

GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER, POLE BARN
1847 Aquetong Road
New Hope
Bucks County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6783-L
HABS PA-6783-L

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER, POLE BARN
1847 Aquetong Road
New Hope
Bucks County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6783-L
HABS PA-6783-L

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER, POLE BARN

HABS No. PA-6783-L

Location: 1847 Aquetong Road, Solebury Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 18938.

Owner: The property is owned by Mira Nakashima Yarnall and Kevin Nakashima, the daughter and son of the original owners, George and Marion Nakashima.

Present Use: The pole barn is used for lumber storage.

Significance: The pole barn, constructed in 1990, is not currently considered to be of significance due to its age and the fact that it was not design by, or built under, the direction of George Nakashima. It was, however, designed by family members, in particular, Nakashima's granddaughter Maria Amagasu, and is important to the George Nakashima Woodworker Complex in that it houses the valuable slabs of wood of all varieties and from all corners of the globe used to create Nakashima furniture.

Description: The pole barn is a expansive structure, measuring roughly 45' x 180', and made of wood with steel posts and trusses resting on a concrete foundation. While it is not considered historically significant today, it is not unsympathetic to its surroundings. It is covered with naturally weathered boards and exposed rafter tails that mimic other buildings on the property. Large steel trusses allow for a wide open expanse, supporting a low gabled roof lit by skylights covered with corrugated translucent material. It has a concrete floor, to accommodate the fork-lift needed to move the lumber, and the space is flanked by palettes of wood slabs. Large, over-mounted garage-style doors located at each end provide egress for the removal of the wood by fork lift.

History: The pole barn was constructed in 1990 with additions in 1995 and 2006. It is a very large structure that serves as a lumber storage building, containing the huge slabs of wood from which the Nakashima furniture is fashioned. It was built to supplement the wood storage facilities created by the original lumber storage building erected in 1956, and another more utilitarian lumber storage building erected in 1982. Prior to the construction of the pole barn, the Nakashimas had to maintain a storage facility off site to accommodate the wood collected by George Nakashima, and now his daughter, Mira, as they were made available; they have traveled the globe to take advantage of exotic and old growth trees that have fallen or otherwise must be harvested, and had them specially milled to create monolithic slabs. According to Mira,

One of my father's legacies was a vast collection of air-dried lumber, which had outgrown its storage space. My daughter, Maria, who had been studying

architecture at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, returned to help me design and build a new housing based on a traditional Pennsylvania 'pole barn,' the name we still used for this structure even though it ended up with a steel frame."¹

Thus the last structure to be designed and built under the direction of George Nakashima, was the reception house, erected in 1977. The pole barn was erected the year of George Nakashima's death and is the only building on site that was not designed by George Nakashima. It was erected as the largest lumber storage facility on site, designed by Maria Amagasu, in 1990.

Sources: James A. Michener Art Museum, *George Nakashima and the Modernist Movement* (essays by Steven Beyer and Matilda McQuaid). Doylestown, Pennsylvania: James A. Michener Art Museum, 2001.

Mira Nakashima. *Nature, Form & Spirit: the Life and Legacy of George Nakashima*. New York: Abrams, 2003.

Historian: Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS, 2012

¹ Mira Nakashima, *Nature, Form & Spirit: The Life and Legacy of George Nakashima* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003), 244.