.147936° | Longitude: -122.878750° |
| 3. Latitude: 38.143885° | Longitude: -122.874273° |
| 4. Latitude: 38.142087° | Longitude: -122.875246° |
| 5. Latitude: 38.143118° | Longitude: -122.877176° |
| 6. Latitude: 38.144050° | Longitude: -122.880940° |

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

The proposed boundary includes the entirety of Marin County Assessor parcel 106-210-54, as depicted on Map 4.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic district boundary expands the 1989 boundary to encapsulate the entire parcel owned by California State Parks, adding 11 new contributing resources constructed by the Synanon organization, and 4 non-contributing resources.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rebecca Lapham Wallisch and Megan Warley McDonald
organization: Post Oak Preservation Solutions
street & number: 2506 Little John Lane
city or town: Austin state: Texas zip code: 78704
e-mail: Rebecca@post oakpreservation.com, Megan@post oakpreservation.com
telephone: 512-766-7042
date: June 21, 2024

Additional Documentation

Photo Log

Name of Property: Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District
City or Vicinity: Marshall
County: Marin County
State: California
Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell; Marconi Lodge (photos 19-30, 33); Patrick Stanley (photos 18, 36, 37)
Date Photographed: August 2023; October 2023; June 2024

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

1 of 39: General site view showing Station KPH Inn (Resource 1, NRHP 1989), with Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3, NRHP 1989) partially visible in the trees at left. View northwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0001)

2 of 39: General site view showing paved internal roadway and Powerhouse (Resource 2, NRHP 1989) at right. View west. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0002)

3 of 39: General site view showing paved internal roadway leading to the Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0003)

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4 of 39: View from cliff side overlooking A-Frame Cave (Resource 7) and Tomales Bay, as well as a small parking area and the internal roadway. View southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0004)

5 of 39: View of Green Caves (Resource 8) from interior roadway below. View northwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0005)

6 of 39: Westward view across the property toward the Caves complex. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0006)

7 of 39: Hillside view across the property, overlooking the Super Caves. View southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0007)

8 of 39: General site view depicting roadway to the Super Caves. Super Caves A and B (Resources 12 and 13) are at right and Super Cave C (Resource 14) is in the distance at left. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0008)

9 of 39: Station KPH Inn/Marconi Hotel (Resource 1, NRHP 1989) primary elevation. View northeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0009)

10 of 39: Station KPH Inn/Marconi Hotel (Resource 1, NRHP 1989) rear elevation. View southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0010)

11 of 39: Station KPH Powerhouse (Resource 2, NRHP 1989), view northeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0011)

12 of 39: Station KPH Powerhouse (Resource 2, NRHP 1989), view southwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0012)

13 of 39: Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3, NRHP 1989) primary elevation, view north. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0013)

14 of 39: Bayview Cottage (Resource 4, NRHP 1989) primary elevation, view north. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District _0014)

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15 of 39: Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0015)

16 of 39: Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0016)

17 of 39: Synanon-era garage (Resource 6) adjacent to Station KPH Operating Station, view southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0017)

18 of 39: A-Frame Cave (Resource 7), view southwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0018)

19 of 39: Caves complex from central courtyard with Red Caves at left, Green Caves at Center, White Caves at right. Blue caves are not depicted. View south. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0019)

20 of 39: Red Caves (Resource 11), view southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0020)

21 of 39: Red Caves (Resource 11), showing stairs to exterior second floor walkway. View east. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0021)

22 of 39: White Caves (Resource 9), view southwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0022)

23 of 39: White Caves (Resource 9), view of second story walkway and entrances to units. View southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0023)

24 of 39: Blue Caves (Resource 10) from central courtyard, view northwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0024)

25 of 39: Blue Caves (Resource 10) rear elevation from interior roadway, view southeast. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0025)

26 of 39: Entrance to lobby and administrative area housed in Blue Caves (Resource 10). 2005 addition with arched roof depicted at right. View southwest. (CA_Marin County_Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0026)

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27 of 39: Green Caves (Resource 8) view southeast. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0027)

28 of 39: Green Caves (Resource 8) view southwest. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0028)

29 of 39: Room 201 in Green Caves (Resource 8), depicting open ceilings, exposed rafter beams, and tongue-in-groove boards. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0029)

30 of 39: Room 201 in Blue Caves (Resource 10), showing an alternative room design with the same open ceilings, exposed rafter beams, and tongue-in-groove boards. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0030)

31 of 39: Stairs leading to an original loft space in the White Caves (Resource 9). (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0031)

32 of 39: View of loft space in the White Caves (Resource 9). (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0032)

33 of 39: View of original Synanon tile shower mosaic in the Green Caves (Resource 8). (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0033)

34 of 39: Super Cave A (Resource 12), view southeast. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0034)

35 of 39: Super Cave B (Resource 13), view east. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0035)

36 of 39: Super Cave C (Resource 14), view northwest. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0036)

37 of 39: Super Cave C (Resource 14), view southeast. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0037)

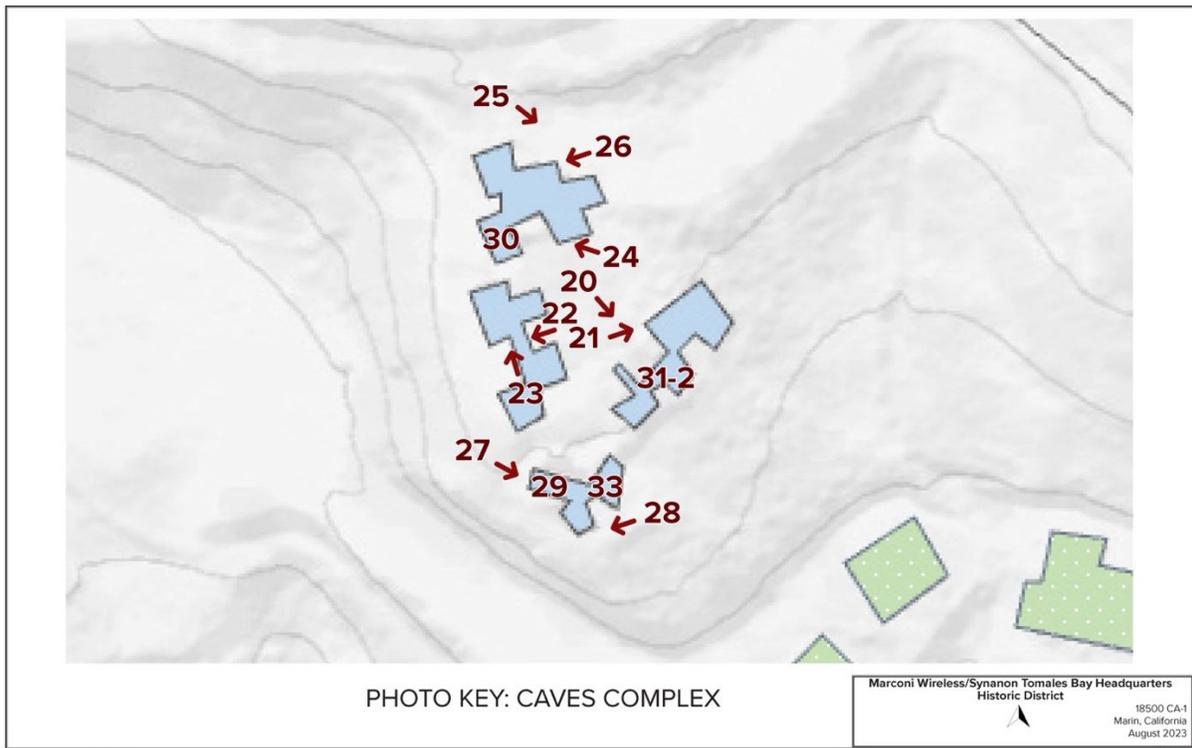
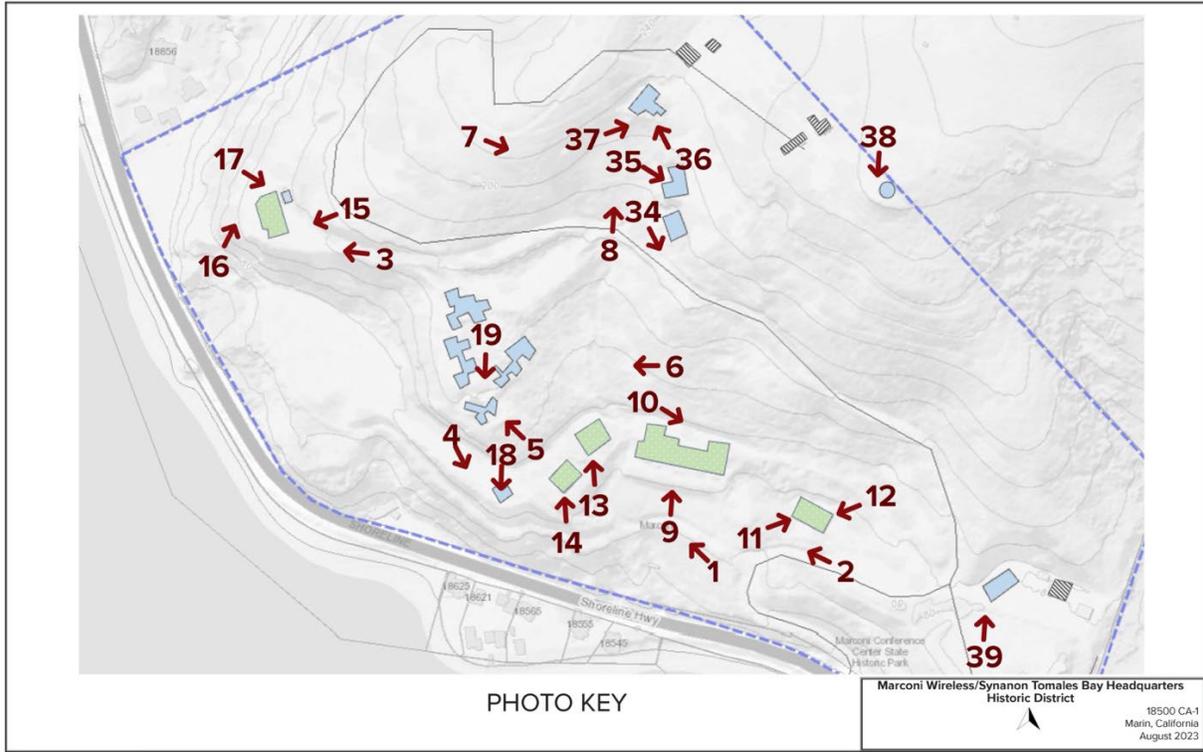
38 of 39: Water tank and small shed (Resource 15), view north. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0038)

39 of 39: Thickened Sound building (Resource 16), view east. (CA_Marin County_ Marconi Wireless-Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District_0039)

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Photo Keys



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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Maps

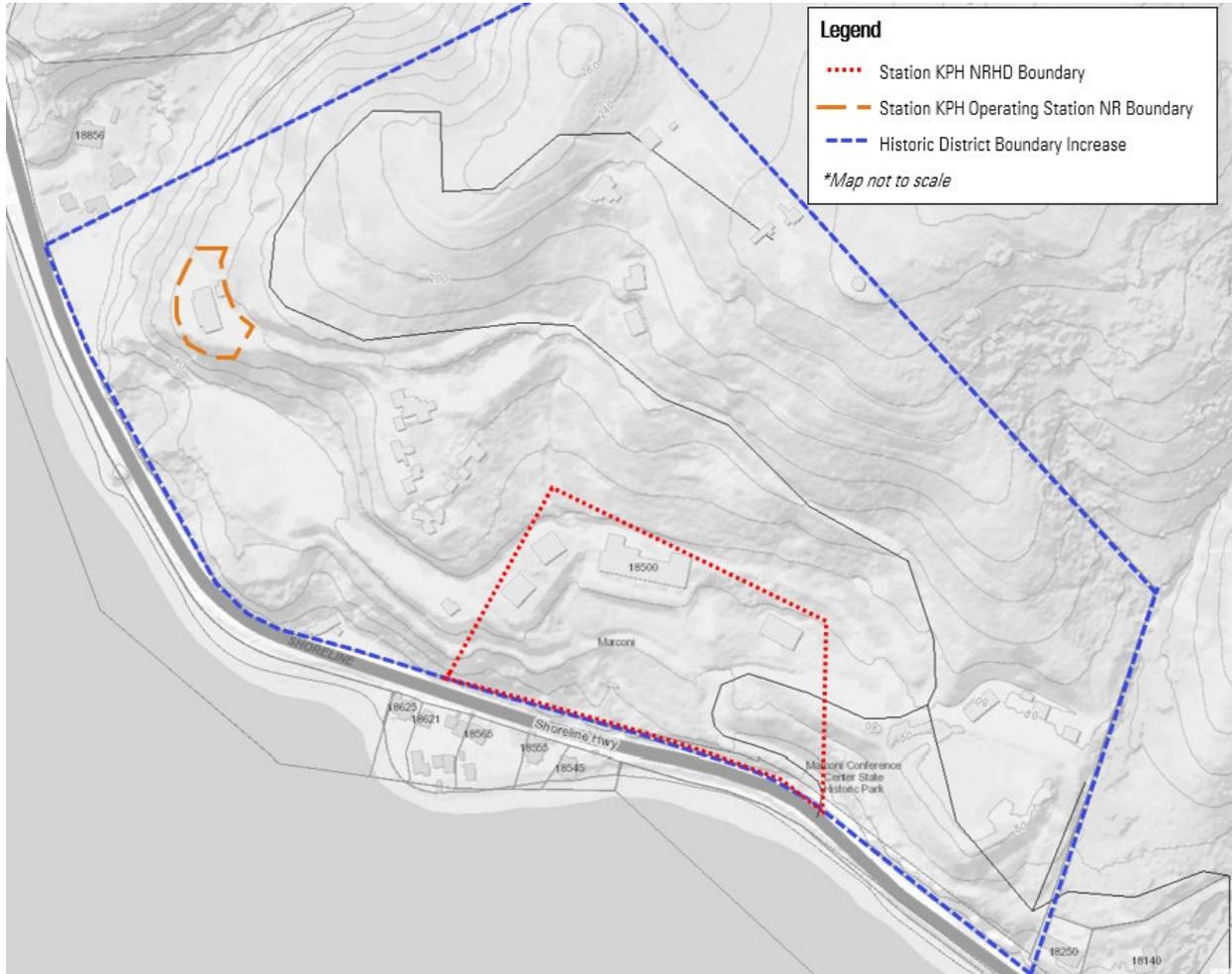
Map 1: Location Map depicting proposed boundary increase for the Marconi/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters National Register District. Source: Google Earth 2024.



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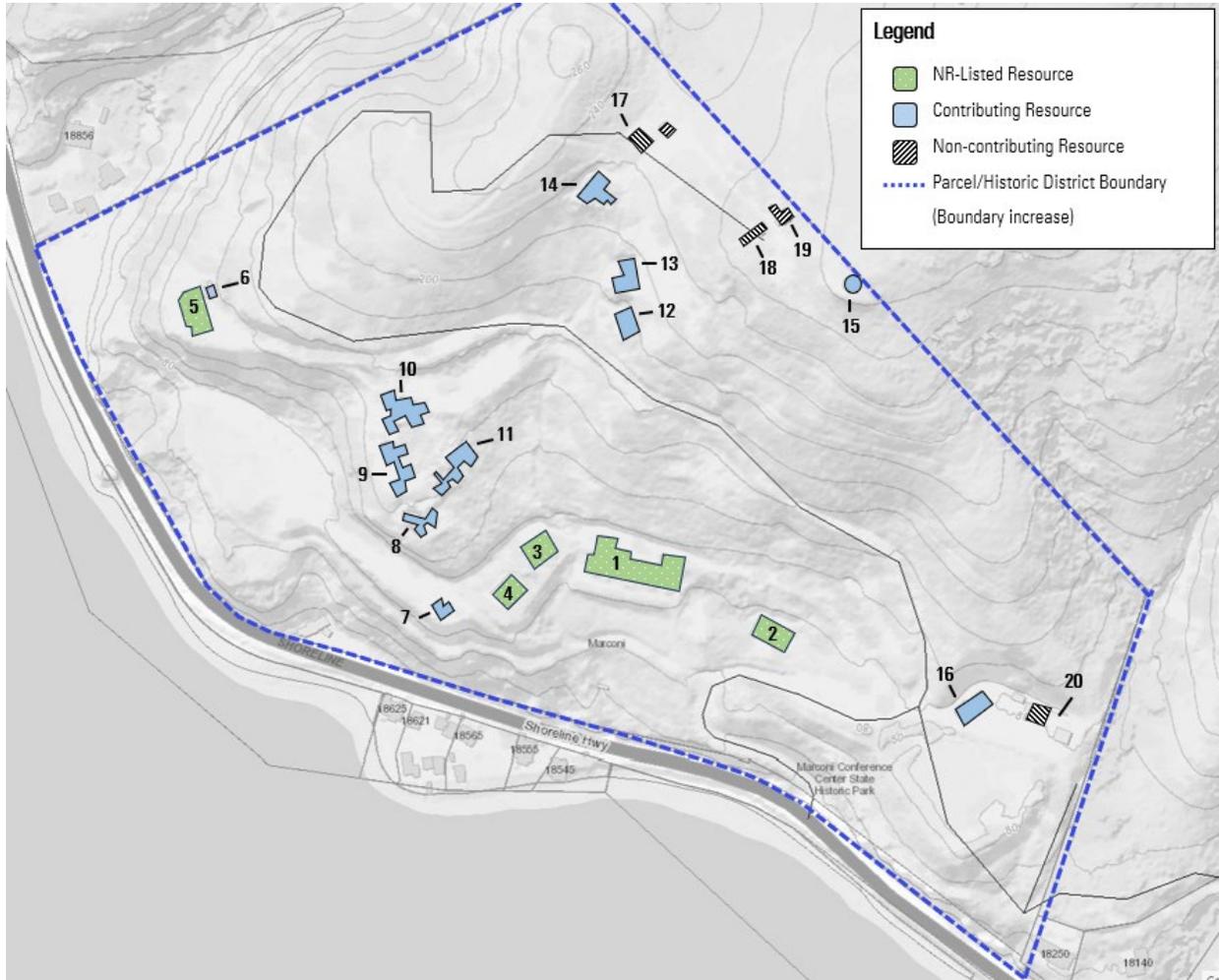
Map 2: Map of proposed boundary increase for the Marconi/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters National Register District. Post Oak Preservation 2024, base map from Marin County CAD.



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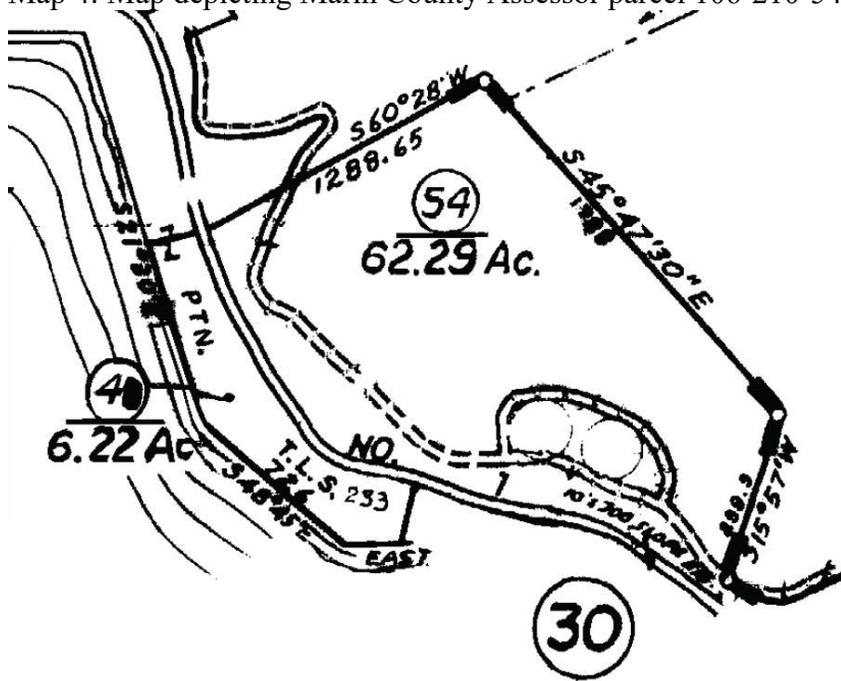
Map 3: Sketch Map of Marconi/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters National Register District.
Post Oak Preservation 2024, base map from Marin County CAD.



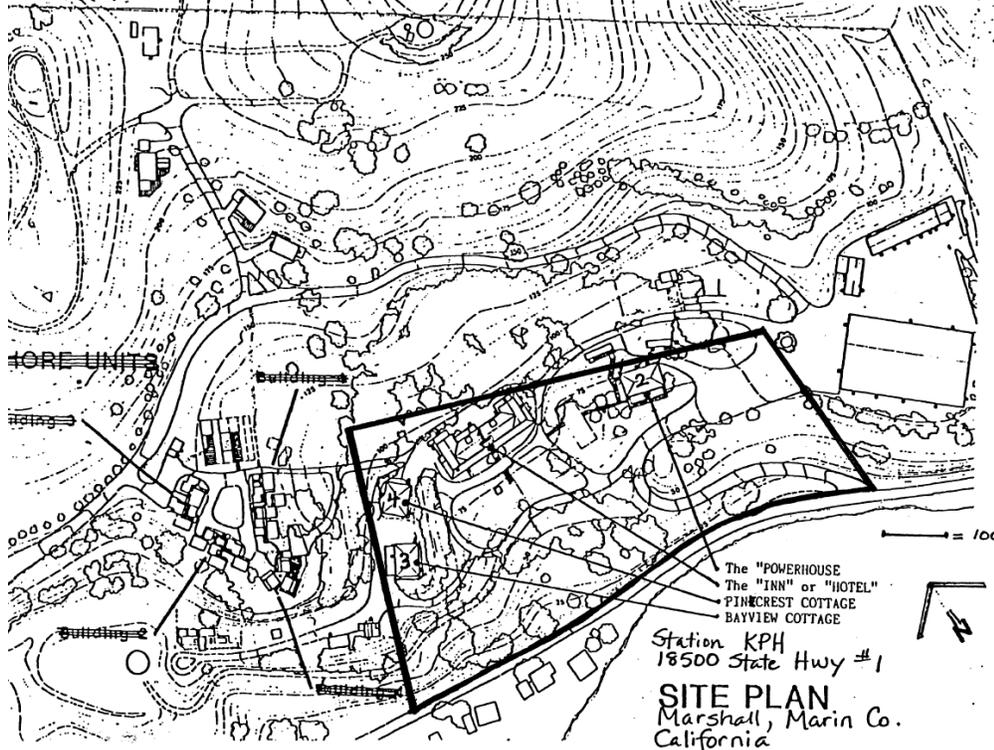
Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District
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Map 4: Map depicting Marin County Assessor parcel 106-210-54.



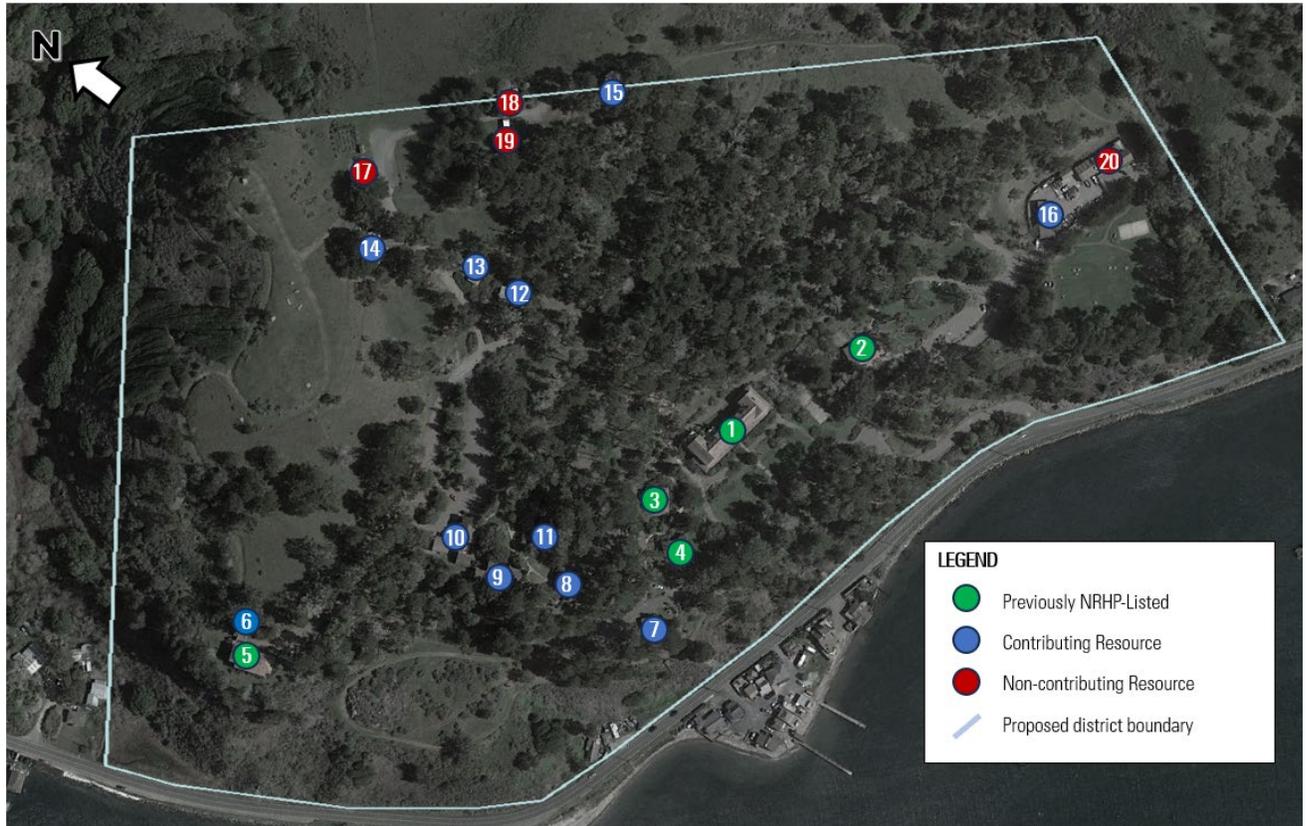
Map 5: Map showing the boundary of the NRHP-Listed Station KPH — Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America, courtesy of 1989 National Register nomination.



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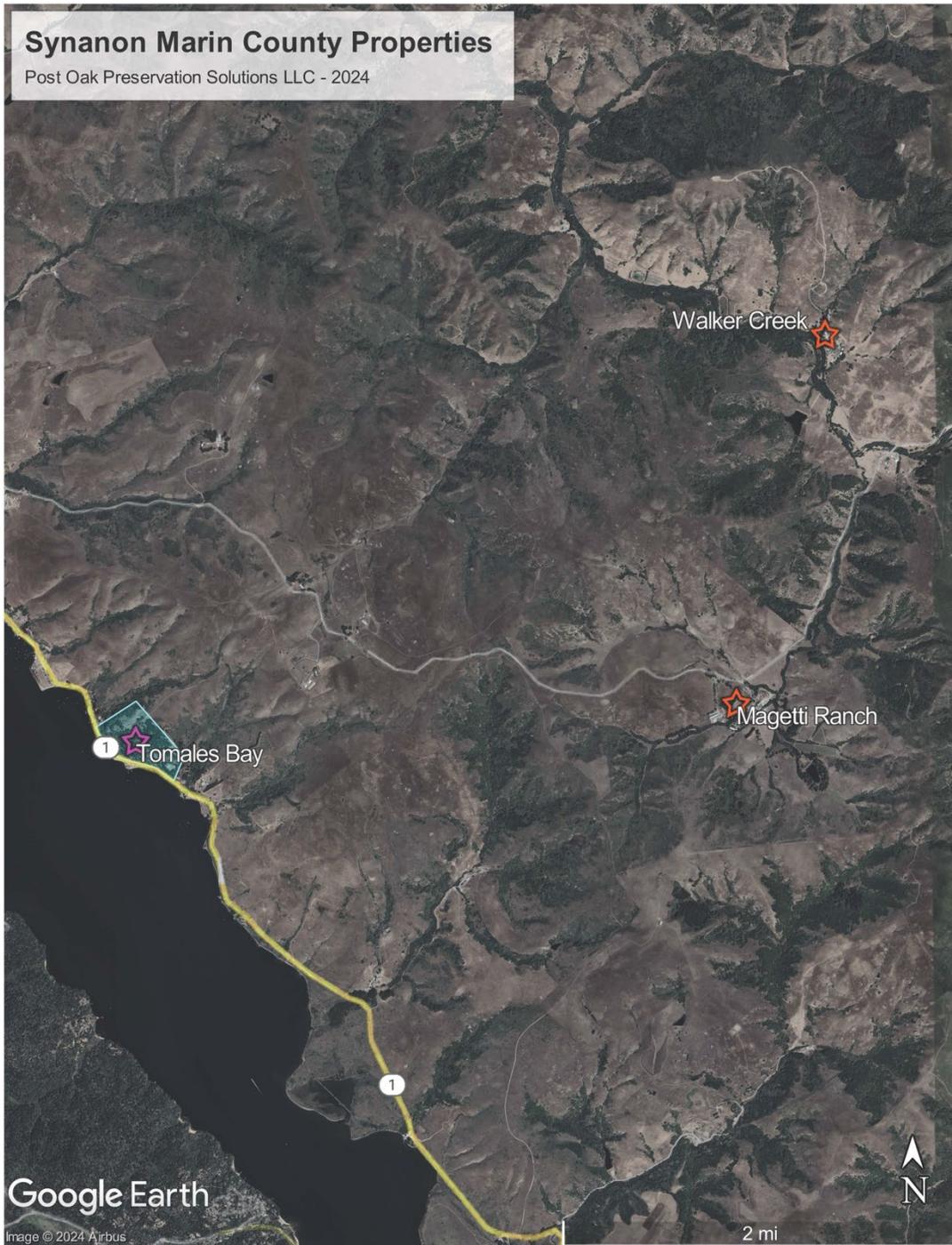
Map 6: Proposed Marconi Wireless/Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters Historic District. Aerial courtesy of Google Earth 2024. See Inventory Table for corresponding resource numbers.



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Map 7: Aerial view of Synanon Tomales Bay Headquarters in relation to other Marin County landholdings, the Maggetti Ranch and Walker Creek.



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Figures

Figure 1. 1965 Aerial Image showing Tomales Bay property shortly after it was purchased by Synanon. Source: Cartwright Aerial Surveys, Flight CAS-65-130, Frame MRN 54-130 (1:12,000), June 27, 1965, flown for California Division of Highways.



Figure 2. Aerial Image showing Tomales Bay after Synanon had relocated its headquarters to Camp Badger in 1975. Source: National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA)--Ames Research Center, Flight 77-002-02452, Frame 186b (1:32,500), January 4, 1977, flown for Mikkelsen and Ferry, UCSB.



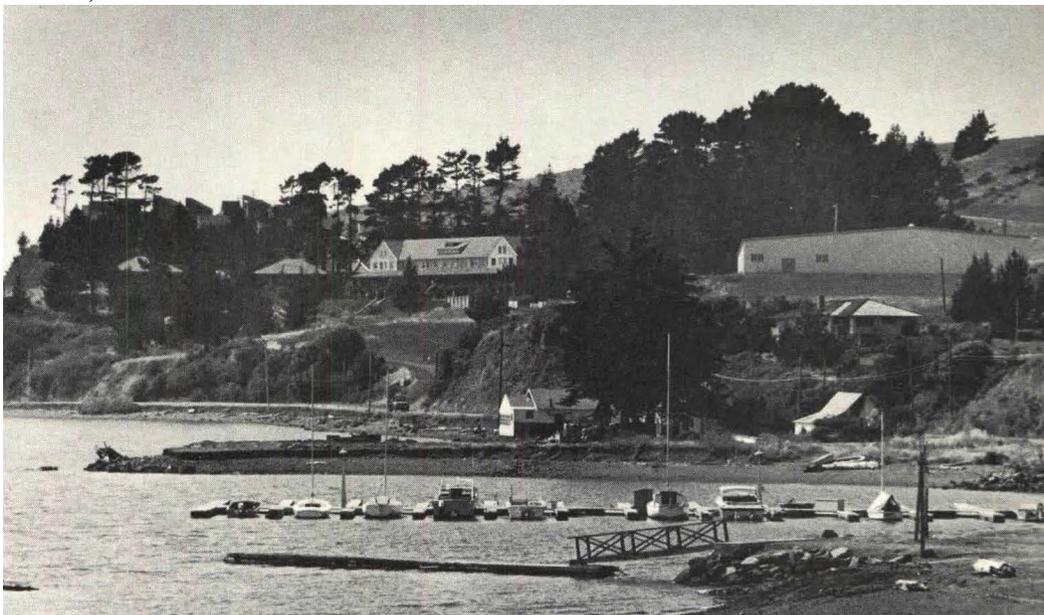
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Figure 3: Undated photograph of Marconi Wireless property prior to acquisition by Synanon. Courtesy of California State Parks–Bay Area District.



Figure 4: Circa 1970 view of Synanon property from Tomales Bay. The distinctive shed roofs of the Caves buildings are visible through the trees at top left. Marconi buildings at Center. The “Shed” (no longer extant) is the large, prefabricated building visible at right. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



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Figure 5: 1974 aerial view of Tomales Bay property, courtesy of *Westways*, Volume 66, Number 5, P1



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Figure 6: Synanon founder Charles Dederich (foreground) and members of Synanon stand on the front steps of the Station KPH Inn (Resource 1), shortly after purchasing the Tomales Bay property in 1964. Source: "Synanon by the Bay," *The San Francisco Examiner*, August 26, 1964.

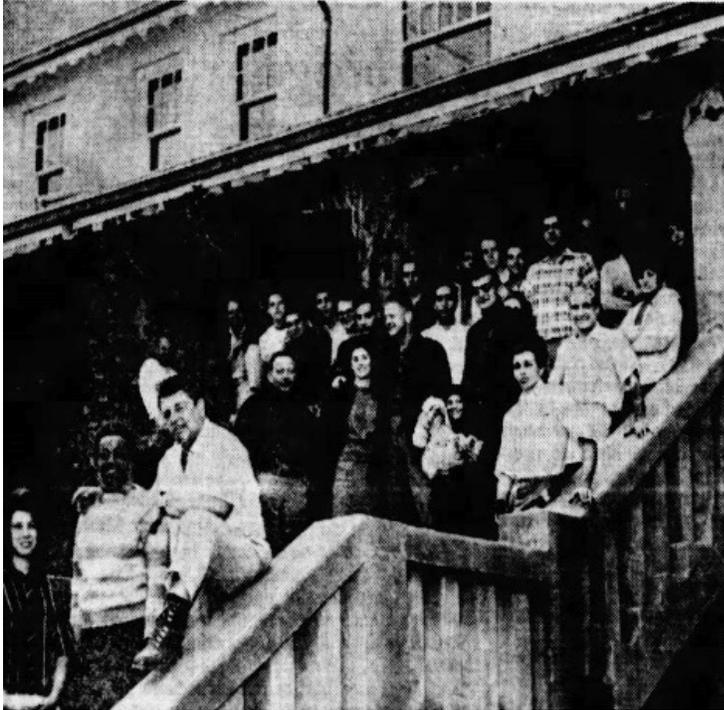


Figure 7: View of the Station KPH Inn (Resource 1, right) in 1970. Geodesic dome (no longer extant) at left. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



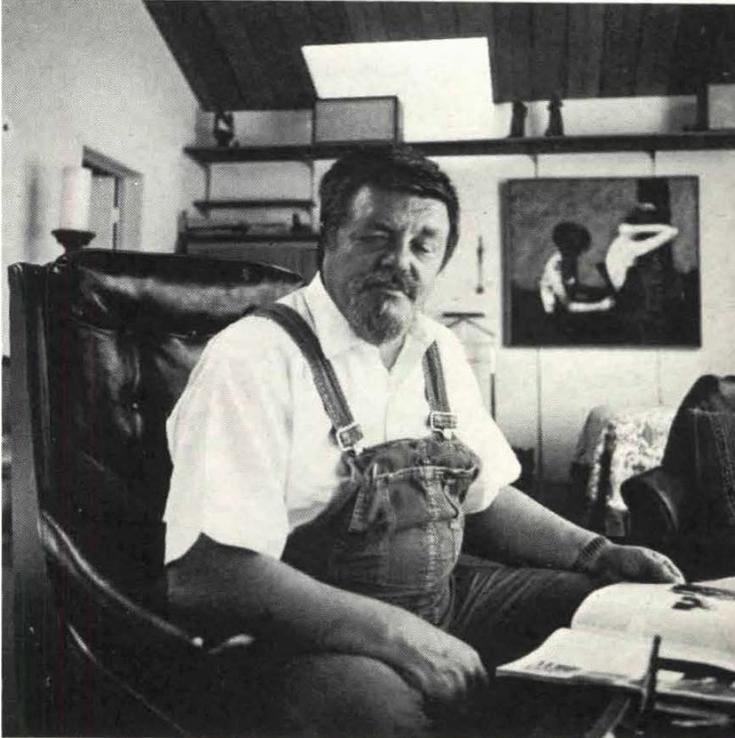
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Figure 8: Synanon members gather inside an unidentified Marconi building, likely the Station KPH Inn or Powerhouse. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



Figure 9: Charles Dederich inside the Green Caves (Resource 8) at the Tomales Bay property, circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



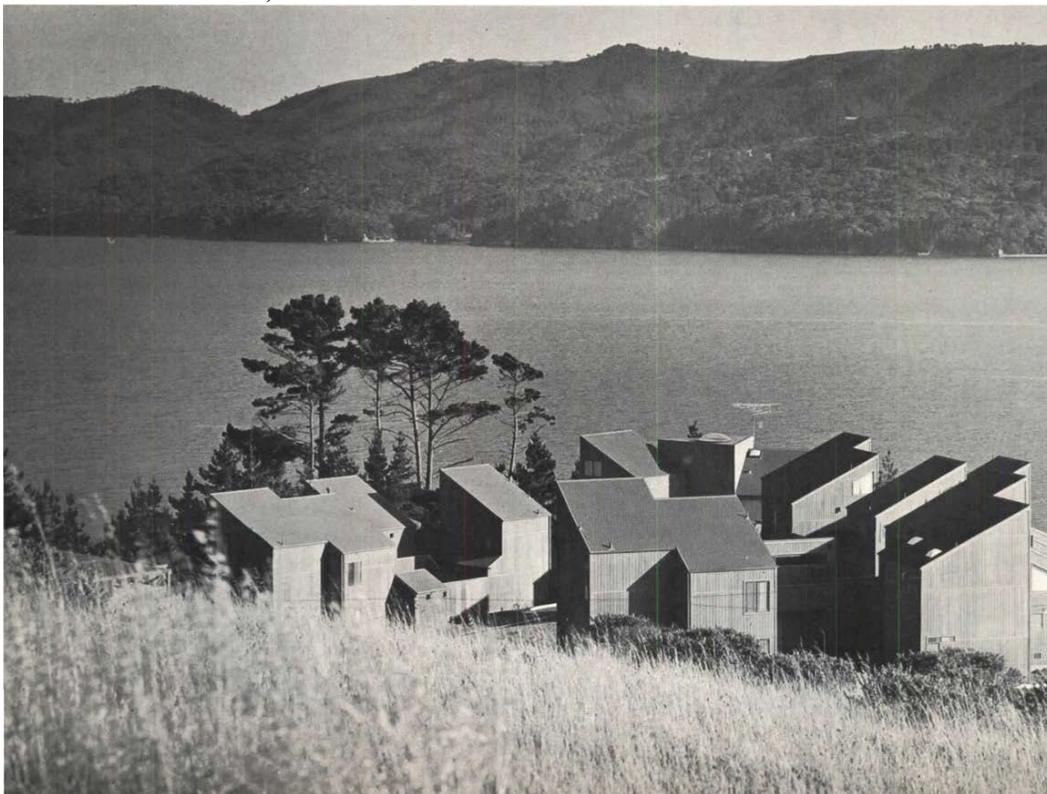
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Figure 10: A Group of “Punks” at Tomales Bay, *Argus Courier*, January 26, 1978, 2A.



Figure 11: Caves buildings viewed from above, overlooking Tomales Bay. Circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



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Figure 12: From left to right, Red, Green, and White Caves buildings. Circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.

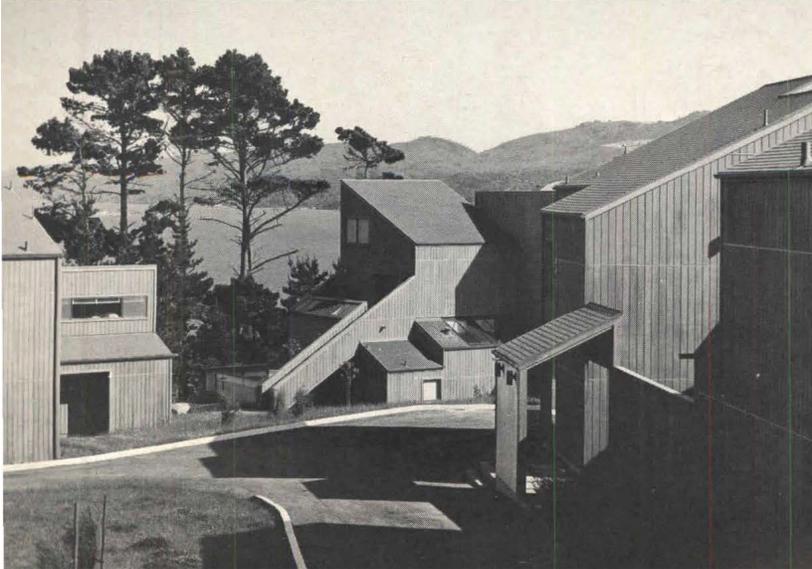
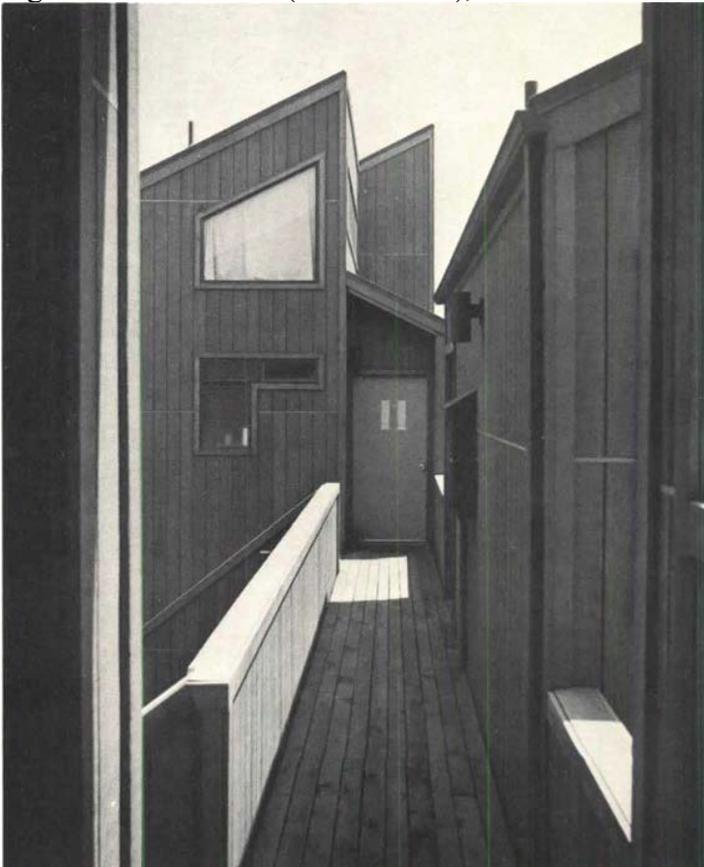


Figure 13: Red Caves (Resource 11), Circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



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Figure 14: Circa 1970 photo of Blue Caves (Resource 10). "A City Someday," *San Rafael Independent-Journal*, April 2, 1970, 28.

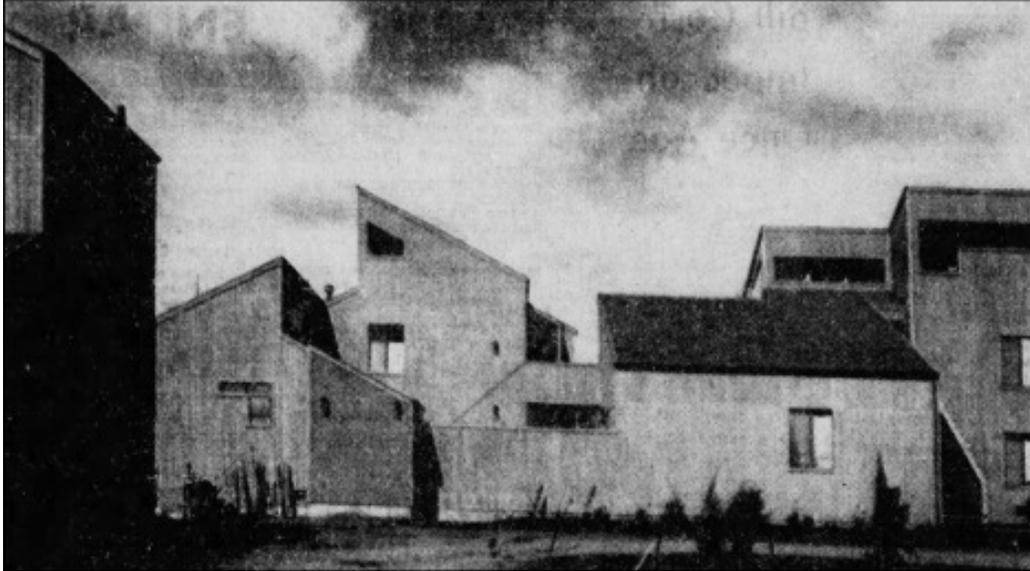


Figure 15: Southern exterior of Blue Caves (Resource 10), Circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.



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Figure 16: Synanon member pictured in the loft of unidentified Cave, Circa 1970. *Architectural Forum*, November 1970.

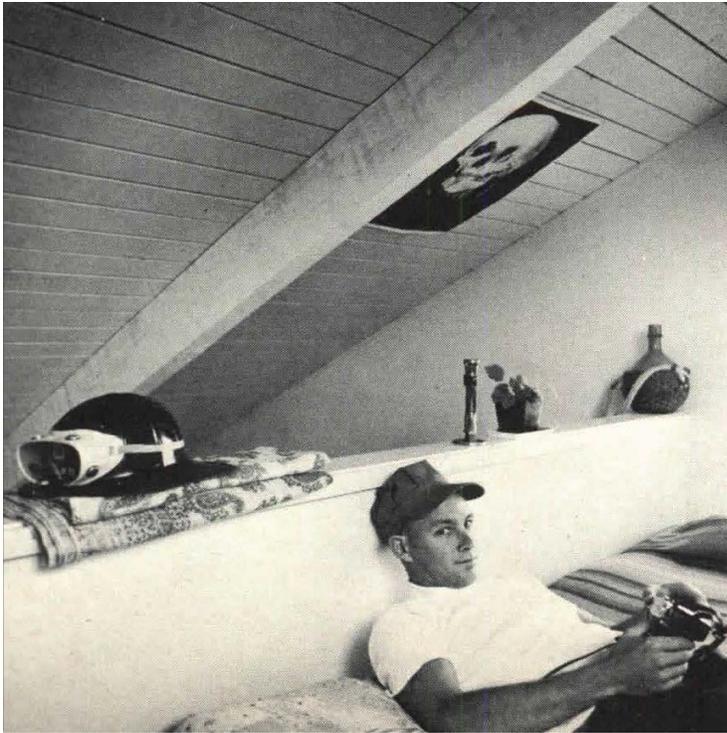
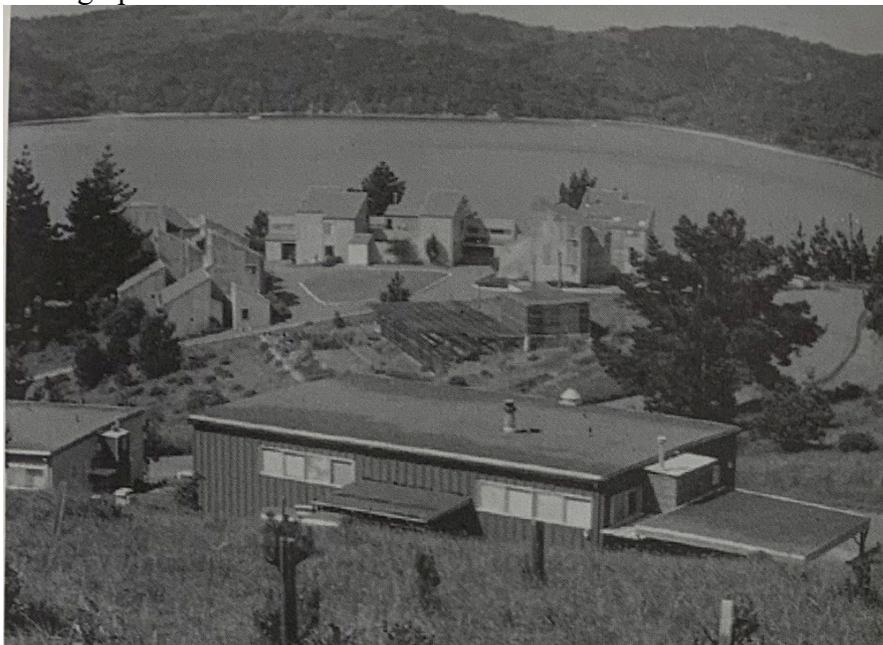


Figure 17: Circa 1979 photo depicted Super Caves A and B in foreground and Caves buildings in background. From *The Rise and Fall of Synanon: A California Utopia* by Rod Janzen. Photographer Bob Goldfeder.



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Figure 18: Circa 1979 view of Caves buildings. Incomplete “town hall” building in foreground. Courtesy of MCCSHP Office.



Figure 19: Super Cave A (Resource 12), circa 1980. Courtesy MCCSHP Office.



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Figure 20: Super Cave C (Resource 14), circa 1979. Courtesy MCCSHP Office.



Figure 21: A-Frame “Cave” (Resource 7) ca. 1979. Courtesy MCCSHP Office



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Figure 22: Partners of KMD Architects, from left to right: Ellis Kaplan, Herbert McLaughlin Jr., and James R. Diaz. “Where Programming is the Design,” *AIA Journal* (April 1973), 39-47.

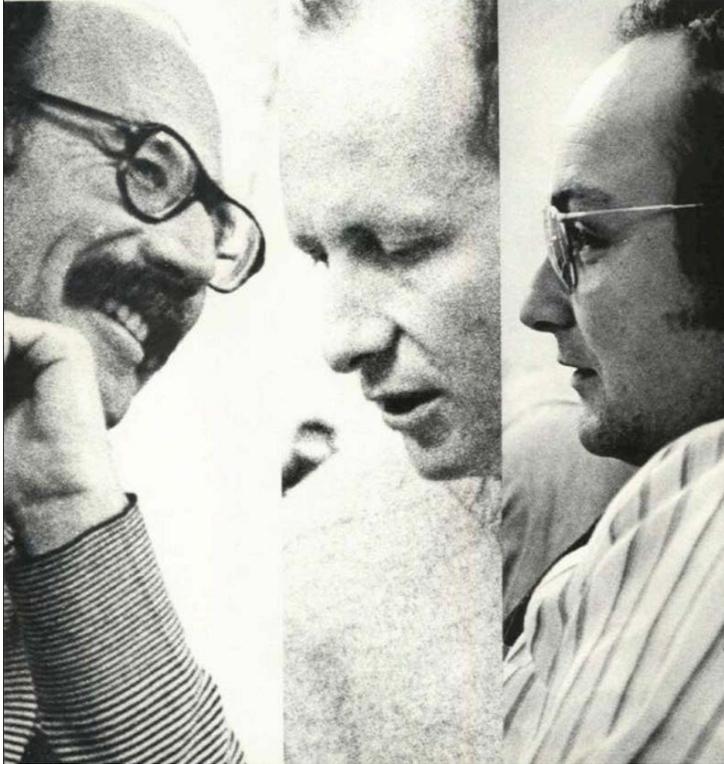


Figure 23: The Sea Ranch in Sonoma Valley, California is an excellent example of the Third Bay Tradition of architecture and served as inspiration for the Synanon Caves.



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Photo 1: General site view showing Station KPH Inn (Resource 1, NRHP 1989), with Pinecrest Cottage (Resource 3, NRHP 1989) partially visible in the trees at left. View northwest.



Photo 2: General site view showing paved internal roadway and Powerhouse (Resource 2, NRHP 1989) at right. View west.



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Photo 3. General site view showing paved internal roadway leading to the Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northwest.



Photo 4. View from cliff side overlooking A-Frame Cave (Resource 7) and Tomales Bay, as well as a small parking area and the internal roadway. View southeast.



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Photo 5. View of Green Caves (Resource 8) from interior roadway below. View northwest.



Photo 6. Westward view across the property toward the Caves complex.



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Photo 7. Hillside view across the property, overlooking the Super Caves. View southeast.



Photo 8. General site view depicting roadway to the Super Caves. Super Caves A and B (Resources 12 and 13) are at right and Super Cave C (Resource 14) is in the distance at left.



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Photo 9. Station KPH Inn/Marconi Hotel, (Resource 1, NRHP 1989) primary elevation.



Photo 10. Station KPH Inn/Marconi Hotel (Resource 1, NRHP 1989) rear elevation. View southeast.



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Photo 11. Station KPH Powerhouse, (Resource 2, NRHP 1989), view northeast.



Photo 12. Station KPH Powerhouse, (Resource 2, NRHP 1989), view southwest.



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Photo 13. Pinecrest Cottage, (Resource 3, NRHP 1989) primary elevation, view north.



Photo 14. Bayview Cottage, (Resource 4, NRHP 1989) primary elevation, view north.

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Photo 15. Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northwest.



Photo 16. Station KPH Operating Station (Resource 5, NRHP 1989), view northeast.

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Photo 17. Synanon-era garage (Resource 6) adjacent to Station KPH Operating Station, view southeast.



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Photo 18. A-Frame Cave (Resource 7), view southwest.



Photo 19. Caves complex from central courtyard with Red Caves at left, Green Caves at Center, White Caves at right. Blue caves are not depicted. View south.



Photo 20. Red Caves (Resource 11), view southeast.

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Photo 21. Red Caves (Resource 11), showing stairs to exterior second floor walkway. View east.



Photo 22. White Caves (Resource 9), view southwest.

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Photo 23. White Caves (Resource 9), view of second story walkway and entrances to units. View southeast.

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Photo 24. Blue Caves (Resource 10) from central courtyard, view northwest.



Photo 25. Blue caves (Resource 10) rear elevation from interior roadway, view southeast.

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Photo 26. Entrance to lobby and administrative area housed in Blue Caves (Resource 10). 2005 addition with arched roof depicted at right. View southwest.



Photo 27. Green Caves (Resource 8) view southeast.

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Photo 28. Green Caves (Resource 8) view southwest.



Photo 29. Room 201 in Green Caves (Resource 8), depicting open ceilings, exposed rafter beams, and tongue-in-groove boards.

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Photo 30. Room 201 in Blue Caves (Resource 10), showing an alternative room design with the same open ceilings, exposed rafter beams, and tongue-in-groove boards.



Photo 31. Stairs leading to an original loft space in the White Caves (Resource 9).

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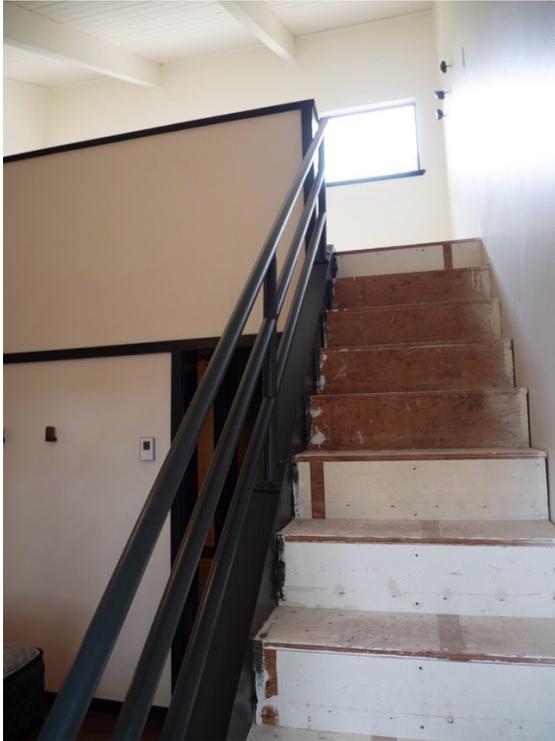


Photo 32. View of loft space in the White Caves (Resource 9).



Photo 33. View of original Synanon tile shower mosaic in the Green Caves (Resource 8).

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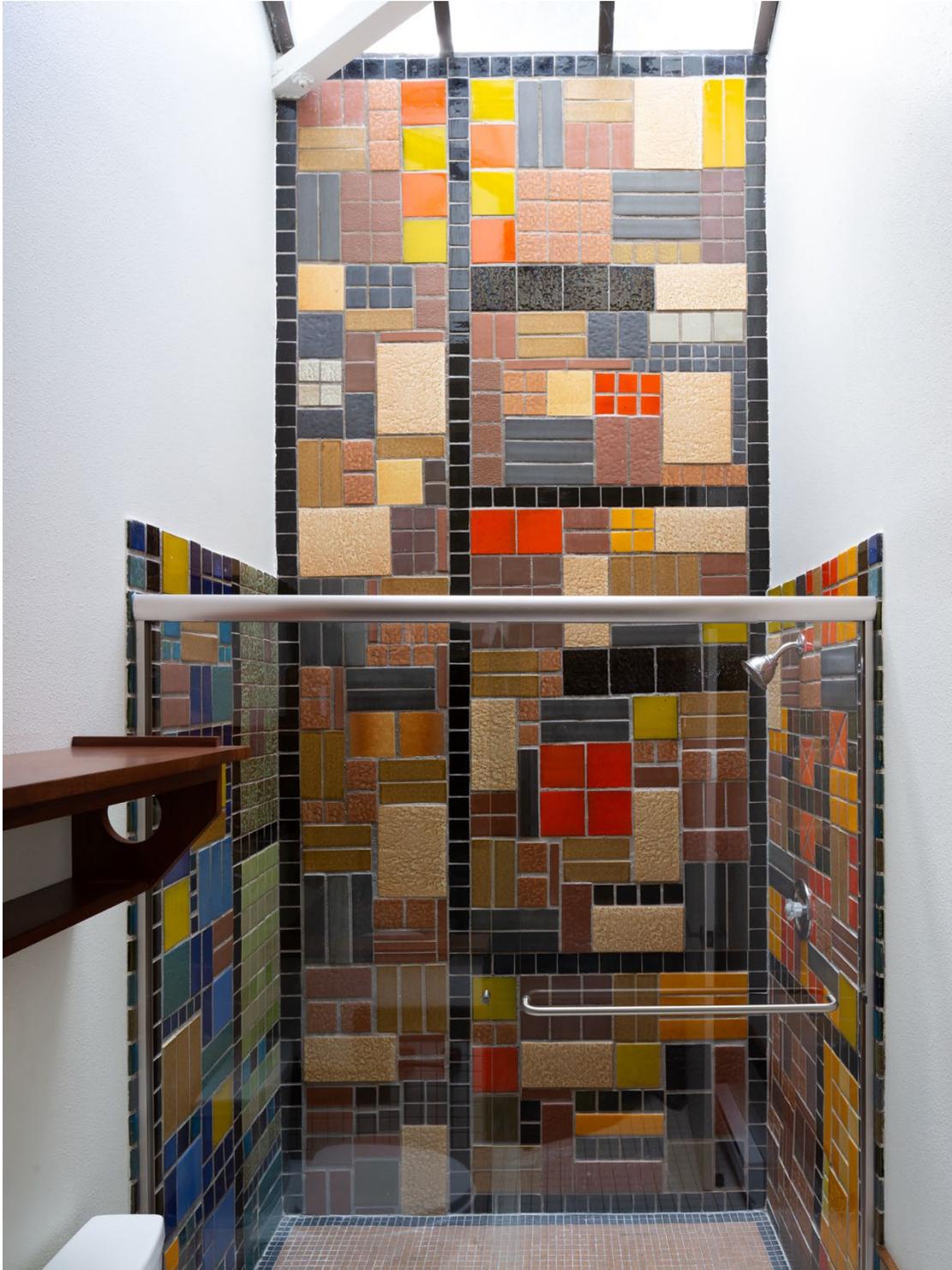


Photo 34. Super Cave A (Resource 12), view southeast.

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Photo 35. Super Cave B (Resource 13), view east.



Photo 36. Super Cave C (Resource 14), view northwest.

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Photo 37. Super Cave C (Resource 14), view southeast.



Photo 38. Water tank and small shed (Resource 15), view north.

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Photo 39. Thickened Sound building (Resource 16), view east.

