



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property: Pond Farm Pottery
City, State: Guerneville, Sonoma County, California
Period of Significance: 1942-1980
NHL Criteria: 1, 2
NHL Criterion Exception: 8
NHL Theme: III: Expressing Cultural Values
1. Educational and Intellectual Current
2. Visual and Performing Arts
6. Popular and Traditional Culture
Previous Recognition: 2014, National Register of Historic Places
Historic American Landscapes Survey (No. CA-95)

National Historic Context: American Studio Pottery Movement, 1940s to 1980s

National Significance:

- Pond Farm Pottery is significant for its association with the mid-twentieth century American Studio Pottery Movement and represents the life, work, and personal philosophy of nationally significant Bauhaus-trained master potter Marguerite Wildenhain. Pond Farm Pottery served for decades as the studio and home of Marguerite Wildenhain, who contributed artistically, philosophically, and pedagogically to the American Studio Pottery Movement between her arrival at Pond Farm in 1942 and her retirement in 1980.
- Wildenhain was a major figure during the American Studio Pottery Movement's formative years, providing a voice for American pottery on an international stage alongside the leading figures of the British Studio Pottery Movement and the Japanese Mingei Movement.



- It was while living and working at Pond Farm that Wildenhain produced the bulk of her work, shaped the movement’s discourse, and taught students in her intensive and widely renowned “summer sessions,” which were important in introducing Bauhaus principles of form, technique, and artistry into American ceramics.
- The presence of the studio and Wildenhain’s personal residence, originally constructed by Wildenhain and Gordon Herr, along with her extensive landscaping measures reflect Wildenhain’s philosophy of complete self-sufficiency. The presence of many of the original kick wheels of Wildenhain’s own design, along with several of her original workstations, provide insight into both her artistic technique and approach to teaching.
- As her home and studio for over three decades, Pond Farm Pottery is the only property with such an undeniably deep connection to Wildenhain and her work and the best property to exemplify the development of the American Studio Pottery Movement in the mid-twentieth century.

Integrity:

- Pond Farm Pottery retains a high degree of integrity in both the built environment and the landscape. Pond Farm Pottery retains its original location and configuration within the isolated setting of the Austin Creek State Recreation Area.
- The barn and residence have their original design configuration as created by architect Albert Lanier in a 1960s remodel of both buildings, though vegetation growth obscures former lines of sight between them. A stabilization and weatherization project in 2016 replaced some of the original redwood shingles on the barn and residence with cedar, replaced the roof shingles on both buildings, and put new supportive structures in place. Providing a strong sense of the property’s original feeling, the interior of the barn, which served as the studio of Pond Farm Pottery, retains thirteen of Wildenhain’s original kick wheels and many of the original workstations designed by Wildenhain which reflect her Bauhaus training.
- While the overall exterior is unchanged, the interior of the guesthouse has significant alterations as the result of renovations to create a residence for State Parks staff and exterior additions for the purpose of ADA compliance.
- The presence of intact historic buildings and landscape features, and the property’s location within a state recreation area aiding in the lack of surrounding development, ensures the property retains strong integrity from the period of significance of the American Studio Pottery Movement and Marguerite Wildenhain.

Owner of Property: California State Parks

Acreage of Property: 34.3 Acres

Origins of Nomination: California State Parks requested the preparation of a National Historic Landmark nomination for Pond Farm Pottery. Dr. Anne Lindsay of the California State University, Sacramento Public History MA program recruited a class of public history master’s students to conduct the necessary research and write the nomination. Following the class’s conclusion, Dr. Lindsay and a team of public history master’s students continued the work of research and writing through the rest of the process.



Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: The mainstream narratives of the American Studio Pottery Movement have traditionally focused on the work of male potters. The designation of Pond Farm Pottery as a National Historic Landmark will recognize and highlight the role of women in shaping trends in artistic expression, teaching, and the public discourse of the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of August 21, 2023):

- Rachel Norton, Executive Director, California State Parks Foundation
- Michele Luna, Executive Director, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (2022)
- Billie Sessions, Professor Emeritus, Department of Art, California State University San Bernardino
- Frank Philipps, Studio Potter
- Justin Lindenberg, Executive Director, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (2023)

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Add the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts as a comparative property.
- Bauhaus is an approach to design, not a style so that should be clarified.
- Reconsider if the guest house is a contributing resource because it appears to have been altered since the period of significance. Description of building does not support high integrity.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Pond Farm Pottery in Sonoma County, California, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Pond Farm Pottery in Sonoma County, California, as a National Historic Landmark.