

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name West Point Inn
other names/site number _____



2. Location

street & number Old Railroad Grade, Mt. Tamalpais not for publication
city or town Mill Valley vicinity
state California code CA county Marin code 041 zip code 94941

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

Signature of certifying official Date

Title 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

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)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
8	1	buildings
		district
		site
3	4	structure
		object
11	5	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

RECREATION: outdoors

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

RECREATION: outdoors

SOCIAL: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: shingle style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: STONE, CONCRETE

walls: WOOD shingle

roof: ASPHALT

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The West Point Inn is comprised of a wood-shingled, two story building and a number of smaller outbuildings and cabins. It is located on the southern slope of Mount Tamalpais, the highest and most prominent peak in Marin County and the northern San Francisco Bay area. Perched on an exposed ridge at an elevation of 1,800 feet above sea level, the inn affords a panoramic view of southern Marin County, Muir Woods National Monument, San Francisco and Oakland, Mt. Diablo, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The location is exposed to extremes of weather, above the coastal fog line; it can be very hot in the summer but with mild winters and generally windy throughout the year. Vegetation is characterized by dense manzanita scrub with few trees in the vicinity, although redwood, coast live oak, Douglas-fir and other species of tree are found nearby.

Narrative Description

The West Point Inn, built in 1904, together with its adjacent cabins and landscape features, is a unique and rare surviving example of a San Francisco Bay Area rustic mountain lodge. Constructed in the era of train travel and during a period when hiking was among the most popular recreational pursuits, the inn exemplifies turn-of-the-twentieth-century outdoors-oriented tourism and the architectural styles that served to enhance the visitor's experience.

The inn is reached by a two mile-long dirt road, part of the abandoned railroad grade of the Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway, later called the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Scenic Railway (1896-1930). This road, which practically encircles the inn grounds and terminates near the East Peak summit of Mt. Tamalpais, is a popular hiking and multi-use trail. Paved roads provide access to the Railroad Grade from Mill Valley, the nearest town, and other Bay Area cities.

The grounds of the West Point Inn comprise about one acre of land, and includes the inn building, two sheds, five cabins, a stone stairway, and the grounds as surrounded by the railroad grade. The property's topography ranges from sloping at the inn site to steep at the far cabins. Vegetation within the property includes native plants such as manzanita, live oak, and bay laurel, as well as non-natives such as Monterey pine. A native redwood tree was planted in front of the inn some years ago.

The West Point Inn is a wood frame building consisting of three sections: the original two-story inn (built in 1904); a one-story addition (1920); and a non-historic innkeeper's addition (1982). Adjacent to the inn is an old (circa 1920) former chicken shed. East of the shed is a line of five cabins, numbered 1 through 4 (circa 1915), and the other known as the "honeymoon cabin" (1918). An outhouse-styled toilet room near cabin 3 appears to have been built in the 1940s or 1950s. Also on the grounds are a non-historic wood shed and a substantial disabled access ramp at the center of the complex. Visitors reach the inn from the railroad grade on a stone stairway and path that leads to wooden stairs, part of the inn's porch. A trail provides access to cabins 2, 3 and 4.

The West Point Inn was built by the Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway Company in 1904 and has served day and overnight visitors almost uninterrupted since then. The railway company leased the buildings from the Marin Municipal Water District until the rail service ended in 1930. The water district owns the buildings and surrounding lands, leaving operation of the inn to the non-profit West Point Inn Association.

The West Point Inn retains historic integrity, with its original layout, buildings, setting and feel. Architectural details including original windows and doors remain in place on all contributing structures, with few exceptions (eg: double hung windows in a few upstairs rooms). The interiors have seen little modification except for the inn's kitchen, which has been sensitively modernized. One small building, a shed used for making acetylene gas from when the inn first opened through the 1920s, was removed at an unknown date. Non-contributing structures include the innkeeper's quarters, designed as an architecturally compatible addition, and the ADA-required wheelchair ramp, which intrudes on the historic scene. Minor non-contributing features include a small wood shed, energy shed, and a supply shed.

[See continuation sheets]

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1904-1943

Significant Dates

1904, 1916, 1920, 1942-1943

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The start of the period of significance reflects the year of construction; the end of the period is 1943, when the West Point Inn was closed during the war and nearly razed as a fire hazard. It was saved from demolition and began to be managed by a group dedicated to its preservation.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The West Point Inn, built in 1904, together with its adjacent cabins and landscape features, is a unique and rare surviving example of a San Francisco Bay Area rustic mountain lodge. Constructed in the era of train travel and during a period when hiking was among the most popular recreational pursuits, the inn exemplifies turn-of-the-twentieth-century outdoors-oriented tourism and the architectural styles that served to enhance the visitor's experience. The West Point Inn is regionally significant under Criterion A for its role in the increasing popularity of Mt. Tamalpais as a refuge from the ills of the city and providing respite and adventure for generations of people from all over the world (theme: recreation). The inn served as a way station on the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railway and hub for stagecoach service to Willow Camp (theme: transportation). The inn is also significant under Criterion C as an intact example of Bay Area Shingle style architecture supplemented by rustic vernacular single-room mountain cabins, all remaining in their original isolated setting and possessing a high level of historical integrity.

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

The West Point Inn is inextricably connected to the San Francisco Bay Area and the growth of that city and its surrounding cities and suburbs. The inn reflects a time when hiking and touring boomed, as hiking clubs were established on area mountain slopes and the public called for more recreational lands and opportunities. It was in this period that the environmental movement got its start, as President Theodore Roosevelt declared neighboring Muir Woods a National Monument and John Muir saw his most active period as a leading force in the infant years of the nationwide conservation movement. The inn was designed to reflect the rustic charms of the area, with wood shingles and stone fireplaces.

Mt. Tamalpais has been celebrated by nearby peoples in various ways for centuries. The Coast Miwok Indians reportedly considered the mountain a mysterious or dangerous location, and newly arrived settlers took the old stories and added mythical and romantic legends such as the "Sleeping Lady" myth that claimed local Indians referred to the mountain as such because of its evocative geographic profile. The Indians and their successors used the mountain's slope for hunting game, as subsistence evolved into sport. Since the 1870s the mountain's beauty has been evoked in poetry, paintings, music and theater, all spurred by the popularity of hiking, hunting, natural studies and the pursuit of art.

The mountain's slopes attracted men of wealth who built estates in Mill Valley, Kentfield and other once-wild locations. Prominent businessmen such as Albert Kent, Hall McAllister and Sidney Cushing bought property in the shadow of the mountain while others from San Francisco constructed trails and cabins in the woods. The Tamalpais Sportsman's Club and other organizations leased acreage, created camps and eventually built clubhouses. The Bohemian Club held its early outdoor events on the south slope at what is today Muir Woods.

The first detailed hiking map of the mountain was published in 1898. A common destination was West Peak (the mountain is capped by three peaks), at the time the highest spot north of the Golden Gate. Hikers boarded ferries and transferred to Marin County's narrow gauge train system, which deposited the visitors at various popular stops along the way. Hiking clubs, most from San Francisco and often reflecting a nationalist theme (German clubs were especially popular), held regular group hikes and camping expeditions. Some clubs, and also private entrepreneurs, eventually built lodges of varying size, almost entirely on the south face of Mt. Tamalpais with a panoramic view to San Francisco.

Besides trails, one road offered access to the peaks before 1900. Eldridge Grade, constructed in 1884, provided access for wagons from the Ross Valley to near the summit of West Peak. The construction of the Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway in 1896 changed the patterns of access to the mountain, bringing people in great numbers to the summit and stops in between.

During the 1890s, the Tamalpais Land & Water Company controlled the south slopes of the mountain. Company employees hatched the idea of a railroad that would carry passengers on a memorable ride from Mill Valley to East Peak where a hotel would be built. With the financial backing of many prominent local landowners who stood to gain in increased land values, the Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway opened to the public in August 1896. It was soon dubbed "The Crookedest Railroad in the World" for its approximately 281 curves along the 8.19-mile route, ascending a grade varying from five to seven percent. Geared steam locomotives pushed coaches up the mountain to the newly constructed Tavern of Tamalpais where guests could eat with a spectacular view of the San Francisco Bay Area, or stay overnight in a limited number of rooms. In a later development, open-air gravity cars allowed a thrilling ride as passengers coasted down the grade and onto a new spur (built in 1907) into Muir Woods where a rustic inn would be built as a terminus. Within years the mountain railroad became internationally known as an important scenic attraction not missed by visitors to San Francisco.

[See continuation sheets]

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Cerny, Susan Dinkelspiel. *Berkeley Landmarks. An Illustrated Guide to Berkeley, California's Architectural Heritage.* Berkeley: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1994.

Fairley, Lincoln. *Mount Tamalpais: A History.* San Francisco: 1987.

Olmsted, Roger and T. H. Watkins. *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage.* San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968

Sandrock, Fred, Editor. *Facts & Fancies.* Newsletter of the Mt. Tamalpais History Project.

Spitz, Barry. *Mill Valley: A History.* San Anselmo: Potrero Meadow Publishing, 1998.

Toogood, Anna Coxe. *Historic Resource Study: A Civil History of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore California.* Denver: National Park Service, [1980].

Wurm, Ted and Al Graves. *The Crookedest Railroad in the World.* Glendale: Trans-Anglo Books, 1983.

Historical Files, West Point Inn, Fred Runner, Historian.

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: West Point Inn, Mill Valley Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>10</u>	<u>535715</u>	<u>196695</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries encompass the lodge, outbuildings, and grounds of the West Point Inn on Mt. Tamalpais, California, as designated in the West Point Inn Association's lease agreement with Marin Municipal Water District. The boundary is the inner edge of Old Railroad Grade, a public trail, as it encircles the inn grounds, and a straight line running between the two portions of the railroad grade (see sketch map) a short distance north of Cabin #4.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the entire working and historic grounds of the West Point Inn, an area that has changed little since the historic period.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. S. (Dewey) Livingston, Historian
organization West Point Inn Association date August 18, 2011
street & number PO Box 296 telephone 415-669-7706
city or town Inverness state CA zip code 94937
e-mail dlive@svn.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

[See continuation sheets]

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Marin Municipal Water District
street & number 220 Nellen Avenue telephone 415-945-1190
city or town Corte Madera state CA zip code 94925

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 18 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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Inn building:

The West Point Inn was built in three stages, two of which fell in the historic period. The original inn, a hipped-roof two-story shingle lodge with dormer windows overlooking the western slopes of Mt. Tamalpais, was built in 1904. In 1916 the small porch was enlarged to the configuration in which it remains today, affording breathtaking views of the San Francisco Bay Area. By that time at least four cabins had been built to augment the lodging needs. In 1920 the owners added a dining room, a roomy hall extending from the back of the inn (it was later called the Rec Room and today is known as "The Member's Lounge."). The West Point Inn Association added a much-needed innkeeper quarters in 1982, virtually extending the 1920 addition with a split-level two-story living unit designed to complement the inn's historical architecture.

The first inn building is a two-story wood frame building with four rooms downstairs (sitting room, kitchen, pantry, shower, the latter originally being a small open porch) and eight guest rooms upstairs, one of which has been transformed into a fire escape and closet. There is a basement under the west part of the building with crawl space under the east side. A small bathroom was added a few years after the inn opened on the northwest end of the upper floor. The inn has two stone fireplace/chimneys, one of which is operable, located on opposite sides of the building. The long hipped roof has a gable on the northwest corner. There are two hipped dormers on the front roof face, three flat dormers on the rear, and a flat dormer for the added bathroom on the west side; all clad in composition shingles. The exterior walls are painted cedar shingles, and flare at the base where they met the original stone foundations. The stone and mortar foundation has been supplemented with an invisible concrete foundation installed in the basement.

A roomy porch wraps around the southwest and southeast sides of the inn. It has wood floors, rustic log posts as well as milled posts, and a wood railing. A wooden stairway leads from the porch to a stone pathway and the original stairs to the former railroad grade.

There are two main types of exterior windows on the original inn building, all intact. The lower floor windows are six-over-nine double hung sash, six facing southwest, two facing northwest and two on the northeast corner end. A clouded window provides light to the shower room. The dormers on the front have two-over-four double hung sash. Doors on the building are wood and appear to be the original installations.

The interior rooms on the lower floor provide common spaces. The largest is the sitting room, with a large stone-and-brick fireplace, painted wood paneling and tongue-and-groove wood floors. The kitchen, equipped with a propane refrigerator and two large stoves, has painted wood panel walls with built-in shelves. There is a sink and two skylights. The pantry is dominated by clear-finished wood lockers and a large table. The wood paneling is painted. The shower room was once an open corner porch. Its painted wood shingle walls were once exterior, with infill walls of bead-board wood paneling. The remodeling was apparently done in the 1940s.

The upstairs lodging rooms are reached by a narrow stairway leaving the common room that splits in two directions half way up. Four rooms face the southwest, three the northeast. All have painted wood paneling, partially sloping ceilings, wood doors, dormer windows, and gaslights. The northeasternmost room has been converted to a storage room, with part of its entry rebuilt to accommodate a fire escape. There is a small bathroom, added before 1910, and a few small storage spaces including a linen closet.

The 1920 members lounge addition is a long, gable-roofed room with a composition roof and painted wood shingle exterior walls. There is a row of five fifteen-light fixed windows on the northwest façade, which were restored in 1998, and a row of three fifteen-light casement windows on the southeast. The interior is unpainted Douglas-fir T&G paneling, including the ceiling. A stone fire place graces the north end of the room.

All the large interior rooms are fitted with gaslights; the fixtures are non-historic but parts of the original fixtures remain. There is plumbing only in the bathroom, kitchen, and shower.

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The 1982 innkeeper quarters was constructed onto the north end of the 1920 addition. On the west side the gable continues from the recreation room, and on the east the addition features a transverse gable that forms a second story to that part of the quarters. The addition has matching shingle siding and roof treatments. The addition, while architecturally compatible, does not contribute to the significance and integrity of the original inn building. The fire escape on the 1904 building is also non-contributing.

The West Point Inn is in good condition and possesses excellent historical integrity. Its alterations are few, with a mostly intact interior and exterior that has retained its character-defining features. It is in its original setting, which has changed little throughout the years. The surroundings are a protected natural area, and the view is the same one enjoyed by guests for more than a century.

Chicken Shed:

This simple frame shed was constructed between 1904 and 1920 and served as a chicken coop and storage building. Measuring 10 by 12 feet, with a 4-foot shed addition, it has a shed roof clad in composition shingles and board-and-batten siding. The shed rests on a concrete foundation with a concrete floor, and a rock wall lines the northeastern elevation. There is an old door as entry, repaired with plywood pieces on the interior. A fixed, six-light window faces northeast. It is in fair condition.

Cabin 1:

Built before 1920, Cabin 1 is an irregularly shaped building measuring roughly 12 by 12 feet with an original bathroom extension measuring six by seven feet. There is a "notch" of about four feet square on one corner to accommodate a protruding outcrop on the rocky hillside on which the cabin is built. The exterior walls are shingled and the cabin has a shed roof with a partially covered porch/deck forming a gable. A pair of hinged, two-light windows are set in a mock-bay window facing the narrow porch on the southwest elevation, and a small, six-light casement window faces northwest. A fixed, six-light window faces the southeast deck and a second door, unused, provides entry directly to the bathroom extension. A small, single-light window faces northeast. The single-wall construction reveals the original vertical boards on the interior, now painted white. The floor is tongue-and-groove. Cabin 1 has been modified to provide access for people with disabilities with a wide modern door and remodeled accessible bathroom. Additional structural bracing with 2x6s has strengthened the building, two skylights have been added in the roof, but most historical features remain intact. It is in good condition.

"Honeymoon Cabin":

This is the most substantial and well crafted of the inn's five cabins. It was built in 1918 by Dr. Washington Dodge, a survivor of the sinking of the *RMS Titanic*. The rectangular building measures about 12 by 16 feet and is set into an excavated hillside on the north and supported with posts on the south. It has a gable roof of composition shingles, and the exterior walls are clad in wood shingles installed in a distinctive design, with a brick chimney on the east-facing wall. There are small and wide double-hung bathroom windows on the west side and a set of sliding and fixed windows facing east, all with relatively fancy trim painted green.

The cabin consists of a main room, a small bathroom with toilet and sink (a cold water shower was removed because it caused dry rot), and an open porch that faces San Francisco and the Golden Gate. The interior is distinguished by a brick fireplace (removed from service after the 1989 earthquake), old finished plywood paneled walls and ceiling with redwood trim, fine plate molding, and tongue-and-groove flooring. The bathroom features painted V-groove paneling, linoleum flooring, an antique corner sink, and a small utility closet. Double, eight-light doors access the porch. The rail on the porch has been raised for safety reasons. The cabin had been wired for electricity and some antique fixtures remain. It is in good condition and retains excellent historical integrity.

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Cabins 2, 3 and 4:

These comprise a row of three almost identical cabins, all constructed circa 1915 on a steep hillside overlooking the railroad grade and the scenic southerly view. They are the easternmost buildings in the complex and are reached by a narrow foot trail from the inn. They are perched on tall, cross-braced wood posts on concrete piers. The cabins measure roughly 13 feet square with additional six-foot deep open porches facing south. All are simple, gable-roofed cabins with original single-wall construction of board-and-batten now sheathed in shingles on the exterior. Vents under the gable ends allow cross ventilation. With generous two-foot eaves, the rafter ends were cut to curve upward at the ends, producing a distinctive profile. Each roof has been surfaced with composition shingles, and metal gutters and drainpipes have been installed along the eaves. Each cabin has a rustic plank door providing entrance on the uphill side at grade with the access trail.

The cabins feature single-wall construction and are not insulated. The interior walls are unfinished and show the old wood planks of the original construction, but additional structural bracing with 2x4s has been added for stability. Each has older tongue-and-groove wood floors. The short but wide porch is reached through a set of Dutch doors and features an outdoor shower and sink as well as evidence of former outdoor cool storage for perishables at cabins 2 and 3. The exterior walls within the porches (south-facing) show the original board-and-batten siding.

The cabins have seen varied modifications, including foundation bracing, manufactured outdoor shower floors (which have reduced the threat of dry rot), a short vertical extension of the porch railings, plywood sheathing in some of the roof structures, and some alteration in the decorative bracing on the south-facing gable ends on the porches. Cabins 3 and 4 have newer double doors to the porches, constructed of plywood and lacking window lights. These doors appear to have been built in the 1950s.

The first in the row from the main inn, Cabin 2 retains its older double Dutch outer doors constructed from planks and featuring four-light fixed windows. Repairs on the western eaves have eliminated the original "swooped" eave design, and galvanized metal gutters have been installed. Cabin 2 is in fair to good condition.

The second of the three cabins, Cabin 3 has an original plank front door entry and the plywood Dutch doors appear to have been installed in the 1950s, while the internal structure has been supplemented with additional bracing and sistered rafters and framing. Cabin 3 is in fair to good condition.

The last of the cabins on the trail, Cabin 4 is virtually the same as its neighbors except for the lack of a small porch extension apparently for storage of perishables. Its front door has been rebuilt, perhaps in the 1970s or 1980s, in a slightly different design and the plywood Dutch doors appear to have been installed in the 1950s. Cabin 4 is in fair to good condition.

Character-defining features of the cabins include single wall construction with exposed framing and old siding, original doors, siding remnants within the porch enclosures, roof design, and their building footprints and location.

Outhouse:

This small toilet facility, located on the eastern trail between and across from Cabins 3 and 4, appears to have been constructed in the 1940s or 1950s. It measures 6 by 4.5 feet and was constructed of full-dimension 2x4s and cove siding. It has a gable roof, a narrow door with matching siding, a small, clouded window, and concrete foundation. It is in good condition.

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Contributing Structures:

Three historic structures include a stone stairway system at the entrance on the southwest side of the inn that dates from around 1904 or shortly thereafter; the main sign near the front of the building (1917); and the 4 to 5-foot-wide trail to Cabins 2, 3, and 4, constructed circa 1915.

Landscape Features:

The West Point Inn is distinguished by its location on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais. It is surrounded by protected natural landscape and accessed by four popular and historic hiking trails. The setting is virtually unchanged since the founding of the inn. Historic landscape features include various plants, native and introduced, that have been part of the landscape of the inn for decades including manzanita, live oak, redwood, bay laurel, and Monterey pine. Minor landscape alterations include the rerouting of the path between the inn and Cabin 1, in order to provide access for people with disabilities, and elimination of a short driveway between the railroad grade on the north and the former chicken shed. The old railroad grade, while not included as a contributing resource in this nomination because it is a specific, separate linear structure in itself, is an important part of the surrounding landscape that defines the West Point Inn property.

Missing resources

All of the original West Point Inn buildings remain except for the small acetylene shed once located at the railroad grade near the south corner of the inn and mentioned earlier. Across the railroad grade to the west once stood a shed that acted as stables for the horse-drawn stage line; it predated the West Point Inn and was removed by 1920.

Non-contributing building and structures

One non-contributing building is the innkeeper's quarters, added in 1982 and detailed previously. This addition abuts the original inn and was designed to complement the architecture of the original inn.

Four structures do not contribute. An extensive wooden ramp, built in 1998 and required by accessibility regulations, leads from the inn's main porch to Cabin 1. Construction of the ramp, which provides access for people with disabilities, affected the open feel of the grounds and introduced a large structural component to the grounds. Also, three small, clustered utility structures that were installed north of the inn building and chicken shed do not contribute: an architecturally compatible board-and-batten wood storage shed with hipped roof; a gable-roofed "solar shed" was constructed in 2010; and a tiny, flat-roofed storage shed.

Railroad Grade:

A short portion of the 6.7-mile former rail bed of the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railway, constructed in 1896, is a dominant feature of the West Point Inn grounds. This location is where the rail route made a tight curve from west to east, marking the line's westernmost point (hence the name West Point). The location, where rail passengers could disembark and board a horse-drawn stage to points west, is an important factor in locating the inn here. The 12-foot wide dirt roadway almost entirely surrounds the inn property as it makes its arc for the final ascent to the peak of Mt. Tamalpais. The roadway is now used as a multi-use recreational trail called Old Railroad Grade, and for restricted access by vehicles servicing the inn and surrounding municipal watershed lands. The Old Stage Road (built 1902) meets the Old Railroad Grade at West Point. The hand-carved road that once carried stagecoaches between West Point and the beach is also a popular multi-use trail, connecting the West Point Inn and Mt. Tamalpais State Park's Pan Toll ranger station two miles away. Despite this importance in defining the inn property and historic significance, the railroad grade is a separate structure and so is not part of this nomination.

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The Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway constructed the West Point Inn in 1904 at a significant spot on the mountain railroad. The westernmost point on the railroad was at a tight 252° curve known as West Point. At this location a wagon road served by a stage service commenced for the trip to the popular summer enclaves of Willow Camp (Stinson Beach) and Bolinas. The West Point Inn would not only accommodate patrons of the stage service, but also provide additional lodging for railway patrons, with the Tavern of Tamalpais being inadequate for the crowds that were attracted to the mountain despite the Tavern's enlargement in 1900. West Point was a simpler alternative to hikers on the many new trails being developed on the mountain, and the inn became a focal point for Mt. Tamalpais hikers. Guests likely spent daylight hours out exploring the mountain and little time in the small rooms of the inn.¹

The railroad company built the West Point Inn on property owned by the North Coast Water Company, nestled within the sharp curve of the railroad grade. The initial building was designed in the Bay Area Shingle style preferred in northern California at that time, especially in Berkeley, Inverness, and nearby Mill Valley. In the late 19th and early 20th century, California architects, including Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, Willis Polk and Ernest Coxhead took inspiration from northeastern architects and created a popular style that was especially apt in coastal redwood country. In emphasizing simplicity and utilizing local materials such as redwood and native stone, architects incorporated the surrounding landscape in their designs and made the most of views and nearby vegetation; such buildings became a significant milestone in California architecture and the style remains in use today. The name of the inn's architect is unknown, but was undoubtedly a member of the shingle style movement. The architect included a distinctive shingle kick-out at the base of the exterior walls, and utilized shingled dormers and window details indicative of the shingle style, all of which survive in today's building. The massive masonry chimneys are also indicative of the style.²

While the West Point Inn's architectural strength might be somewhat diluted in a suburban shingle style neighborhood, its isolation lends to a particular significance. The building would be less remarkable in Berkeley but is very remarkable in its lonely location on Mt. Tamalpais, and as the last surviving structure associated with the Mt. Tamalpais Railway the West Point Inn is indeed a one-of-a-kind example of a significant architectural style put to use in a unique environment.

The West Point Inn reportedly cost \$2,500 to build. The handsome two-story building afforded a sweeping view of the Pacific Ocean, slopes of Mt. Tamalpais, southern Marin County and the entire San Francisco Bay Area. The inn was immediately put to use and gained a devoted list of guests, both hikers and railroad passengers. The railroad company leased the facility to a full-time innkeeper who ran it like a country hotel offering beds, hot meals, limited entertainment, and recreational opportunities. For more than a decade, the single, two-story inn proved adequate to handle the visitors arriving by stage, train, and on foot or horseback. In the meantime, in 1908, the Muir Woods Inn was opened. Within a ten-year span, three inns had opened on Mt. Tamalpais.³

The more elegant Tavern of Tamalpais and Muir Woods Inn tended to cater to the well-dressed visitor who enjoyed the views, fine food, and simple recreational pursuits, while the West Point Inn attracted more of the working people who sought accommodations at a key trail hub. An early visitor described the West Point Inn parlor as only adequate, with guest rooms small but great views to make up for the small interior space. Guests spent most of their time out on trails. Hunting parties sent supplies and materials by rail to the inn, setting out on horseback for the day's hunt. Trophy antlers from those days continue to decorate the walls of the inn.

As time passed, more demands were put on the West Point Inn and expansion would become necessary. Following the opening of the inn in 1904 and creation of nearby Muir Woods National Monument in 1908, hiking clubs proliferated. The Tamalpais Conservation Club, founded in 1912, called the inn its hiking headquarters. Others, like the Tourist Club (also founded in 1912), the California Alpine Club (1914), and clubs based in the East Bay, joined the older Tamalpais Club (pre-1880) and the Cross-Country Club (1890) in bringing people from all over the state to Mt. Tamalpais. The Sierra Club also made Mt. Tamalpais a focal point of its organized nature outings. Some of these clubs, notably the Tamalpais Conservation Club, were responsible for the construction of miles of popular trails in the mountain in use today.

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Virtually all of the clubs made some use of The West Point Inn, either formally or informally as members lodged or ate there as part of an outing.⁴

Until the West Point Inn was built, and with the exception of the Tavern of Tamalpais, most private establishments offering lodging or board were located on the north side of the mountain, including the Summit House and Liberty Resort. On the south side, the new community of Mill Valley filled the needs of hikers and hunters. After the establishment of West Point Inn in 1904 a number of other hostelrys opened on the south slope, including the Muir Woods Inn (1908), Mountain Home Inn (1912) on Throckmorton Ridge above Mill Valley, and the ornate chalet of the Tourist Club (circa 1920) overlooking Muir Woods. Later, the California Alpine Club established a lodge in a former house on Throckmorton Ridge around 1928, and two attractions were available to hikers in Muir Woods, Joe's Place and the Muir Woods Inn.

Various events brought the need for expansion to the proprietors of the West Point Inn, but first there was a setback. The stage service to Willow Camp and Bolinas ended in 1915 and the inn closed. By this time a handful of rustic cabins had been added to supplement the accommodations there. The Tamalpais Conservation Club took the lead in quickly returning the place into active operation and attracting a new innkeeper. Usually couples, the innkeepers acted as hosts, hotelkeepers, maintenance workers, and cooks. The inn reopened in 1916, no doubt boosted by the emerging popularity of the Mountain Play, founded in 1913 and continued as a tradition to the present.

The first Mountain Play was staged in a natural amphitheatre nestled on the western flanks of Mt. Tamalpais about two miles northwest of the West Point Inn. In May of 1913, Garnet Holme presented *Abraham and Isaac*, as well as scenes from *Twelfth Night*, to an audience of 1,200. The venue could only be reached by hikers, some of whom lodged at West Point Inn. The Mountain Play became an instant success. Holme created plays specifically for the spring event and had the help of the mountain's many outdoors organizations. The Mountain Play brought a new generation of hikers and visitors to Mt. Tamalpais. The play's director and actors stayed at the inn the week before the single annual show. Extra staff was hired for the busy week. Playgoers arrived by train, some making reservations for a fresh chicken dinner on the way home, made with chickens raised on the inn grounds. The railway company constructed a new rail siding, laying 500-feet of new track down the Old Stage Road and building extensive passenger platforms to accommodate the larger crowds.⁵

The increased interest in mountain pursuits and the accompanying demand for food and lodging brought new life to the West Point Inn. The railroad management enlarged the porch in 1916, creating a large, open-air gathering place that made the most of the inn's expansive views. More sleeping cabins had been added in the 'teens and in 1918, Washington Dodge, a survivor of the sinking of the Titanic, built a cottage on the grounds. His was the most substantial of the West Point Inn cabins, with distinctive shingling, milled window frames, and fine interior wood paneling. In 1920, workers constructed an 800-square-foot dining room attached to the back of the inn on a site that had been an open-air dance platform. The big room was nicely appointed and more than doubled the size of the common areas. It featured large windows, a brick fireplace, and wood paneling with wainscot. Henry Boese was the architect of the porch enlargement.⁶

During early 1920s, innkeeper Martin Kliewe provided starched linen napkins and tablecloths, echoing the elegance of the Tavern of Tamalpais and Kliewe's experience at San Francisco's renowned Palace Hotel. Kliewe's inn also had a radio at the dawn of radio broadcasting, built by the innkeeper himself. Live broadcasts from the best ballrooms in San Francisco played for inn guests. A large bank of batteries in the basement powered the simple radio he used as a showpiece; he sold radios as a sideline for \$250 a piece. Kliewe, like other early innkeepers, had worked at fine hotels in San Francisco such as the Palace and St. Francis Hotels.

An advertisement published in 1922 noted the attractions of the inn: "West Point Inn, scenically located on Mt Tamalpais, OPEN ALL YEAR – If you have never spent a night at West Point there is a picturesque surprise in store for you. Sparkling lights of San Francisco and nearer towns; the Bay, shimmering under the full moon's brightness—then, with morning, the sun rising above the warm blanket of fog that has stolen in thru the night. Plan now to spend a night at West

Point and enjoy these superlative scenes from this mountain height. Hotel and Outdoor Sleeping Accommodations, all recently renovated. Excellent Meals. Martin W. Kliewe [innkeeper].⁷

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The West Point Inn thrived during the 1920s as the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railway (as it was now called) continued hauling passengers up the mountain and to the increasingly popular Muir Woods National Monument. Mt. Tamalpais State Park was created in the late 1920s, its lands practically surrounding the area occupied by the West Point Inn. The Mountain Play brought crowds to post-play dinners, and the play's directors and actors lodged at the inn during the rehearsal periods before the annual performances. Surrounding communities in and outside of Marin County sprouted with commuter-oriented suburbs served by modern interurban electric train service. These new neighborhoods attracted people who enjoyed the outdoors and the scenery of Marin County.

A building boom in Marin County and the resulting need for increased domestic water supply led to the creation in 1912 of the Marin Municipal Water District. The new district took over the lands of the North Coast Water Company, which controlled the south slopes of Mt. Tamalpais. The West Point Inn became the property of the water district, which leased the grounds back to the railroad company.

Despite occasional efforts to close the mountain railroad and replace it with a paved automobile roadway, the trains continued to run until 1929 when a devastating fire roared over the south side of Mt. Tamalpais, burning hundreds of homes in Mill Valley and damaging the railroad infrastructure. The West Point Inn survived the fire, but the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railway went out of business, tearing up the rails and ties and leaving a well-engineered dirt roadway for future use as a hiking trail.⁸

The closure of the railroad and the subsequent Great Depression initially slowed activities at the inn. Despite the economic hardships (or perhaps because of them), hiking continued to flourish on Mt. Tamalpais and the inn remained open. Thousands came to Mt. Tamalpais every weekend using the frequent and inexpensive train and ferries of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (round trip 48¢.) It was said the throngs of hikers that streamed from the trains sounded like an army marching through Mill Valley. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) accomplished many projects on Mt. Tamalpais, including the Sidney B. Cushing Amphitheater at the location of the Mountain Play, recreational and environmental enhancements in Muir Woods National Monument and Mt. Tamalpais State Park, and road building in the area. The CCC performed some work at West Point Inn, as evidenced in a plan map of the West Point Inn dated 1937. The plan indicated water system improvements, fire breaks, and retaining wall work. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) apparently also worked at the inn: in 1980 workers found a note in a wall stating, "Old Men's Bathroom: WPA Project # 50-12069."⁹

The CCC map presents the best accurate depiction of structures and landscape existing in 1937, and is notable for illustrating how few changes have been made at the inn grounds since that time (See Additional Documentation, Figure 1). The map labeled key vegetation on site, including manzanita, bay, live oak, and wax myrtle. The main inn building, with porches and entry stairs of wood and masonry, is accurately depicted as well as the chicken shed and five guest cabins, all of which are extant today. The only building noted that has been removed is a small shed used for producing and storing acetylene at the south corner of the inn at the railroad grade. The map shows the original alignment of the trail to the cabins, a section of which has been covered by a disabled person's access ramp and deck.

The West Point Inn operated as a commercial hostelry throughout the 1930s despite the closing of the railroad. Its prices remained reasonable: in 1942 the overnight rate, including dinner and breakfast, was \$2.75. During the wartime Army occupation of Mt. Tamalpais, an unknown number of soldiers lived at the West Point Inn and many relaxed there during off duty hours. The war, however, caused the closing of the inn in 1943, as the nation's energy was focused elsewhere. The owners considered razing all the structures as a fire hazard. Immediately, outraged members of the Sierra Club negotiated a lease from the Marin Municipal Water District and reopened the inn, on reduced hours. Soon succeeding the Sierra Club, the newly formed West Point Club purchased the furnishings and equipment and leased the grounds for one dollar a year. Members paid \$5 for membership, \$2 per year, and \$1 per night for a room. By 1950, the West Point Inn once again was open all year.¹⁰

The postwar period in California saw sudden suburban growth and an increase in the population of the San Francisco Bay Area. As in the early part of the century, new residents were attracted to the area, especially Marin County,

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by the scenic attractions and recreational opportunities. Hiking again became popular and as time went by, running and mountain bikers joined the users of Mt. Tamalpais, which attracted people from all over California. The West Point Inn remained open during this period, but began to appear dilapidated by the 1970s with little maintenance accomplished on the then-70-year-old building. It was also considered to be overly exclusive by MMWD, which led to the formation of a new controlling organization.¹¹

With renovations that would save the inn in mind, members formed the non-profit West Point Inn Association in 1978 and commenced a number of restoration and rebuilding projects. During the 1980s the porch was rebuilt and oak floors installed in the common rooms. The major project of that decade was the construction of a split-level innkeepers quarters as an addition on the north side of the old members lounge. The architect took pains to retain the basic style of the Inn while providing modern amenities.

During the 1990s, members improved the septic system, added a foundation on the 1918 Honeymoon Cabin, shingled other cabins and strengthened their underpinnings, and restored the windows in the members lounge. To comply with accessibility laws, an extensive wood ramp was constructed between the main inn building and Cabin 1. Cabin 1 was rehabilitated and made accessible to people with disabilities. In recent years the kitchen has been upgraded, safety features installed, and hazard trees removed. The inn continues to offer rustic lodging, shelter, refreshments to passing hikers, indirect support to the Mountain Play and other activities on Mt. Tamalpais, and monthly summer pancake breakfasts.¹²

Conclusion

The West Point Inn is one of only two surviving early mountain inns on Mt. Tamalpais. The Muir Woods Inn burned in 1913 and its replacement no longer stands. The Tavern of Tamalpais was destroyed in a 1923 fire and its replacement was eventually removed. The Mountain Home Inn was rebuilt in the 1980s as a more upscale establishment. Only the ornate and private Tourist Club remains, now surrounded by suburban development but still offering its fine view of Muir Woods. The West Point Inn reflects its past as a Western outpost that thrived during the days of stage coaches, railroads, and hardy outdoors-loving men and women who thought nothing of climbing steep mountain trails in search of respite from the rigors of their city lives.

The West Point Inn is the last of its kind and has endured through numerous challenges offering, almost uninterrupted for more than 104 years, rustic accommodations to hikers, horsemen, and other visitors. Owned by the Marin Municipal Water District and operated by a volunteer board as the West Point Inn Association, the inn continues to welcome hikers and visitors, providing a rest stop with an unforgettable view, offering refreshments and helpful information, emergency services, and simple overnight accommodations. Historic preservation efforts have kept the old inn buildings true to their roots. Propane gaslights still provide for overnight guests, as no electrical service is available except for an emergency generator. Minimal modernization has occurred, including a revamped kitchen and facilities for access to people with disabilities.

The West Point Inn is a relic of the times when stagecoaches and trains brought hikers and sightseers from around the globe to the famous Mt. Tamalpais with its stunning views of San Francisco and environs. It is a unique and increasingly rare surviving mountain lodge that played a part in the development of recreation in the San Francisco Bay Area, and a well-preserved example of the architecture of the era.

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End Notes:

¹ For a detailed history of the mountain railroad, see Wurm, Ted and Al Graves, *The Crookedest Railroad in the World* (Glendale: Trans-Anglo Books, 1983); Fairley, Lincoln. *Mount Tamalpais: A History* (San Francisco: 1987), pp. 141-147.

² Cerny, Susan Dinkelspiel. *Berkeley Landmarks. An Illustrated Guide to Berkeley, California's Architectural Heritage* (Berkeley: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1994), pp. 166-173; Olmsted, Roger and T. H. Watkins. *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968), pp. 325, 330.

³ Fairley, pp. 148-151.

⁴ Toogood, Anna Coxe. *Historic Resource Study: A Civil History of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore California* (Denver: National Park Service, [1980]), pp. 10, 13-16, 24-25; Fairley, pp. 79-97.

⁵ Spitz, Barry, *Mill Valley: A History* (San Anselmo: Potrero Meadow Publishing, 1998), p. 109; Fairley, pp. 148-151.

⁶ Historical Files, West Point Inn Association.

⁷ Historical Files, West Point Inn Association.

⁸ Fairley, pp. 146-147.

⁹ Historical Files, West Point Inn Association; "Marin Municipal Water District, Camp Alpine Lake, West Point" (Plans dated September 1937).

¹⁰ Fairley, p. 151; Wurm, p. 103.

¹¹ Fairley, p. 151.

¹² Historical Files, West Point Inn Association.

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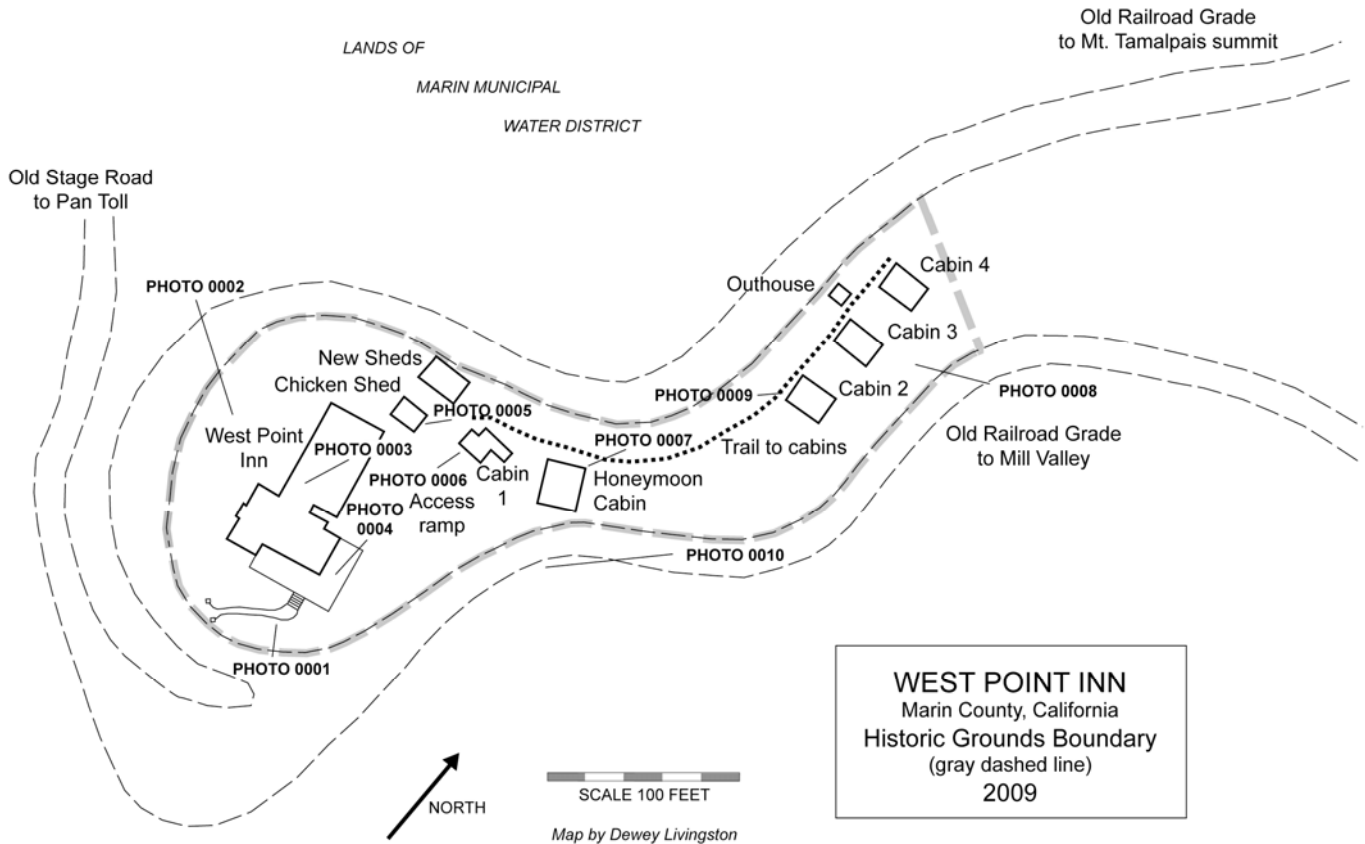
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Additional Documentation: Sketch Map



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Additional Documentation: Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: West Point Inn

City or Vicinity: Mill Valley vicinity

County: Marin

State: California

Photographer: D.S. (Dewey) Livingston

Date Photographed: August 13, 2008

- 0001, West Point Inn, entrance façade of main building. View to northeast.
0002, West Point Inn, north façade of main building with member's lounge at left. View to south.
0003, West Point Inn, interior of member's lounge.
0004, West Point Inn, porch on east side. View to south.
0005, West Point Inn, chicken shed. View to northwest.
0006, West Point Inn, cabin # 1. View to north.
0007, West Point Inn, "Honeymoon Cabin." View to west.
0008, West Point Inn, cabins # 2, 3, 4. View to west.
0009, West Point Inn, cabin # 2. View to north.
0010, West Point Inn, railroad grade with Inn in background. View to west.

Historic Photos (courtesy of West Point Inn Association):

Historic #1, West Point Inn, circa 1905.

Historic #2, West Point Inn, circa 1925.

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Additional Documentation: CCC Map, 1937 (Figure 1)

