

NIVEN NURSERY,  
ORIGINAL GREENHOUSE COMPLEX (NN-5)  
2 WARD STREET  
MARIN COUNTY  
LARKSPUR, CA

HABS NO. CA-2867-C

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NIVEN NURSERY, Original Greenhouse Complex  
(Building NN-5)

HABS No. CA-2867-C

Location: 2 Ward Street, Larkspur, Marin County, California

Significance: The Original Greenhouse complex was constructed as part of the original nursery greenhouse complex and nursery operation created by James Niven and members of the Niven family from 1921 to 1983. The buildings derive their significance as an example of Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial nursery development and Agriculture/Horticulture of the Larkspur area of Northern California. The buildings were used for commercial nursery operations for over sixty years.

Description: The Original Greenhouse complex is a three-greenhouse building complex that was constructed ca. 1921–1942 in a utilitarian style as one of the original buildings in the western portion of the Niven property. The complex of three interconnected wood-frame commercial greenhouses is part of the original Niven Nursery complex. The first greenhouse was constructed between 1921 and 1942 with a horizontal clapboard exterior lower façade with hinged vents on the south elevation; glazed upper sections of the exterior façade; a glazed half-gable roof; and one double-hinged wood door on the east elevation. The greenhouse consists of an east-west oriented walkway with access to three perpendicular wings containing wooden potting benches and accessed through one double-hinged wood door. The second greenhouse (constructed in 1921) has a horizontal clapboard exterior lower façade and glazed upper sections; a glazed gable roof; and wood between the glass panes. The greenhouse has a small room of stud wall and wood frame construction attached to the east façade that houses two metal boilers used for heating the greenhouses, with two boiler stacks protruding from the roof. A small water tank is elevated on a wooden cupola on the roof adjacent to the stacks. The building, including the eastern addition, measures 27 feet in width and 200 feet in length. The third greenhouse (constructed between 1924 and 1942) has a horizontal clapboard exterior lower façade and glazed upper sections; a glazed gable roof; and wood between the glass panes. The greenhouse consists of a north-south oriented, enclosed potting area with a flat metal shed roof, transom windows, and a sliding barn door. From the potting area, there is access to two perpendicular greenhouse wings containing wood potting benches that are accessed through single double-hinged wood doors.

History: Original was constructed ca. 1921–1942 in a utilitarian style as one of the complexes in the western portion of the property. The complex is believed to have been designed and constructed by owner James Niven as part of his nursery complex. (See HABS No. CA-2867 for a historical overview of Niven Nursery.)

Sources of Information:

Hill, Ward. *Historic and Architectural Assessment of the Niven Nursery, 2 Ward Street, Larkspur, CA*, April 2000; [Historicaerials.com](http://Historicaerials.com).

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