

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.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Baker House

Other names/site number: Abell House (preferred), Sea Ranch Binker Barn

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 35292 Timber Ridge Road

City or town: The Sea Ranch State: California County: Sonoma

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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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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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Redwood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located in The Sea Ranch, a planned, unincorporated Sonoma County community, Abell House is an approximately 1,700-square-foot, two-story dwelling known locally as a Sea Ranch Binker Barn. It is constructed of post-and-beam timber framing over a concrete perimeter foundation, with vertical redwood siding, and composition shingle roofing materials. The plan is generally rectangular, with a primary gable and secondary shed roof forms, large picture windows and sliding glass doors, and redwood decks at the front and rear of the home. The setting is a heavily wooded 1.5-acre lot sloping to the west with distant views of the Pacific Ocean. The property includes one contributing building, the residence, and two noncontributing buildings—a garage and an office/studio, both built after the period of significance. The property retains historic integrity.

Narrative Description

House

Contributing Building

Exterior

Completed in 1968, the 3-bedroom, 2-bath residence with approximately 1,700 square feet of interior space on three levels has a generally rectangular plan with a primary gable roof and secondary shed roof forms clad in gray composition shingles. Siding consists of vertically

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oriented tongue-and-groove redwood boards weathered to a light gray color. Construction type is wood frame post-and-beam supported by a concrete perimeter foundation. Close eaves are trimmed in copper flashing with copper gutters and downspouts. Fenestration consists of fixed and sliding metal frame windows, sliding glass doors, and wood frame doors with single inset panes of glass. The main entry is located on the east elevation and is accessed beneath a shed roof porch supported by wood posts resting on a concrete pad. An L-shaped bay window or “saddlebag” with a shed roof and a series of large, fixed-frame and sliding picture windows projects from the west and south elevations.

Two redwood decks extend outward from the front (east) and rear (west) elevations of the residence. Both decks have built-in bench seating and outer edges clad in vertically oriented redwood boards weathered to a light gray color matching the siding of the residence. Integrated into the rear deck is an outdoor hot tub, as well as a wood frame pedestrian bridge leading to the noncontributing office/studio located further west and north.

The front or east façade of the residence consists of vertical redwood siding below the primary side gable and secondary shed roof forms. The entrance to the residence is located on the left side of the façade beneath the shed roof porch, which is supported by three, square, redwood posts. The right side of this façade contains a large window-wall with metal frame fixed units and a sliding glass door leading out onto a redwood deck. This façade contains three skylights: two rectangular skylights on the gable portion of the roof and one square skylight within the shed roof entry porch.

The rear or west façade also consists of vertical redwood siding beneath the primary side gable and secondary shed roof forms. The ground floor contains one wood frame door with inset glass on the left side of the façade, a sliding glass door in the approximate middle of the façade, and the L-shaped bay window or saddlebag containing a series of three fixed-frame, picture windows on the right side of the façade. Both doors lead out onto a redwood deck.

The second floor of this façade contains a metal frame sliding window on the left side generally centered above the sliding glass door, and two, fixed-frame windows generally centered above the bay window. Two rectangular skylights are located on the primary gable portion of the roof and two, smaller square skylights are located near the peak of the gable roof, over the third-level lofts.

The south façade consists of vertical redwood siding on the gable end of the primary gable roof form. A portion of the L-shaped saddlebag, a continuation of the bay window which wraps around from the west façade, can be found on the left side of this façade. It contains two fixed frame picture windows on the left, and forms the base of the exterior chimney on the right. The chimney is comprised of a cylindrical metal stack that rises from the base in the approximate center of this façade. The right side of the second floor of this façade contains a metal frame sliding window.

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The north façade consists of vertical redwood siding below the secondary shed roof form, with the primary gable end above and beyond. The first floor of this façade contains a metal frame sliding window on the left, and two smaller, fixed-frame windows of differing sizes on the right. Centered on the gable end of the second floor of this façade is a metal frame sliding window with a fixed frame window above, which rises to the peak of the roof.

Interior

The interior consists of a series of both single- and double-height rooms arranged around a central staircase leading to the second floor, with an exposed post-and-beam structure and cross-bracing of Douglas fir. A brick fireplace is located on the southern wall of the living room, as is a large L-shaped window seat formed within the saddlebag. Sliding barn-style windows and doors can also be found throughout the interior. Two loft spaces located on a third level just beneath the peak of the gable roof are accessible by wood ladders from the second-floor hallway and the smaller bedroom.

Garage

Noncontributing Building

Completed in 1973, after the period of significance, the approximately 550 square foot two-car garage is located about 50 feet northeast of the residence. The building is wood framing over a concrete slab foundation. The garage is rectangular in plan with a saltbox-style roof clad in gray composition shingles that match those of the residence, and siding clad in vertically oriented redwood boards weathered to a light gray color, similar in style and color to the main residence. The garage is accessed by a wood frame pedestrian door located to the left of the automobile door. Windows are limited to two metal frame fixed units, one each at the peak of the east and west gable ends, and a single metal-frame sliding unit on the western elevation equipped with a sliding barn-style wood door.

Office/Studio

Noncontributing Building

Completed in 2008, after the period of significance, the approximately 600 square foot two-story office/studio is located about 30 feet northwest of the residence. The building is comprised of wood framing over a concrete slab foundation. The second floor of the office/studio is connected to the rear deck of the residence via pedestrian bridge.

The building itself is square in plan with a shed roof clad in composition shingles that match those of the residence, and siding clad in vertically oriented redwood boards weathered to a light gray color, similar in style and color to the siding of the main residence. Copper flashing is visible on the close eaves on the north and south elevations. A series of metal-frame fixed solarium-style windows are located on the south elevation of the second floor. Other windows are metal-frame fixed, casement, and sliding units. The main entry to the second floor office space is on the east elevation. This entry is recessed, and consists of a wood frame door with a single pane of inset glass. Two secondary entrances to the ground floor studio space are located on the north and south elevations, and consist of wood frame doors with clear glass panels, similar to those of the primary entrance.

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Alterations and Integrity

Abell House is one of the first Binker Barns to be constructed at Sea Ranch and retains an exceptionally high level of integrity. Where physical changes to this residence do exist, they are minor and sympathetic to the original design and to the core design principles of Sea Ranch. The outbuildings constructed on the property after the period of significance (1968) including the garage (1973) and office/studio (2008), are highly compatible with the residence while allowing it to read as a completely separate building.

Site Specific History and Alterations

A review of building permits and plans on file with the Sonoma County Building Department, as well as plans in the possession of the owner, provide a brief history of the original construction in 1968, subsequent changes to the residence between 1970 and 2007, as well as additions to the property that occurred between 1973 and 2008.¹

The residence at 35292 Timber Ridge Road was completed in 1968 according to plans prepared by MLTW/Moore Turnbull for the home's first owners, Mr. and Mrs. James Baker of Tiburon, California (**Figure 1, 2**).² The building contractor was Matthew Sylvia, who built many of the first homes at Sea Ranch, including Condominium 1 and the Hedgerow Houses. Available plans and permits indicate that minor changes have occurred to the residence after its completion in 1968. In 1970, the original owners had a redwood deck designed by MLTW/Moore Turnbull constructed at the front (east) elevation of the home, and they replaced an original dining room window with a sliding glass door to access this deck.

In 1973, a detached, two-car garage was completed to the northeast of the residence by the second owners, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon E. Ladke. In 1981, another redwood deck was constructed at the rear (west) elevation of the residence, and an original window was replaced with a sliding glass door to access this deck. The rear deck was extended further west and north in 1991 to provide space for a hot tub, and the downstairs bathroom was remodeled.³

In 1995, the original 0.5-acre lot at 35292 Timber Ridge Road was officially consolidated with the adjacent, 1-acre undeveloped lot to the west at 35369 Crows Nest Road by the property's third owner, Judith A. Garza. The consolidated lots form the entirety of the nominated 1.5-acre property. In 2007, the original redwood shake roof of the residence was replaced with composition shingles.⁴

¹ Sonoma County Building Department, Building Permits on file for APN 155-030-023, 1968-2009.

² MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Final Submittal Plans, *House for Mr. & Mrs. James Baker*, May 28, 1968 (Permit #A-021569).

³ Sonoma County Building Department, Building Permits on file for APN 155-030-023, 1968-2008.

⁴ Ibid.

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The final change to the property occurred in 2008 when the office/studio was constructed to the northwest of the residence, including a bridge connecting it to the rear deck, completed by the fourth owners, Mr. and Mrs. Marty Abell, according to their own plans.⁵

Integrity

Location. The property has remained in its original location since 1968 when it was initially constructed. As such, the property retains a high level of integrity of location.

Design. The design of the residence, including the composition of elements that constitute its form, plan, space, structure, and style, remain essentially intact from the time when it was designed by William Turnbull, Jr., with MLTW/Moore Turnbull. Minor changes to the design, including the replacement of two windows on the east and west sides of the residence with sliding glass doors, as well as redwood deck extensions in these areas, have not detracted substantially from the original design of the property. Overall, the property maintains a high level of integrity of design.

Setting. Changes to the setting of the property that were completed after the period of significance include the construction of the detached, two-car garage in 1973, and the construction of the office/studio in 2008. Both of these outbuildings were designed and constructed to be architecturally compatible with the residence while allowing it to read as a completely separate building, thereby minimizing effects to the setting. Consolidation with the adjacent property in 1995 resulted in a minimal change to the setting of the original property as it has remained undeveloped and wooded since 1968 when the residence was built. The consolidation of the lots was intended to prevent another house from being constructed to the west of the subject property, thereby preserving the original viewshed from the residence towards the Pacific Ocean. Overall, the residence maintains a high degree of integrity of setting.

Materials. The exterior materials of the residence, including vertically oriented redwood siding weathered to a natural gray color, have remained intact since it was originally constructed. A small number of boards on the north side of the residence were replaced in-kind since 2016. They are in the process of weathering to a light gray that will eventually match the color of the rest of the house. The original, redwood shake roof was replaced with composition shingles. Although they differ in materiality from the original, they do not substantially detract from the overall design or composition of the residence. Overall, the residence maintains a sufficient degree of material integrity to convey its significance.

Workmanship. Examples of workmanship exhibited by the exposed, post-and-beam construction on the interior, and the rough-hewn redwood siding on the exterior, have remained intact since the residence was completed in 1968. The original building contractor, Matthew Sylvia, was well known and respected for his quality of workmanship. Overall, the residence maintains a high degree of integrity of workmanship.

⁵ Ibid. Mr. Abell was an architectural design student of Turnbull at University of California (UC) Berkeley in the fall of 1968 at the time the residence was built.

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Feeling. As the property remains largely unchanged since it was originally constructed in 1968, including compatible outbuilding additions completed after this time, the property continues to evoke a respect for nature and harmony with the landscape. Overall, the residence maintains a high degree of integrity of feeling.

Association. The property generally retains its period appearance and retains a high degree of integrity of 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1968

Significant Dates

1968

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Turnbull, Jr., William, FAIA

Sylvia Construction

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Abell House is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction known locally as a Sea Ranch Binker Barn, and represents the work of master California architect William Turnbull, Jr., FAIA, when he was a founding partner with the architecture firm of MLTW/Moore Turnbull. Completed in 1968, this single-family residence was designed to emphasize harmony with the landscape realized by borrowing from local vernacular building forms and native materials, as well as a sense of the great expanse of nature outdoors matched with a sense of visual and spatial adventure indoors. Winning many architectural design awards and general acclaim in local and national publications, the Binker Barn quickly became synonymous with the iconic image of Sea Ranch. Its Shed Style architecture was widely imitated throughout the country in the 1960s and 1970s for both residential and commercial buildings. This property, in particular, is the embodiment of that style and is representative of an important movement in Modern architecture. The period of significance is 1968, the year of construction.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Sea Ranch is a residential development project begun in 1963 by Oceanic Properties, Inc., the Hawaiian real estate subsidiary of Castle & Cooke, to develop a radically innovative residential community on the California coast, 100 miles north of San Francisco. The project was initiated by architect and developer Alfred Boeke, Vice-President and Planning Director for Oceanic Properties, after he flew over the ten-mile-long coastside Ohlson sheep ranch, Rancho del Mar, which was then for sale. Boeke persuaded Oceanic Properties to purchase the property that became known as Sea Ranch. As project director and client, he hired professionals of a then-unprecedented wide range of disciplines: foresters, grassland advisors, engineers, attorneys, hydrologists, climatologists, geologists, geographers, demographers, graphic artists, and public relations and marketing personnel. Together they formed a planning team that spent over one year developing the principles and plan that became Sea Ranch. Monthly meetings were held to discuss the contributions of each consultant. These discussions gradually evolved into the concept and all the details of a completed project ready for construction, sales, management, and maintenance. Condominium 1 was to be the prototype building and foundational icon for Sea Ranch.⁶

Very early in his planning, Boeke hired landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, who had studied at Harvard University under Walter Gropius and Christopher Tunnard, and worked with Thomas Church, before opening his own firm in 1949. Boeke and Halprin agreed to take a whole new approach to land planning at Sea Ranch, one which reflected the ecology and aesthetics of the

⁶ Pamela Joan Carlson, "Condominium 1," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005, 8-2.

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region. What Boeke wanted most was to avoid suburbanization of the area. Boeke's next step was to hire Joseph Esherick, preeminent architect of the Second Bay Region style, and the emerging Berkeley firm of Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker (MLTW). Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, and William Turnbull met while architecture students at Princeton University in the 1950s, and had formed a close friendship. In 1958, William Wurster, dean of the University of California (UC), Berkeley school of architecture, invited Moore to join the faculty. Turnbull, originally from New York, and Lyndon, from Los Angeles, soon joined Moore in California. Lyndon also taught at UC Berkeley; Turnbull worked in the San Francisco office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Soon they began moonlighting on small projects and, joined by Richard Whitaker, a former Berkeley graduate student, they formed MLTW in 1962.⁷

The firm had designed only a few modest houses and some larger unbuilt projects when it came to Boeke's attention. Esherick was in charge of planning a model series of demonstration houses that were to be tucked into a cypress windrow, while Moore and his partners were in charge of designing a model set of clustered units on the ocean's edge. The two firms worked independently, and the results of their work were very similar in design. Together they helped establish the Sea Ranch idiom as an international mode.⁸

Ground was broken in 1964 for three example projects: the ten-unit condominium (Condominium 1) by MLTW, which prepared a plan for eleven more to be strung along the south shore of the site; a group of six "Hedgerow Houses" by Joseph Esherick in a cypress-lined meadow; and a store near the condominium, also by Esherick. The architects, while all individualists, shared a belief in the basic precepts of the Bay Region Style, one of the nation's strongest regional traditions. The precepts included a close relationship to nature and the use of natural materials, windows placed to maximize light and views, a strong indoor-outdoor flow, and a general emphasis on buildings as human habitation rather than as objects.

While still at Princeton University, Moore, Lyndon and Turnbull had begun to develop a common set of imagery in which Moore stated:

Our work at MLTW was based on two ideas. The first was the idea of the four-columned canopy that delimited interior space by pinpointing a particular, precise, and central spot on the planet. The second was the saddlebag: a room, bay alcove, or window seat attached to the main spine or central space, making an extended place to inhabit with your body or imagination.⁹

Spec II House (Binker Barn)

Spec II House was Turnbull's second attempt at designing a prototype single-family home for speculative development at Sea Ranch. Spec I House was never built. Spec III House was completed as a prototype and never replicated as a viable housing option. Spec II House was

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 8-5.

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lauded as both critically and commercially successful. Seventeen versions of this gabled house design were built at Sea Ranch between 1968 and 1971, all with the same basic layout:

A Spec II House is characterized by light-filled, double-height areas and spatial continuity from small enclosures into more open rooms, coupled with views to the outside, giving the small house a sense of expansiveness. Exposed cross-bracing, Douglas fir, solid-wood walls, plywood cabinetry, and sliding barn-style windows and doors all contribute to the house's refined rustic appeal. Upstairs, the bedrooms, bath, and small, sky-lit loft[s]—tucked under the gable's peak and accessed by ladder[s] only—offer a variety of accommodations. The homes were equipped with brick fireplaces for cool evenings and a front porch overlooking either the ocean or a redwood forest, depending on where the house was located. In the living room, an L-shaped saddlebag forms a corner window seat for reading or contemplating nature. It positions the user in the immediate zone between indoors and out, offering the comforts of hearth and shelter alongside the rugged beauty of the coastal landscape. The exterior of Spec II House is sheathed in vertical board natural redwood, further diminishing the distinction between indoors and out; the exterior has weathered to a Sea Ranch silver-grey over time, giving it the appearance of a building that has always existed in the landscape.¹⁰

The Spec II House gained the nickname Binker Barn for its barn-like appearance, as well as for Sea Ranch real estate agent Sanford “Snap” Binker who is credited with the idea of a repetitive house type and sold many of the first ones built. Binker and builder Matthew Sylvia built the first demonstration examples on a site on the Sea Ranch meadow. Subsequent units were built to order by individual clients.¹¹

The Spec II House/Binker Barn concept was designed by William Turnbull while still in partnership with Charles Moore at the firm of MLTW/Moore Turnbull, and was his first step at Sea Ranch working completely within forms that are related to the traditional vernacular of farm buildings (see [The Barn Typology at The Sea Ranch](#)). They were an effort to develop a building type that could be used for various sites and situations at Sea Ranch, including an open meadow, the forest, or adjacent to a stand of trees. The Binker Barns' success in siting lies in their form, which seems to settle into each of their various locations. The form has a simple dominant volume supplemented by bays and porches that slope out to connect to the land. The large gabled volume with attached sheds makes for a hierarchical structure, whereby the smaller pieces relate to the size of the people inhabiting the house while also helping to connect to the ground, sloping out towards the surroundings.¹² The lean-to at one end of the gabled volume could be variously used as a carport or storage shed, or enclosed to form a third bedroom.

¹⁰ William Turnbull, Jr., *William Turnbull, Jr., Buildings in the Landscape*, Architectural Monograph (San Francisco, California), vol. 3 (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2000).

¹¹ Donlyn Lyndon and Jim Alinder, *The Sea Ranch, Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place and Community on the Northern California Coast* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2014).

¹² Ibid.

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Like the design of Condominium 1 before it, the Binker Barns were built like traditional barns, with heavy timber framing, and walls made of planks covered with redwood siding. Their structure is exposed inside, and the shell is articulated by framing members that hold everything in place and modulate the inner surfaces. The outsides are simple skins wrapped to protect against the weather, except for the porches, which provide places of shelter near the entries. The Binker Barns share with Condominium 1 a sense that the experience of the great expanse of the meadows, forest, and open ocean outside can be complemented by visual and spatial adventure inside the volume as well. The inclusion of the projecting L-shaped saddlebag window bay provides an intimate space that opens the house to the outdoors beyond. The basic plan of the Binker Barns was approved in 1967 by the Sea Ranch Design Committee, which allowed individual owners to start construction much more quickly than they could with custom home designs. Although the basic design of the home was preapproved by the committee, the committee members retained oversight of the final siting.¹³

The first Binker Barns were completed in 1968, and by 1971, seventeen had been built on the open meadows and within the redwood forests at Sea Ranch. Although the Binker Barn design proved adaptable to the particulars of any chosen site at Sea Ranch, speculative development decreased sharply in the early 1970s as rising land prices made the initial costs prohibitive to many buyers, and custom construction became more attractive for the developer. In addition, a moratorium imposed by the California State Coastal Commission on new coastal construction effectively halted almost all development at Sea Ranch until 1978.¹⁴

The last of the Binker Barns were completed when only 50 homes existed at Sea Ranch, and they, along with Condominium 1, quickly became the iconic image of Sea Ranch. The first Binker Barns initially sold for approximately \$25,000, and 50 years later, their relative rarity and desirability have pushed their prices past \$750,000.¹⁵

The Binker Barn design garnered critical acclaim in national publications such as *Architectural Record* and *Sunset* in the early 1970s. *Sunset's AIA Western Homes Awards* assigned the Binker Barn an Honor Award in 1971, along with two other state entries, and *Architectural Record* awarded the Binker Barns at Sea Ranch with its Record House of 1973 Award, along with 20 other national entries (**Figure 3, 4**).

Due to widespread readership of these and other design publications throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, the architectural style exemplified by the design of the Binker Barns, as well as that of Condominium 1 and the Hedgerow Houses at Sea Ranch, became known collectively as Shed Style architecture, a style which became widely imitated throughout the country for both residential and commercial buildings during this time.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Binker Barns: A Legacy for the Coast," *Independent Coast Observer*, March 15, 2013.

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The 1971 *Sunset's AIA Western Homes Honor Award* stated about Binker Barns:

They reflect the agrarian heritage of California's northern coast. Within their deceptively simple and rugged exteriors is a surprising variety of spaces. With window seats, lofts, and a dormitory this house can sleep crowds, yet there are only two conventional bedrooms.¹⁶ The barn-house offers a sense of escape from the city. It is a place for playfulness. There are sliding wooden barn windows, ladders to the lofts, windows in the ceiling. The house was designed with modifications to suit both redwood forested slopes and the windy coast.¹⁷

The 1973 *Architectural Record* article provided similar praise for the Binker Barn, its Record House of that year, by stating;

The basic notion is simplicity itself: a barn-like space with a plan that can be flipped and with an appended lean-to whose function is variable. The working out of the notion, though assures that simplicity does not lead to dullness.... The details are simple, the rough-sawn boards are left unfinished, and the heavy framing members stand fully exposed. Outside, this way of building produces an effect that is downright modest, recalling simple rural structures.¹⁸

The Sea Ranch Binker Barn was also locally recognized in 1973 by the Sea Ranch Association under its design citation jury made up of two architects and a landscape architect—Vernon DeMars, FAIA, Elisabeth K. Thompson, FAIA, and Edward A. Williams, FASLA, who stated:

The Binker Barns are indigenous in feeling, with exceptional adaptability to a variety of sites, this design seems to have worked out successfully whether under the trees, on the hillsides, or out in the open meadow. The contrast of horizontal lines with the vertically-laid [*sic*] siding is a pleasant visual reflection of natural horizontals and verticals. Its rough simplicity fits into the character of the land as a good barn building should.¹⁹

The Turnbull-designed Binker Barn was once again cited by The Sea Ranch Association in its 1984 publication, *Soundings*, as an important stop on a self-guided architectural design tour by stating the following:

These barns, both inside and out, are evocative of the working building form of this region, an example of which still functions on The Sea Ranch: the stable. Within this bold, clean structure, spaces are carved to provide a low-ceilinged hearth, a soaring dining room, a sunny window seat, and intriguing sleeping lofts. The planes of the roofs and walls make crisp shadows in the sun and are reassuring in fog and storm. There are

¹⁶ While the standard Binker Barn had two bedrooms, both upstairs, Abell House has three, as the lean-to on the first floor was designed to contain a third bedroom.

¹⁷ "Name for it is Barn-House," AIA Western Home Awards, Honor Award, *Sunset*, October 1971.

¹⁸ "Sea Ranch, CA," Record Houses, *Architectural Record*, Mid-May 1973.

¹⁹ "Sea Ranch Homes Cited for Suitability," *Independent Coast Observer*, February 2, 1973.

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17 barns altogether, dispersed from the south to the middle of the Sea Ranch. Viewed from bluff, road, or across the meadows, these barns belong to the land.²⁰

In *Parallel Utopias: The Quest for Community—The Sea Ranch, California* (1995), author Richard Sexton noted:

The Barn House design represents an evolution from the Sea Ranch style of modernist design tempered by the vernacular to outright vernacular-inspired architecture. Some of the most natural-looking buildings at Sea Ranch, the barn houses genuinely look as though they belong to the land.²¹

Donlyn Lyndon, former partner with MLTW, prepared an architectural walking tour and associated audio guide describing prominent architectural sites at The Sea Ranch for its fiftieth anniversary in 2014. Lyndon stated the following about one of the Binker Barns on the meadow across from Moonraker Recreation Center:

[This house] is a slightly remodeled Binker Barn house built in the early 70s by Matthew Sylvia, the builder for all the original buildings including Condominium 1, the Lodge, the Hedgerow Houses, Moonraker Recreation, the Barns and utility buildings built by Oceanic Properties. This house was designed by Bill Turnbull of MLTW/Moore Turnbull and is a good example of this house type which reaches back to vernacular forms and uses the barnlike structure to remarkably good effect. The pitch of the gable roof is steeper than on many others, and more in keeping with traditional forms. It gives a sharp discipline to the shape of the bay windows and shed roof extensions that happen around all sides of the house to capture outlook, provide porches, extra rooms, or storage, always connecting the central recognizable barn form back to the ground in ways that are particular to a site. There were 17 of these quote “Binker Barns,” named after the realtor Snap Binker with whom Matt Sylvia partnered in their development. Built on The Sea Ranch, they always stand in place on their sites nicely.²²

The Barn Typology at The Sea Ranch

The vernacular barn as a building type has a strong historical precedent on the northern California coast, and at The Sea Ranch in particular. The coastal barn type was one of the primary inspirations when MLTW designed Condominium 1 in 1964, as well as William Turnbull’s inspiration for his design of the Binker Barn/Spec II house type a few years later. The Sea Ranch retains at least three iconic, historic barns that date from the mid-to-late 1800s when the area was still a sheep and cattle ranch. The rustic, rough-hewn Black Point Barn (**Figure 5**) just northwest of Condominium 1 provides the last evidence of the landing and settlement known

²⁰ “Self-Guided Architectural Design Tour,” *Soundings*, Summer 1984.

²¹ Richard Sexton, *Parallel Utopias: The Quest for Community—The Sea Ranch, California*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995).

²² Donlyn Lyndon, *The Sea Ranch Audio Walking Tour, Architecture, Landscape, Intentions*, Segment C, Stop C13. Available online at: <http://www.tsra.org/news.php?viewStory=1940>, accessed June 15, 2018.

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as Bihler's Landing, named for William Bihler whose ranch once thrived in this area of the Pacific Coast in the mid-1800s.²³

About five miles further north is the large, white Knipp-Stengel Barn that stands prominently alongside Highway 1. It was built circa 1880 by Bihler's nephew, Chris Stengel, in partnership with Adam Knipp. Originally used as a cattle barn, then a dairy barn, and later a sheep barn, the building has evolved into a recreational building hosting theatrical events by the Sea Ranch Thespians, seasonal presentations of classic movies, and various social gatherings. The Knipp-Stengel Barn (**Figure 6**) and surrounding outbuildings, including a smaller hay barn built circa 1900, constitute a historic district that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. The National Register nomination notes that the Knipp-Stengel Barn, in particular, is symbolic of indigenous buildings of northern California upon which the renowned Sea Ranch design and philosophy are based.²⁴

William Turnbull, Jr., FAIA (1935-1997)

William Turnbull, Jr., was born in New York on April 1, 1935 and raised on a farm in Far Hills, New Jersey. Both his father and grandfather were architects; the latter, George B. Post, was the architect of the New York Stock Exchange and planner of Forest Hills Gardens, and in 1911 won the gold medal from the American Institute of Architects. Turnbull studied architecture at Princeton and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He returned to Princeton to receive his master's degree in 1959, studying under Louis I. Kahn and producing a thesis on the redevelopment of Ellis Island. For this thesis, he received the AIA Student Medal. He befriended Charles Moore, a fellow graduate student at Princeton, and in 1960 moved to San Francisco, where he began working at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM). One of his achievements at SOM was the design of the Big Sur Coast Master Plan, which has been written into law and protects nearly 100 miles of pristine California coastline from development.²⁵

The San Francisco-based architectural firm of MLTW was formed in 1962. The firm was relatively short-lived, however, and by 1965 Donlyn Lyndon left to become chairman of the school of architecture at the University of Oregon in Eugene, and Richard Whitaker left to take on an appointment with the AIA in Washington, D.C. That same year, Moore and Turnbull formed the architectural firm of MLTW/Moore Turnbull, and the pair continued to work on numerous projects together. By 1970, the firm of MLTW/Turnbull Associates was formed, which evolved into William Turnbull Associates by 1984.²⁶

²³ Susan Clark, *The History of The Sea Ranch from the Pomo Indians to Present*, available online at <http://www.tsra.org/news.php?viewStory=139>, accessed June 15, 2018.

²⁴ Susan Clark Berlogar and Jan Strand, "Knipp-Stengel Barn," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1987, 8-1.

²⁵ *Inventory of the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1959-1997, Biographical Notes*, 2005, The Regents of the University of California, UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives, available online: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5s20213j/>, accessed June 15, 2018.

²⁶ William Turnbull, Jr., *Buildings in the Landscape*.

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Turnbull is perhaps best known for his design projects at The Sea Ranch, including Condominium 1 (1964), on which he collaborated with Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, and Richard Whitaker. Condominium 1 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its demonstration of how to build in harmony with the landscape by borrowing from local vernacular forms and native materials while remaining entirely Modern in style. Revolutionary in design and widely imitated, Condominium 1 helped redirect the course of contemporary architectural design in the United States, and represented a breakthrough in the Modern movement of the 1960s with its bold and innovative interpretation of Shed Style architecture.²⁷ The condominium drew high praise from critics and the general public alike, and the firm rapidly became well known.²⁸

Other prominent Turnbull designs at Sea Ranch include the Sea Ranch (Moonraker) Athletic Club 1 (1965), Spec II House/Binker Barn (1968), and various individual residences, including Johnson House (1965-73), Lawrence House (1967), Hines House (1968), Caygill House (1969), and Rush House (1970). Turnbull's last commission at The Sea Ranch was for the design of The Sea Ranch Employee Housing in 1986.²⁹

In addition to his work at Sea Ranch, Turnbull completed several other significant projects in the early 1970s, including Kresge College at the UC Santa Cruz (1973), and the Faculty Club at UC Santa Barbara (1971). During the late 1960s, Turnbull also began teaching several architecture and landscape architecture studio classes at UC Berkeley.³⁰

Turnbull's residential designs were featured in *Architectural Record* five times between 1967 and 1973, including the cover of the 1972 Record House issue for his design of a seaside home in Aptos, California, as well as the detailed article in the 1973 Record House issue on his design for the Sea Ranch Binker Barn.³¹ Turnbull's designs also received three Honor Awards or Awards of Merit in *Sunset's* AIA Western Home Awards issues during the same time period, including the four-level Lawrence House at Sea Ranch in the 1967 issue, and the Binker Barns in the 1971 issue.³²

Turnbull was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1976, and attended the American Academy in Rome in 1980. He was a sought-after speaker due to his quiet rejection of architectural fads such as Postmodernism and Deconstructionism, and he lectured at architecture schools throughout the country. At ease with projects of any scale, he continued to design modest, regionally inspired houses while also taking on large international projects, such as the American Club in Hong Kong.³³

²⁷ Carlson, "Condominium 1," 8-1.

²⁸ *Inventory of the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1959-1997*, Biographical Notes, 2005, The Regents of the University of California, UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives.

²⁹ William Turnbull, Jr., *Buildings in the Landscape*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Record Houses, *Architectural Record*, 1967-1973.

³² *Sunset*, AIA Western Home Awards, October 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1973.

³³ The Regents of the University of California, UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives, *Inventory of the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1959-1997*, Biographical Notes, 2005.

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William Turnbull designed nearly 300 buildings throughout the country during his prolific career spanning over 40 years. Known primarily for the design of high-end and meticulously crafted single-family residences that are sensitively rooted to their site, the vast majority of Turnbull's designs were constructed and still stand as a testament to his skill as a master architect.³⁴

William Turnbull passed away in 1997 at the relatively young age of 62. The two surviving architects of MLTW, Donlyn Lyndon and Richard Whitaker, no longer maintain architectural practices. Lyndon continues to teach on a part-time basis at UC Berkeley, while Whitaker serves as Director of Design Review at The Sea Ranch on a part-time basis.³⁵ After his death in 1997, Turnbull's legacy remains with the San Francisco-based architectural firm of Turnbull Griffin Haesloop.

Turnbull Design Recognitions, *Architectural Record* and *Sunset* (1967-1973)

Architectural Record, Record Houses

Karas House, Monterey, CA by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1967

McElrath House, Santa Cruz, CA, by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1969

Naff House, Pajaro Dunes House, Santa Cruz County, by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull,
Mid-May 1970

Private Residence, Aptos, CA, by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1972

Sea Ranch, CA, by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1973

Sunset, *The Magazine for Western Living*, AIA Western Home Awards

Award of Merit, "The Floor Rises in Four Levels," Sea Ranch, CA, Lawrence House, by
architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, October 1967

Honor Award, "Name for it is Barn-House," by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, October
1971

Award of Merit, "Sea Ranch Award Continues in All-Wood House," Whiteside House, by
architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, October 1973

³⁴ William Turnbull, Jr., *Buildings in the Landscape*.

³⁵ Carlson, "Condominium 1," 8-11.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Primary References

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Sonoma County Building Department. Building Permits on File for 35292 Timber Ridge Road, APN 155-030-023. 1968-2009.

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Turnbull, Jr., William. *William Turnbull, Jr., Buildings in the Landscape*. Architectural Monograph (San Francisco, California), vol. 3. San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2000.

Building Plans

Inventory of the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1959-1997. *Sea Ranch Spec II House: "Binker Barns," Sea Ranch, CA, 1965-1972*. The Regents of the University of California, UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives.

MLTW/Moore Turnbull. *House for Mr. & Mrs. James Baker*. Site Plan and Framing Plan, Floor Plans and Sections, and Elevations. May 28, 1968.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Abell House

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.5 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.691520 Longitude: -123.420344

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

The boundary includes the entire 1.5-acre property at 35292 Timber Ridge Road, APN 155-030-023, as recorded in the Sonoma County Recorder's Office. See Sketch and APN Maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

As drawn on the map filed with the Sonoma County Recorder's office. Property was enlarged in 1995 via consolidation with adjacent lot to maintain integrity of setting as discussed in the Narrative Description.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Brad Brewster
organization: Brewster Historic Preservation Consulting
street & number: 141 Pierce Street
city or town: San Francisco state: CA zip code: 94117
e-mail: brad.brewster@brewsterpreservation.com
telephone: (415) 519-0254
date: June 2018; Revised July 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Abell House
City or Vicinity: The Sea Ranch
County: Sonoma
State: California
Photographer: Brad Brewster
Date Photographed: February 2018

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

- 1 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking east
- 2 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking northeast
- 3 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking northwest
- 4 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking west
- 5 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking southwest
- 6 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking south
- 7 of 13 Exterior view of residence, looking southeast
- 8 of 13 Interior view of residence looking south from second floor to living room below
- 9 of 13 Interior view of residence looking north from second floor to dining room below
- 10 of 13 Interior view of residence looking south from second floor to third floor loft
- 11 of 13 Interior view of residence looking south at cross-bracing detail in living room
- 12 of 13 Exterior view of noncontributing office/studio and bridge looking northwest
- 13 of 13 Exterior view of noncontributing garage looking northwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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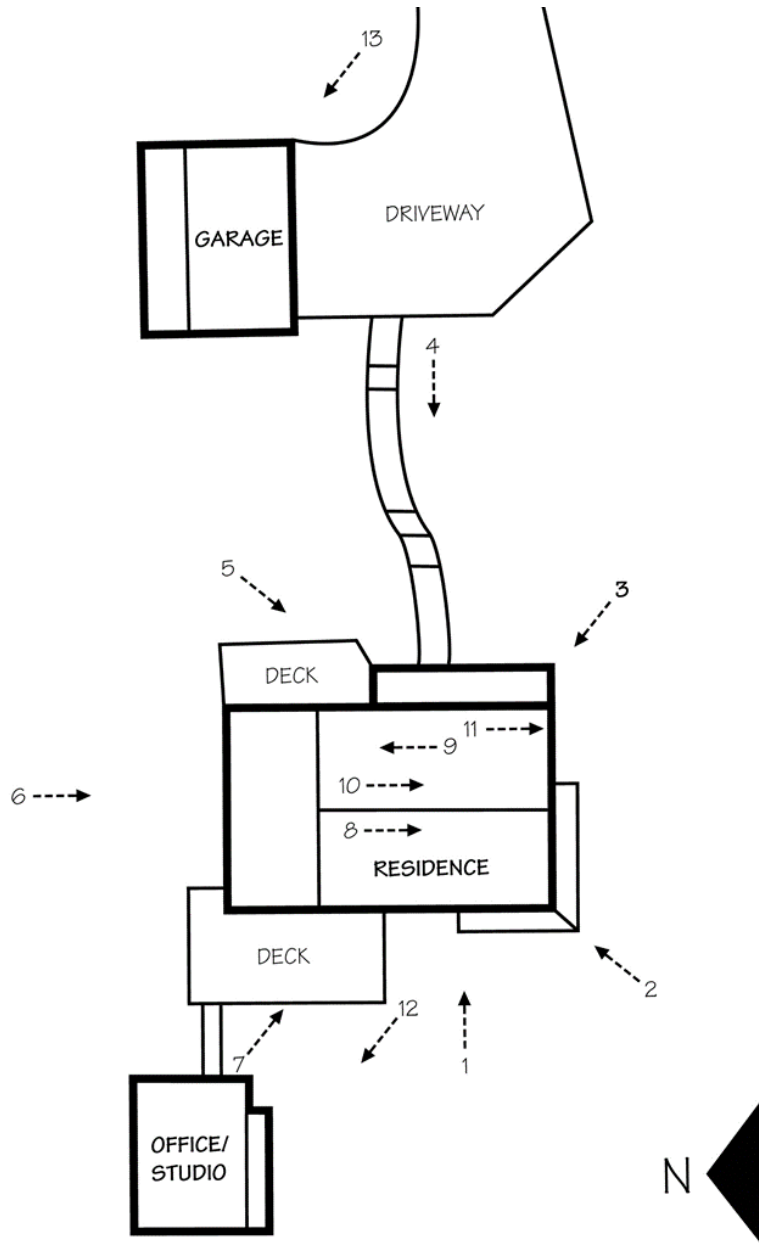
USGS 7.5' Quad Map. Stewart's Point, 2015



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Sketch Map/Photo Key

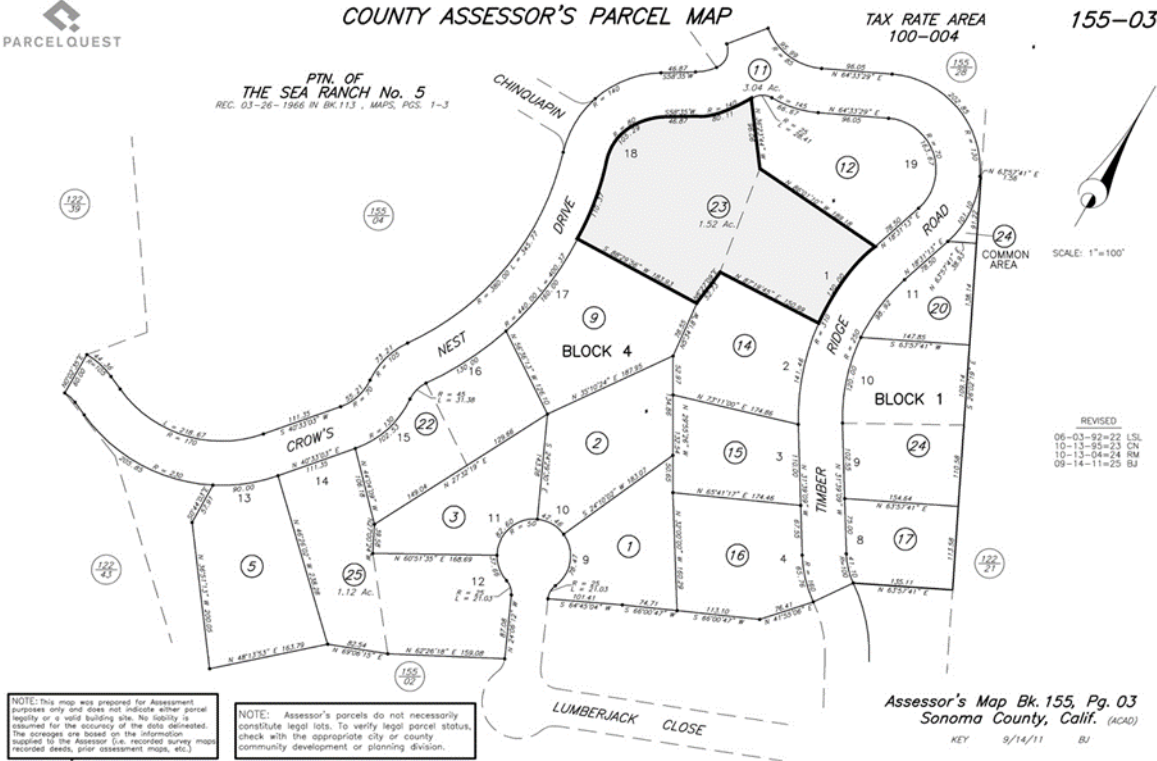


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APN Map (#155-030-023)

Provided by:
PARCELQUEST

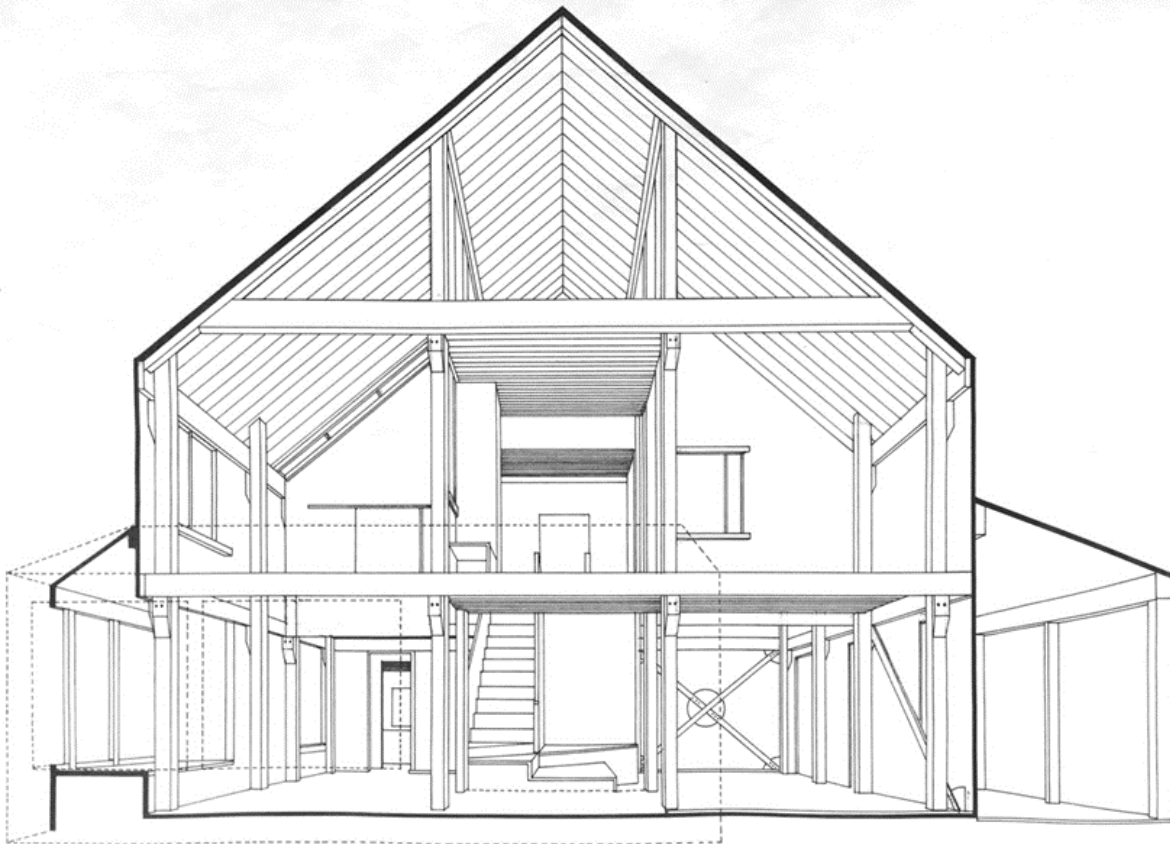


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Figure 2. Inventory of the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1959-1997, *Sea Ranch Spec II House: "Binker Barns," Sea Ranch, CA, 1965-1972* The Regents of the University of California, UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives

Section



SECTION

For reference use only.

NON-ARCHIVAL DUPLICATE

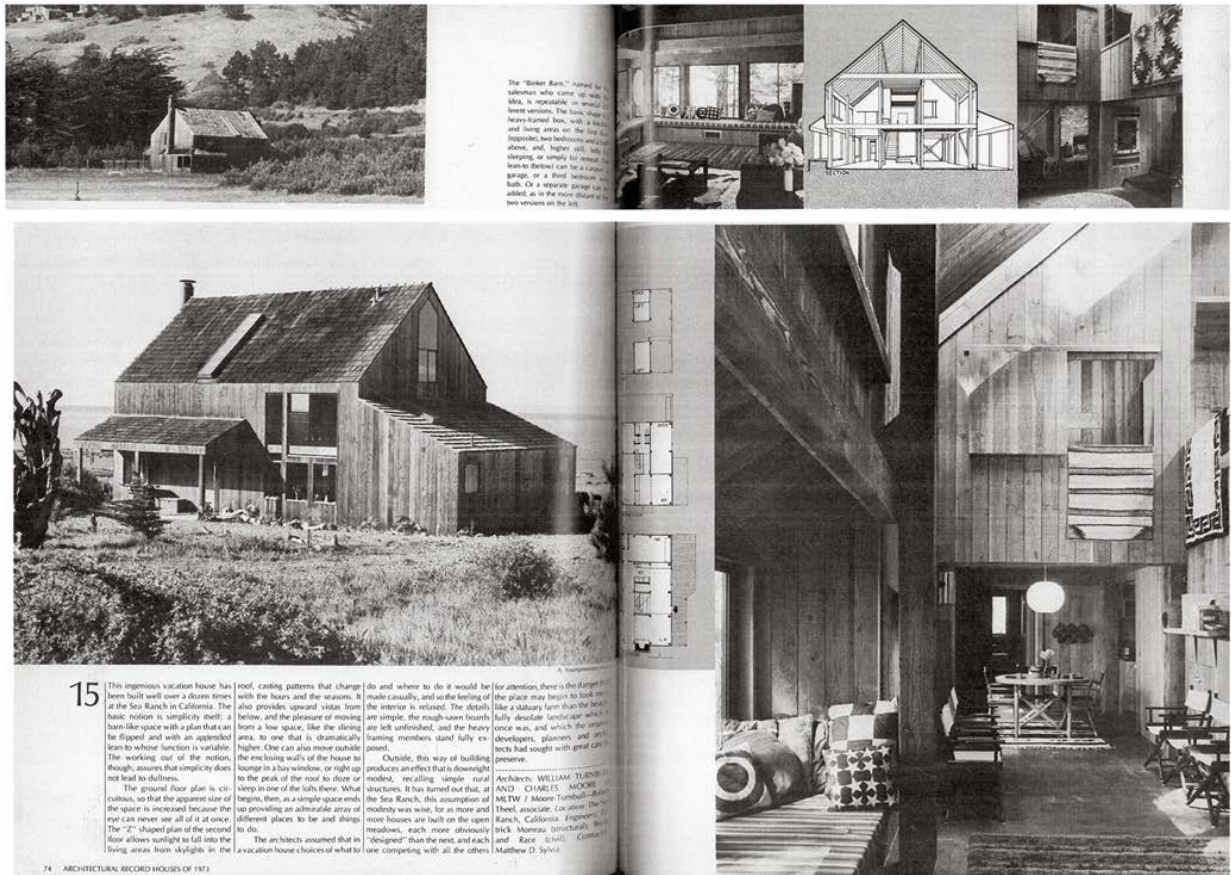
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley
2000-9 _____ Collection
Project/Folder Spec House II

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Figure 3A. Architectural Record, Record Houses, "Sea Ranch, CA," by architects MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1973

See Figure 3B for transcription



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**Figure 3B. *Architectural Record*, Record Houses, “Sea Ranch, CA,” by architects
MLTW/Moore Turnbull, Mid-May 1973**

The “Binker Barn,” named for the salesman who came up with the idea, is repeatable in several different versions. The basic shape is a heavy-framed box, with a kitchen and living areas on the first floor, two bedrooms and a bath above, and higher still, lofts for sleeping, or simply for retreat. The lean-to (below) can be a carport, garage, or a third bedroom. Or a separate garage can be added, as in the more distant of the two versions on the left.

This ingenious vacation house has been built well over a dozen times at the Sea Ranch in California. The basic notion is simplicity itself: a barn-like space with a plan that can be flipped and with an appended lean-to whose function is variable. The working out of the notion, though, assures that simplicity does not lead to dullness.

The ground floor plan is circuitous, so that the apparent size of the space is increased because the eye can never see all of it at once. The “Z” shaped plan of the second floor allows sunlight to fall into the living areas from skylights in the roof, casting patterns that change with the hours and the seasons. It also provides upward vistas from below, and the pleasure of moving from a low space, like the dining area, to one that is dramatically higher. One can also move outside the enclosing walls of the house to lounge in the bay window, or right up to the peak of the roof to doze or sleep in one of the lofts here. What begins, then, as a simple space ends up providing an admirable array of different places to be and things to do.

The architects assumed that in a vacation house choices of what to do and where to do it would be made casually, and so the feeling of the interior is relaxed. The details are simple, rough-sawn boards are left unfinished, and the heavy framing members stand fully exposed.

Outside, this way of building produces an effect that is downright modest, recalling simple rural structures. It has turned out that, at the Sea Ranch, this assumption of modesty was wise, for as more and more houses are built on the open meadows, each more obviously designed than the next, and each one competing with all the others for attention, there is the danger that the place may begin to look more like a statuary farm than the fully desolate landscape which it once was, and which the original developers, planners, and architects have sought with great care to preserve.

Architects: William Turnbull and Charles Moore of MLTW/Moore Turnbull–Robert Theel, associate. *Location:* The Sea Ranch, California. *Engineers:* Patrick Morreau (structural): Belie and Race (civil). *Contractor:* Matthew D. Sylvia.

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Figure 4A. “Name for it is Barn-House,” *Sunset, The Magazine for Western Living*, October 1971

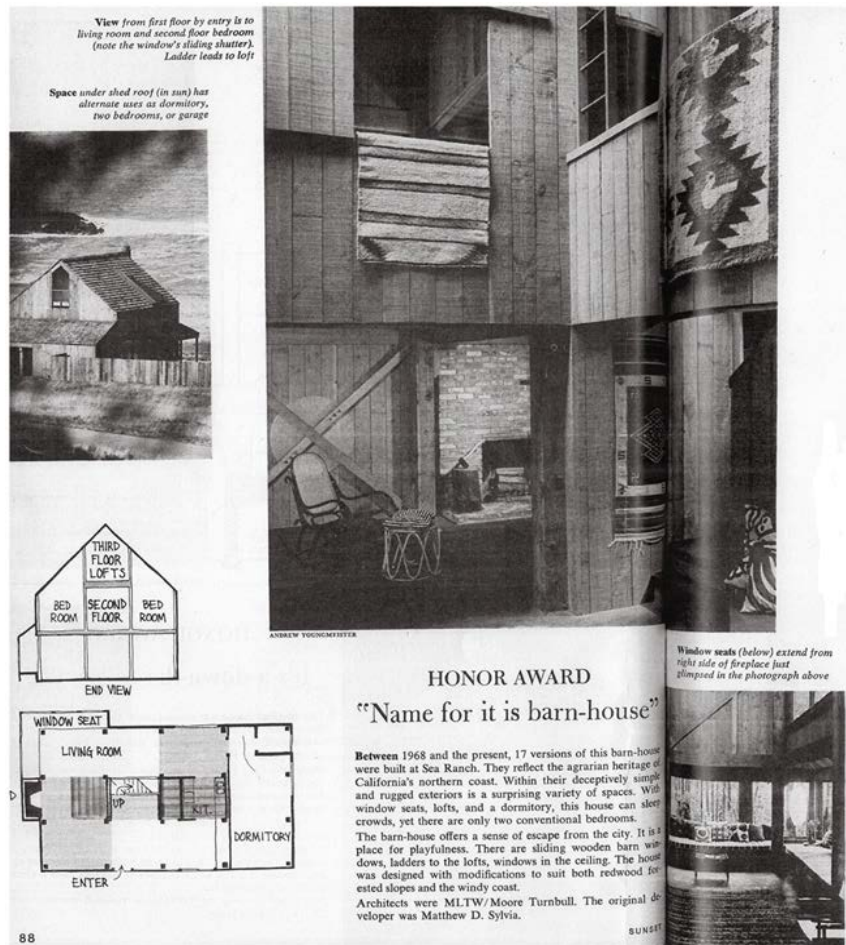


Figure 4B. “Name for it is Barn-House,” *Sunset, The Magazine for Western Living*, October 1971

Honor Award, “Name for it is barn-house”

Between 1968 and the present, 17 versions of this barn-house were built at Sea Ranch. They reflect the agrarian heritage of California’s northern coast. With their deceptively simple and rugged exteriors is a surprising variety of spaces. With window seats, lofts, and a dormitory, this house can sleep crowds, yet there are only two conventional bedrooms. The barn-house offers a sense of escape from the city. It is a place for playfulness. There are sliding wooden barn windows, ladders to the lofts, windows in the ceiling. The house was designed with modifications to suit both redwood forested slopes and the windy coast.

Architects were MLTW/Moore Turnbull. The original developer was Matthew D. Sylvia.

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Figure 5. Black Point Barn, 2018 (Brad Brewster, Photographer)



Figure 6. Knipp-Stengel Barn, 2018 (Marty Abell, Photographer)



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Photo 1



Photo 2



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Photo 3



Photo 4



Abell House
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Photo 5



Photo 6



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Photo 7



Photo 8



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Photo 9



Photo 10



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Photo 11



Photo 12



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Photo 13

