

NIVEN NURSERY,
GREENHOUSES #1-8 (NN-14)
2 WARD STREET
MARIN COUNTY
LARKSPUR, CA

HABS NO. CA-2867-F

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, Greenhouses #1–8
(Building NN-14)

HABS No. CA-2867-F

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

Significance: Greenhouses #1–8 were constructed ca. 1939–1943 as part of the overall nursery complex and nursery operation created by James Niven and the Niven family from 1921 to 1983. The building derives its significance as an example of Early 20th Century Commercial nursery development and Agriculture/Horticulture of the Larkspur area of Northern California. The building was used for commercial nursery operations for over sixty years.

Description: The Greenhouse #1-8 buildings were constructed ca. 1939–1940s in a utilitarian style as a group of eight greenhouses. The buildings are one-story, rectangular-shaped, symmetrical structures. The lower portion of the walls are formed from wood horizontal shiplap siding. The upper portion of the walls contains glazed glass panes in wood frames. The buildings have an asymmetrical front-gabled roof with glazed glass panes in wood frames. Greenhouses 1–4 have a steel truss roof system attached to an exterior wood framing, creating an open free-span space. Greenhouses 5–8 have a wood-truss roof structure. Greenhouses 1–4 have a single wood and glass door with multiple lights on the south façade. Greenhouses 5–8 have a sliding wood and glass door on the south façade. Greenhouse buildings 1–5 measure 34 feet in width, and 220 feet in length. Greenhouse buildings 6–8 each measure 26 feet in width, and 102 feet in length(see Site Plan). No interior access was possible because the extremely poor condition of the structures (overgrown with berry bushes, broken windows, etc.) created safety and insurance liability issues. As seen from outside of the buildings, the interior of the buildings contained long wood tables for plant placement. The buildings are in poor condition. No additions are known to have occurred.

History: The Greenhouse Buildings #1-8 were constructed ca. 1939–1940s in a utilitarian style as a group of eight greenhouses in the western portion of the Niven property. They are 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.

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