



Community Planning & Economic Development

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Thurston County Historic Register Nomination Form

This form is required to nominate properties to the Thurston County Historic Register of Historic Places. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Historic Preservation Office with any questions at 360-867-2117.

Staff Use Only	Date Stamp
LABEL	

PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. Historic Property Name: Poncin Estate Art Gallery
2. Historic Property Address: 9934 Point View Rd., NE, Olympia, WA 98506
3. Tax Parcel Number: 56550104200

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION

Owner: Chad Champagne Email:

Address: PO Box 1966, Olympia WA 98507

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FORM PREPARER

Name: Shanna Stevenson Phone: 360-789-8778 Email: heritageservicesolympia@hotmail.com

Address: 3515 Kensington Court SE City: Olympia, State: WA Zip Code: 98501

Signature: _____ Date: August, 2024

NOMINATED ELEMENTS

Please indicate below significant elements of the property that are included in the nomination by checking the appropriate box(es) below. These elements should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions	<input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

EXTENT OF CHANGES

Please summarize the changes that have been made to the original plan, exterior, materials, cladding, windows, interior, and other significant elements by selecting the choices below. If the property has been previously documented, these may be indicated on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory Form. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

ORIGINAL MATERIALS INTACT

Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint , relocation of walls, or roof plan)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Original cladding/exterior materials	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Other elements	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION NARRATIVE

Describe in detail the original (if known) and present physical appearance, condition and architectural characteristics of the site (context, location), exterior (all four walls), and interior. Please include a list of known alterations and their dates (use additional sheets if necessary)

Physical Description before 2000s renovation:

The Brown House is located at the tip of Johnson Point, approximately ten miles northeast of Olympia, and enjoys panoramic views across an expansive lawn to Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. It consists of a one-story west wing with hip roof (formerly the Poncin Gallery) joined to a later two-story east wing with hip roof, both resting on a poured concrete foundation and full basement. The roof is covered with composition shingles and broken by a large brick chimney at the juncture of the wings. The west wing, approached by a winding driveway bordered by a concrete railing with ornate balusters, has stucco walls ornamented with doubled engaged pilasters topped by a wide frieze and cornice. The west façade has rounded steps leading to french doors with a fanlight transom, topped by a canopy roof. The north façade, facing the water, has three similar doors, two of which open onto a deck with wooden railing and stairway to the lawn. Two basement doors lead to a storage area below the deck. Walls of the east wing are clad with stucco on the first story and clapboards on the second story and basement. A porch on the south façade shelters an entry door. The north façade has a row of plate glass windows on the first story and two pairs of multi-paned picture windows on the second. A row of smaller multi-paned windows light the basement. The building is maintained in good condition.

2024 Appearance of the property: The original Brown wing of the house was demolished. The new three-story section is faced with white limestone and encircled with wraparound porches with ornate balustrades on the east façade. The arched windows have limestone surrounds and there is a newer balustrade along the roofline of the gallery, which has been renovated on the interior but maintains some original character. Double stairs lead up to a remodeled, projecting entry central with a square pillar. The south wing roofline has a gable front façade and a projecting turret feature on the south end. The north end next to the gallery has a newer projecting entry. The lower area is accessed through an arcaded area under the new wraparound porch. According to newspaper accounts, the remodeled structure encompasses over 13,334 feet square feet with features such as a home theater and game room.

1992 Historic Features from Thurston County Register Placement:

1. Winding driveway bordered by a concrete railing with ornate balusters.
2. One story west wing with hipped roof has stucco walls with double engaged pilasters topped by a wide frieze and cornice.
3. West facade has rounded steps leading to french doors with a fanlight transom, topped by a canopy roof.
4. North facade has three similar doors, two of which open onto a deck with wooden railing and stairway to the lawn.

Features That Would Be Desirable to Restore to the Original

1. Skylights/Roof System
2. Roof Balustrade

HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

The County Historic Register recognizes properties that are at least 50 years old (or of lesser age if of exceptional importance), and which are important for one or more of the following reasons:

- xHistorical Importance -- the property is: the site of an historic event with an effect upon society; identified with a person or group who had some influence on society; or exemplifies the cultural, social, religious, economic, political, aesthetic or engineering history of the county.
Architectural Importance -- the property is: (a) an individual building that embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, period, style or method of design or construction; is the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the county; or (b) a group of buildings that may lack distinction individually but together are easily distinguished as a unit and characterize an earlier era, way of living, and construction of the built environment.
- Archaeological Importance -- the property has yielded or may be likely to yield archaeological information important in pre-history or history.
- Birthplaces, Graves , Cemeteries -- the property is: a birthplace or grave of a person of outstanding historical importance; or a cemetery significant because of its age, distinctive design features or association with historic events or cultural patterns.

HISTORICAL DATA (IF KNOWN)

Date of Construction ca. 1906, 1946 Other Significant Date: remodeled 2000's

Architects: _____ Builder: _____

Architectural Styles: _____

Materials: Concrete, wood

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the criteria for the Register of Historic Places. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph that lists the relevant criteria (use additional sheets if necessary). This section should include a thorough narrative of the property's history, context, occupants, and uses. If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

At Johnson Point on Henderson Inlet, several buildings are associated with Gamma and Birdie Poncin, who after the turn of the 20th century, purchased over 200 acres of woodland and developed a large estate on Johnson Point.

The area has a multi-cultural history. The Point was called S q w a'ts q s meaning "crooked promontory" by area tribes according to T. T. Waterman. The Wilkes expedition in the 1840s dubbed the site "Moody's Point" for a member of the expedition. In 1853, Ezra Meeker called it "Johnson's Point" for an early resident. By the 1890s, the site was called "Kanaka Jack's" for Kanaka Jack (1828-1906) of Hawaiian descent and his wife, a Native American, believed to be Katie (1847-?). The 1900 census shows two other Hawaiians in the same household, Kanaka Harry (1836-1919) and likely John Levi (Kanaka) 1847-1907. The 1900 census lists Kanaka Jack's profession as "U.S. Shore Light," so he may have been the light tender for the Johnson Point Light as well. Kanaka Jack's was a stopping point for steamboats to take on wood and water. According to his obituary, Jack was a former Hudson's Bay Company employee and his wife was a Native American. Jack died in 1906, friend John Levi in 1907 and Harry in 1919. They are buried in the Forest Cemetery in Olympia. No information is available about Jack's wife. They apparently continued to live on the site after the Poncin acquisition.

There was a navigation light on Johnson Point as early as 1889 which was a lantern on a pole. In the 1920s there was a concrete structure at the end of the point likely powered by wet cell batteries. Currently there is a lighted buoy at the point.

Gamma Poncin and his first wife Eliza had come to Seattle from Minnesota in 1872. He was a haberdasher and through a series of business transactions, eventually became president of Yesler Estates, managing the numerous properties of Henry Yesler, a founder of Seattle. Eliza died in 1911 and Poncin married Birdie Hydelliff Poncin (1869-1948), who was likely his spouse when the Johnson Point property was developed.

After purchasing the property in 1906, Poncins built a large home on Johnson Point; an elaborate barn, complete with finished floors and walls; greenhouses, peacock and deer enclosures; and brought other exotic animals. The non-native white-tailed deer which now frequent Johnson Point are remnants of that introduction.

Most interesting to onlookers was an enclosed concrete art gallery lit by a skylight in the European manner. A large vault was built under the gallery to house Poncin art treasures. The gallery likely dates from around 1911.

After Gamma Poncin's death in 1922, the estate fell into some disrepair until it was purchased in 1928 by Henry (1860-1934) and Irene Merritt (1868-1937) Stumer from Birdie Poncin. The Stumers had developed the Alderbrook Inn on Hood Canal and they too fell in love with the natural beauty of the point. They purchased the property for \$125,000.

Stumers developed a spa called "Beacon Beach Resort," honoring the navigation light on the point. They built a number of cottages and tent houses which opened up to a verandah around the main house. The cement art gallery was opened by windows and french doors extending onto a terrace.

Stumers added an extensive kitchen to the main house. A flotilla of green and white boats were available as well. Stumers further envisioned a swimming pool, and the big colonial barn was to be the clubhouse of a planned golf course. They also planned to subdivide part of the property for private homes. These later ideas were never carried out – Stumers' resort was short-lived, lost the property for non-payment back to Birdie Poncin by 1930.

The property was subsequently acquired in 1935 by A. E. Schluylor of Chicago, who subdivided and sold the property. Still extant on Johnson Point are the gallery, barn, caretaker's cottage (although it has been moved), greenhouses which were designed by Joseph Wohleb, now in disrepair, and a guest house -- all now part of

residences on Johnson Point. Poncins are remembered by Poncin Cove on Henderson Inlet. Many other of the Poncin buildings were purchased by individuals—some of which were extensively remodeled.

Another part of the multi-cultural history of the site is Kaemon Kurose, (1889-1983) a Japanese gardener who took care of the Poncin grounds and in the early 1930s, managed the site for events. Also an inventor, he died in 1983 in Seattle.

Ironically, one of deed restrictions of the Johnson Point Community Association Articles of Incorporation in 1936 was that no one except of “the white race” could own or occupy the property unless a “servant” of the property owner.

Among the purchasers of the former Poncin property, were Dr. Ralph C. (1906-1984) and Lillian Burkland Brown (1908-2011) who came to Olympia in the 1930s. They bought the former art gallery and grounds in 1940 and added a two-story wooden structure adjacent to the gallery as a summer home. After Dr. Brown’s service in World War II, the family moved permanently to the site where a more permanent house was built and connected to the art gallery. The addition was built by Clarence Ely of South Bay. The first two floors were built in 1946-7 and the third story added later. The Browns used the gallery for family projects. Dr. Brown had a large medical practice and both he and his wife were active in the schools of the area.

Dr. Brown died in 1984 and Lillian Brown in 2011.

The property was purchased from the Browns by another owner in 1991. That owner eventually renovated the property transforming the house adjacent to the gallery into a large three-story property over several years.

The 1991 owner sold the property to Johnson Point Beach House in 2010 who sold to the current owner (2024) in 2017. The property was placed on the Thurston County Historic Register in 1992.

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