## 1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

**Historic Name:** Tor House (Robinson Jeffers Home)

**Other Name/Site Number:** Tor House

**Street and Number** (if applicable)**:** 26304 Ocean View Avenue

**City/Town:** Carmel **County:** Monterey **State:** California

National Park System Advisory Board (NPSAB) Meeting Draft – December 9-10, 2024

## 2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

**NHL Criteria:** 2

**NHL Criteria Exceptions:** N/A

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**NHL Theme(s):** III. Expressing Cultural Values; 3. Literature, 5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design

**Period(s) of Significance:** 1919–1962

**Significant Person(s)** (only Criterion 2)**:** Robinson Jeffers

**Cultural Affiliation** (only Criterion 6)**:** N/A

**Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder:** Robinson Jeffers

**Historic Contexts:** Mid-Twentieth-Century American Poetry

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement.** We are collecting this information under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467) and 36 CFR part 65. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate properties nominated as National Historic Landmarks. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has approved this collection of information and assigned Control No. 1024-0276.

**Estimated Burden Statement.** Public reporting burden is 2 hours for an initial inquiry letter and 344 hours for NPS Form 10-934 (per response), including the time it takes to read, gather and maintain data, review instructions and complete the letter/form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate, or any aspects of this form, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop 242, Reston, VA 20192. Please do not send your form to this address.

## 3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

**Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?**

___ Yes

_X_ No

## 4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**1. Acreage of Property:** 0.64 acres

**2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:**

**UTM References:**

**Zone** 10 **Easting** 595565 **Northing** 4044603

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**3. Verbal Boundary Description**:

The boundary of the property is the same as the legally recorded property boundary as shown in the Monterey County Tax Assessor's Map Book 9, Page 43 (Tax Code Area 60-23) CARMEL-BY-THE SEA, ADD.NO.T BLKS.B12, B15 & B19 JEFFERS ESTATES. The property is #21 in Section 432 (See Plot Plan attached to this application).

Starting on the southeastern corner of the property on Ocean View Avenue, the boundary goes:
N 50°44' E, for 78.00'; N 54° 27' 30" E, for 60.11'; S 62°54' W, for 63.17'; it then parallels Scenic Road: S 62°50'25" E, for 62.75'; S 45°38'25" E, for 48.78'; S 14°36'10" E, for 31.97'; it continues from Scenic Road back to Ocean View Ave.: N 71°40' E, for 100.5'; S 3°40' E, for 28.43'; N 64°57'20" E, for 123.78'; then returns to the southeastern corner of the property, parallel to Ocean View Ave.: 140° 50'10" W, for 111.67'.

**4. Boundary Justification:**

The boundary selected is an intact lot remaining from the original property purchased over a number of years by Robinson Jeffers and his wife Una. At one time they owned 36 lots in what is called the Jeffers Estates in the Assessor's Map, but Jeffers sold several lots at the north end of the property to thwart an attempted takeover by the City of Carmel through eminent domain; the other lots were sold by the family in order to pay the inheritance taxes after Jeffers died. Those lots have lost their integrity: they all have homes built upon them.

## 5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"In the eyes of many, Robinson Jeffers is America's greatest poet." So began a brief article about Jeffers published in the April 1932 issue of *Vanity Fair*. Accompanying the article was an Edward Weston photograph of Jeffers "standing in front of Tor House, which is hewn out of the great stones which form the seacoast at Carmel."[1] Soon after the *Vanity Fair* profile appeared, another Weston portrait of Jeffers was featured on the cover of *Time*. Within the magazine, a review essay praised a new book by Jeffers and observed that "a considerable public" now regards Jeffers as "the most impressive poet the U.S. has yet produced." "Hard by the Pacific surf-line at Carmel, California," the essay reported, describing the place where Jeffers lived, "stands a tower of grey Santa Lucia granite, sea-worn boulders rolled up from the shore and heaved into place" by Jeffers himself, with a "house nearby, built also of sea boulders."[2]

These magazine articles are significant for two reasons. First, they indicate, at a time in America's history when T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and others commanded nationwide attention as the vanguard of modernist American poetry, that Jeffers—whose style, choice of themes, and use of narrative free verse set him apart from his contemporaries—was seen across America as among the most important poets of the period. Second, Jeffers was regarded in popular imagination not just as an exceptional poet, but as the inspired architect of Tor House and Hawk Tower, the granite structures he built with his own hands on the Pacific shore.

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From 1919, the year he moved into Tor House, until 1962, the year he died there, Jeffers devoted himself to his twin crafts: poetry and stonework. With words (more than eighteen books in a forty-year career), Jeffers built an artistic edifice unlike any other of his time. With stones, he created a dwelling place for himself and his family equally unique in the Modern era—a sanctuary, one with its setting and elemental in material form. The two crafts were closely intertwined. The experience of building his stone home deepened Jeffers's connection to the natural environment of the Carmel coast and profoundly influenced his poetry. During his years at Tor House, Jeffers developed a philosophy of life he termed "Inhumanism" that involved a "shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man," a "rejection of human solipsism," and, most important, a "recognition of the transhuman magnificence" of the natural world.[3] These ideas informed his commentary on major events of the time, including World Wars I and II, and anticipated core ideals of the late twentieth-century environmental movement.

Jeffers continues to be recognized for his powerful and often dark narrative portrayals of contemporary life, unflinching depictions of human self-centeredness and pathology, criticism of war, and vision of the unity and enduring beauty of the natural world. All of Jeffers's major works were written at Tor House, and it is the location most closely associated with his distinctive contributions to mid-twentieth century American poetry and environmental literature. As a property associated with the life of a person nationally significant in the history of the United States, Tor House merits recognition as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 2; as a

[1] "Robinson Jeffers and His Sons," *Vanity Fair* 38, no. 2 (April 1932): 27.
[2] "Harrowed Marrow," *Time* 19, no. 14 (April 4, 1932): 63–64.
[3] Robinson Jeffers, "Preface," *The Double Axe and Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1948), vii.

statement in stone of Jeffers's personality and worldview, Tor House deserves recognition under National Historic Landmark Criterion 2, Theme 3, "Expressing Cultural Values" (subthemes "literature" and "architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design").

## PROPERTY SPECIFIC HISTORY, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND THEMES

*Early Life*

John Robinson Jeffers was born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on January 10, 1887.[4] His father, Rev. Dr. William Hamilton Jeffers, was a well-to-do Presbyterian seminary professor who specialized in ancient languages, church history, and Old Testament literature. His mother, Annie Tuttle Jeffers, twenty-two years younger than her husband, was orphaned at age fourteen and raised in a prosperous family of bankers and industrialists.

Jeffers's parents took him to Europe twice, when he was four and five, and for a third time when he was eleven. For several years prior to that third trip, Jeffers had been learning Greek and Latin under the tutelage of his father, so he was well-equipped to study both languages when he was placed in a school in Leipzig, where instruction in the classics was conducted in German. The next year he was sent to a school in Vevey, Switzerland, where Greek and Latin were part of the standard curriculum, but this time instruction was in French. And that was the plan for the next few years, with Greek and Latin at the center of a liberal course of study conducted in French and German. When Jeffers returned to the United States in 1902, he was in complete command of five languages (including English). His father enrolled him as a sophomore at what is now the University of Pittsburgh. A year later the family moved to Los Angeles, where Jeffers transferred to Occidental College as a junior, graduating in 1905.

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Graduate school was a natural next step, so he enrolled at the University of Southern California in the spring of 1906, intending to study languages and literature. It was then, in a course on advanced German, focused on a study of Goethe's *Faust*, that Jeffers met Una Call Kuster, the woman destined to alter his life. Jeffers was nineteen at the time and Una (born January 6, 1884, in Mason, Michigan) was twenty-two. Married to Edward "Teddie" Kuster, a young but prominent attorney, she was working toward the completion of a baccalaureate degree begun at the University of California, Berkeley.

Jeffers left the University of Southern California after one semester and traveled with his parents back to Switzerland, where he entered a graduate program at the University of Zurich. His curriculum included *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Introduction to Philosophy), *Altere englische Literaturegeshichte* (Old English Literature), *Histoire de la litérature français de 1840 à 1900* (French Literature from 1840 to 1900), *Dantes Leben und Werke* (Dante's Life and Work), *Spanische Romanzen Poesie* (Spanish Romance Poetry), and *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit* (History of the Roman Empire)—which meant that he was using French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Old English simultaneously. Jeffers enjoyed his classes, but not enough to remain in Europe. After a semester he returned to California, uncertain of his future.

[4] Except where otherwise indicated, biographical information in this nomination comes from James Karman, *Robinson Jeffers: Poet and Prophet* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

For something to do when he arrived, Jeffers translated German medical papers for his mother's physician, which sparked an interest in the field. So, in the fall of 1907 he re-enrolled at the University of Southern California, this time in the medical school. Una was still a student at the university—she earned a BA in 1908 and an MA in Philosophy in 1910 (with a thesis titled "The Enduring Element of Mysticism in Man")—and their paths soon crossed again.

A person who knew Jeffers at the time described him as "a tall, slender handsome youth, who wore [a] very stylish loose coat and very up-to-date 'peg-top' trousers."[5] He belonged to a fraternity, ran for the cross-country track team, and, as the top student in his physiology class, distinguished himself as a gifted scientist. Una, equally bright, was known for her Botticellian beauty, her "ineffable charm," and for the long braid of chestnut-colored hair that fell down her back.[6] Despite the barriers between them, the two were drawn to each other. "Without the wish of either of us," Una wrote, reflecting on this period in their life years later, "our love was one of those *fatal attractions* that happen unplanned and undesired."[7]

Perhaps to relieve some of the strain caused by the intensity of his involvement with Una, Jeffers dropped out of medical school in 1910, moved to Seattle, and enrolled in the Department of Forestry at the University of Washington. Jeffers had second thoughts about Seattle soon after he arrived. He abandoned his studies before the end of his first semester and returned to Los Angeles—restless, uncertain of his future, and still very much in love. In time, Una's husband Teddie learned of her affair. Shattered by the discovery, he persuaded her to undertake a solitary trip to Europe, believing that a prolonged separation would give them both a chance to think about their future. She left in April 1912 and returned in August. During the five and a half months she was away—traveling through England, Scotland, Ireland, and other countries—the couple realized their marriage was no longer tenable, and steps toward a divorce were begun.

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Una, never emotionally out of touch with Jeffers despite their months apart, joined him in Seattle, where he resumed his study of forestry. As soon as her divorce was final, the two were married in Tacoma—on August 2, 1913. Una's almost immediate pregnancy and Robinson's decision to abandon forestry once and for all prompted the couple to return to Los Angeles, where they accepted an invitation to stay with Robinson's parents until their baby was born. Their daughter Maeve arrived May 5, 1914, but she only lived for a day. In the wake of their grief, they resolved to live in Lyme Regis, on the southern coast of England, but that dream ended in July, when Europe was engulfed by World War I.

Having heard about the village of Carmel-by-the-Sea in northern California, Robinson and Una decided to reside there for a time—just long enough to get their bearings. They wanted to be in a place where Jeffers could write, which as he had come to realize, was the only thing he ever wanted to do. Neither of them knew much about the area, so they were not sure what to expect, but they were immediately entranced. "When the stage-coach topped the hill from Monterey and we looked down through the pine and sea-fogs on Carmel Bay," Jeffers wrote later, "it was evident that we had come without knowing it to our inevitable place."[8]

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[5] *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*, Volume 2: 1931–1939, ed. James Karman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 557n1.

[6] Edith Wherry, "A Poet's Wife—Una Jeffers," *Jeffers Studies* 19 (2020): 54, 55.

[7] *Collected Letters*, 2: 473.

[8] Robinson Jeffers, biographical note on jacket of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1925).

When Robinson and Una arrived in September 1914, Carmel was already well known for its vibrant artistic and intellectual culture. In addition to a "professors' row," where a number of academics from Stanford University and the University of California had cottages, the village was home to painters, sculptors, dancers, musicians, architects, actors, and writers of the first order. Among the famous artists and writers who lived in Carmel for varying lengths of time prior to Robinson and Una's arrival were Gertrude Atherton, Mary Austin, William Rose Benét, Van Wyck Brooks, William Merritt Chase, Armin Hansen, Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, Xavier Martinez, William Ritschel, William Silva, Upton Sinclair, George Sterling, Jessie Lynch Williams, and Harry Leon Wilson. For Jeffers—a newlywed husband, grieving father, and aspiring poet—it was an ideal place for self-discovery.[9] Una, looking back, described their early days:

> So began our happy life in Carmel, full and over full of joy from the first. For a long time we knew no one, but were busy from morning till night anyway. Robin was writing poetry, his reputation yet to make; I was studying certain aspects of late 18th Century England and receiving from the State Library at Sacramento, through the little village library, priceless packages of old and rare books on my subject. There was housework, and continual woodchopping to fill the maw of the great fireplace in our drafty cabin. We bought simple textbooks on flowers, shells, birds, and stars and used them. We explored the village street by street, followed the traces of the moccasin trail through the forest, and dreamed around the crumbling walls about the old mission. When we walked up from the shore at sunset scarfs of smoke drifting up from hidden chimneys foretold our own happy supper and evening by the fire.[10]

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Excursions along the Big Sur coast south of Carmel also had a great impact on Jeffers. He referred to his encounter with the area and his immersion in its wild beauty as the second of two crucial accidents that "changed and directed" his life. "The first of these accidents," Jeffers said, was meeting Una: "My nature is cold and undiscriminating; she excited and focused it, gave it eyes and nerves and sympathies." "She is more like a woman in a Scotch ballad," he added, attempting to describe her ongoing influence, "passionate, untamed and rather heroic—or like a falcon—than like any ordinary person." The second accident was his experience of "the Monterey coast mountains," where for the first time in his life he "could see people living—amid magnificent unspoiled scenery—essentially as they did in the Idyls or the Sagas, or in Homer's Ithaca. Here was life purged of its ephemeral accretions. Men were riding after cattle, or plowing the headland, hovered by white sea-gulls, as they have done for thousands of years, and will for thousands of years to come. Here was contemporary life that was also permanent life. . . ."[11]

With a modest inheritance to support them, Jeffers devoted himself to writing, but he had not yet found his true voice as a poet, and, despite his bucolic life in Carmel, he felt restless and uncertain of himself. The death of his father in December 1914 added a new layer of grief to the ongoing anguish that stemmed from the loss of his daughter, and the increasing violence of World War I troubled him deeply.

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[9] For descriptions of early Carmel, see Daisy F. Bostick and Dorothea Castelhun, *Carmel at Work and Play* (Carmel, CA: Seven Arts, 1925); Alissandra Dramov, *Carmel-by-the-Sea, The Early Years, 1903–1913* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013); Harold Gilliam and Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, 1992); Sharron Lee Hale, *A Tribute to Yesterday* (Santa Cruz, CA: Valley Publishers, 1980).

[10] Una Jeffers, "How Carmel Won the Hearts of the Jeffers Family," *Carmel Pine Cone*, April 19, 1940, 9.

[11] *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, Volume 4: Poetry 1903–1920, Prose, and Unpublished Writings*, ed. Tim Hunt (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 392.

In his introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1935), Jeffers looked back at this difficult time, when his wish to be a genuine poet exceeded his ability. At twenty-seven, a year older than poet John Keats when he died, he "had written many verses, but they were all worthless." He "had imitated and imitated, and that was all." One way out of the impasse, he surmised, would be to study the work of his contemporaries—who, he knew, were drawing inspiration from French poetry—and try to beat them to wherever they were headed. The path laid out by Stéphane Mallarmé and others, however, involved progressive renunciations: "ideas had gone, now meter had gone, imagery would have to go; then recognizable emotions would have to go; perhaps at last even words might have to go or give up their meaning, nothing left but musical syllables." Every supposed advance involved a step away from reality. Not wanting to become "slight and fantastic, abstract and unintelligible" like other poets of the day, Jeffers felt "doomed to go on imitating dead men" until a new way opened up for him.[12]

Despite the derivative nature of his work at this time, Jeffers was good enough to merit publication, and his first commercial book, *Californians*, was released by Macmillan in 1916. Critics, however, more or less agreed with Jeffers's self-assessment. "His technique," according to Marguerite Wilkinson, "unites him spiritually to the poets who were writing twenty-five years or more ago," as evidenced by the fact that he was fond of old "poetry words" like "thee" and "thou."[13] Another critic, writing anonymously in the *Overland Monthly*, concluded a one-paragraph review with very faint praise: "His work is worthwhile."[14] And finally, O. W. Firkin in the *Nation* captured Jeffers's own sense of his dilemma. Like Emerson, Firkin said, Jeffers writes with muscular power about the primacy of the natural world, but "his failings are many and grave." "Has Mr. Jeffers the patience and humility which will loose his evident force from its no less obvious incumbrances?" he wondered. "All turns on the answer to that question. I shall not mock him with the word 'promising'; promise is half ominous in our day."[15]

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*Californians* was published in October 1916. A month later, Robinson and Una welcomed the arrival of twin sons, Garth and Donnan. Neither a quiet life in a rustic cabin near the ocean, however, nor the publication of a book, nor the gift of fatherhood, lifted the bleak mood that oppressed Jeffers. No matter how much he wished for change, he declared in a poem titled "The Cloud," the darkness over him could not be pierced or lifted: "shutting me from heaven / And love and my own soul, that weary cloud / Has not been moved; never; nor now is it shaken, / Though the hills laugh April green, and the waters awaken."[16]

In addition to doubts about himself as a poet, Jeffers questioned, like other deep-thinking people of the time, what World War I meant for himself personally, for Western civilization, and for humanity as a whole. When, in April 1917—his time of darkness—the United States declared war on Germany and American men were called upon to join the fight, Jeffers could not decide what to do. Eventually, despite misgivings, he resolved to enlist, but a medical evaluation revealed some minor irregularities and the war ended in November 1918, before his application was approved.

[12] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 384–86.
[13] Marguerite Wilkinson, "Concerning Another California Poet," *Los Angeles Graphic* 49 (November 11, 1916): 4.
[14] Anonymous, *Overland Monthly* 68 (December 1916): 570.
[15] O. W. Firkin, *Nation* 105 (October 11, 1917): 400–01.
[16] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 307.

It was then, in the following spring and summer, that something happened—a third event equal in importance to the previous accidents that changed and directed Jeffers's life. "In 1919 we built Tor House," Una recounted, "on a knoll where stones jutting out of the treeless moor reminded us of tors on Dartmoor [in England]. Our favorite walk had been along the grass grown track that wound around the Point." At that time, she added, Carmel Point was mostly uninhabited—"acres of poppies and many colored wild flowers spread out like a mille-fleurs tapestry, . . . golden-breasted meadow larks sang enchantingly from every lupin bush" and "horses grazed at will across the moor and whinnied wildly on windy nights."[17]

The site Robinson and Una chose for their home on Carmel Point featured an outcrop of large boulders that reminded them of the prehistoric cromlechs, dolmens, and menhirs found all over the British Isles—not so grand as Stonehenge or Avebury, but just as mysterious. Among the Standing Stones, as Robinson and Una called them, one was chosen for a cornerstone. They named it "Thuban" after a binary star that serves every 25,800 years as Earth's pole star.[18]

*Carmel Background History and Ethnographic Context*

The natural beauty of Carmel Point is matched by its evocative and troubled history. The area was named by Sebastián Viscaíno in 1602 during a voyage that retraced the route of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's 1542 expedition along the California coast. Viscaíno chose the name in deference to three Carmelite friars on board his ship who saw features in the Carmel River and surrounding countryside that reminded them of Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, where their religious order was born.[19]

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Carmel Point was also known as Mission Point, for less than a mile inland stood Fray Junípero Serra's *Misíon San Carlos Borromeo del Río Carmelo*. By 1919 the mission was an abandoned ruin, but during Serra's time it served as the headquarters for all the missions of El Camino Real, the road Spanish settlers traveled between San Diego and San Francisco. The mission also served as the center of Serra's own ministerial activities, where he and his fellow Franciscans lived, worked, and prayed amongst those they sought to Christianize—the native inhabitants whose ancestors had lived in the area for thousands of years.[20] When nearby Monterey was named the capital of Alta and Baja California in 1777, the mission became all the more important as an outpost of Spanish influence.

The Spaniards referred to the native population collectively as *costeños* (coast dwellers), Anglicized as "Costanoans," but more than a dozen different tribes inhabited the area, with their own languages and traditions. The Rumsen, for instance, lived in villages on the Monterey Peninsula, along the lower Carmel River, and from Carmel Valley to Point Sur, while Esselen lived in the nearby Santa Lucia Mountains, on Point Lobos, and south

[17] Una Jeffers, "How Carmel Won the Hearts," 9.

[18] Due to the precession of Earth's rotational axis, the star currently in that position is Polaris, with Errai, Deneb, Vega, and others to follow. Some 18,000 years in the future (circa 20346 CE), Thuban will be the north star again, just as it was when the Egyptians built the Pyramids of Giza, and as it was innumerable times before then, and will be countless times after.

[19] According to the Bible (1 Kings 18:1-40), the prophet Elijah won a major victory on Mt. Carmel when he defeated 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah in a contest to determine whose God was the true God. In answer to Elijah's prayers, Yahweh revealed himself in a theophany of fire.

[20] Gary S. Breschini and Trudy Haversat, *The Esselen Indians of the Big Sur Country* (Salinas, CA: Coyote Press, 2004), 23. See also Paul Henson and Donald J. Usner, *The Natural History of the Big Sur* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 264.

along the Big Sur coast, but their territories often overlapped.[21] Interaction and intermarriage occurred frequently, and many members of these communities were likely multi-lingual.[22]

Spanish colonization and the advent of the mission system had catastrophic impacts on the native communities of the Monterey coast. Disease, violence, disruption of trade networks and social relationships, coercive labor practices, land dispossession, and environmental degradation led to demographic collapse and loss of cultural traditions. These trends continued under Mexican and American rule, and by the late nineteenth century only fragments of the indigenous population survived. In an 1883 report to the federal Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Helen Hunt Jackson and Abbott Kinney reported only about one hundred "San Carlos Indians" living near the Carmel Mission on fewer than twelve acres of land—a ninety percent drop in population and a near total loss of ancestral territory.[23] In the early twentieth century, Bureau of Indian Affairs agents gave the name "Monterey Band" to the few who remained.[24] By then, intermarriage with members of other tribes or non-Indians had become more common. Many Rumsen and Esselen also often hid their ancestry, claiming to be Spanish or Mexican to avoid persecution. In 1925, anthropologist Arthur Kroeber declared the Costanoans "extinct so far as all practical purposes are concerned."[25] Kroeber later qualified his statement, explaining that while people tracing their ancestry to the Costanoan tribes could still be found, those that remained could not or would not share the types of knowledge of language and cultural practices that anthropological projects like his demanded. Kroeber's characterization nevertheless continued to inform government policies and public attitudes in the years that followed, to the detriment of tribal communities on the Monterey coast and throughout California still struggling for survival and recognition.[26]

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Robinson and Una knew they were settling on land once occupied by Native Americans. In "To the Rock That Will Be a Cornerstone of the House" (published 1924), Jeffers asked of Thuban, "How long a time since the brown people who have vanished from here / Built fires beside you and nestled by you / Out of the raging sea wind?"[27] In a letter to Sara Bard Field in June 1927, Una wrote that Garth and Donnan "found a beautiful little arrowhead here on the place," adding further that "this is the first perfect arrowhead—though there have been many pieces of worked flint, and close to us here two perfect mortars were found last year."[28] In 1949, according to a story in the *Carmel Pine Cone–Cymbal*, ditching machines uncovered a number of native artifacts and skeletal remains "in the vicinity of Robinson Jeffers' Tor House," leading the newspaper to report

[21] Breschini and Haversat, *Esselen Indians*, 6.

[22] Philip Laverty, "The Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation of Monterey, California: Dispossession, Federal Neglect, and the Bitter Irony of the Federal Acknowledgment Process," *Wicaza Sa Review* 18: 2 (Autumn 2003): 43.

[23] Helen Jackson and Abbot Kinney, *Report on the Conditions and Needs of the Mission Indians of California to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883), 14.

[24] Laverty, "Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen," 42.

[25] A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 78 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), 464, 544.

[26] Laverty, "Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen," 67–71.; In 1992, tribal groups with roots in Monterey County organized to petition the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for federal acknowledgment. These included the Costanoan Band of Carmel Mission Indians, the Costanoan Ohlone Rumsen-Mutsen Tribe, the Costanoan Carmel Tribe, the Esselen/Costanoan Tribe of Monterey County, and the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation. BIA denied the application, concluding that the petitioners failed to demonstrate continuity as a tribal community from the historical times to the present up to the standards required under the Federal Acknowledgment Process. Despite this, descendants of the historic tribes of Monterey remain committed to continuing cultural traditions and protecting ancestral lands and sacred sites.

[27] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 11.

[28] *Collected Letters*, 1: 674.

what was already well known—"Carmel Point was at one time an Indian camping or burial grounds."[29] "There's a kind of shell-mound," Jeffers wrote in "The Last Conservative" (published 1962), referring to a layer of abalone shards found at the site. "I used to see ghosts of Indians squatting beside the stones in their firelight."[30] In January 2017 after heavy rains, a Tor House docent found a Phoenix button protruding from the soil off the path that leads from the dining room to the southern property line.[31] Phoenix buttons were designed to be used on Haitian military uniforms during the 1811–1820 reign of King Henry I of Haiti and were, most likely, introduced into California through trade in the late 1830s.[32] Tor House's location on Carmel Point and the presence of artifacts on the site suggest its potential to yield important archaeological information about the indigenous history of the Monterey coast.

While Native Americans were not a major focus of Jeffers's work, some of his poems help illustrate how he regarded them. A notable example is "Hands" (published 1929), a poem about a cave near the Tassajara hot springs, located in a remote canyon thirty miles inland from Tor House.[33] "The vault of rock is painted with hands," Jeffers wrote, "A multitude of hands in the twilight, a cloud of men's palms, no more." Evidence suggests that the hot springs and abandoned cave had been used for over 3,500 years, but the exact age of the handprints is unknown. Also unknown is the meaning of the prints: "Whether the brown shy quiet people who are dead intended / Religion or magic, or made their tracings / In the idleness of art." Nevertheless, Jeffers believed, the prints communicate an important and unmistakable message:

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> ". . . Look: we also were human; we had hands, not paws. All hail
> You people with the cleverer hands, our supplanters
> In the beautiful country; enjoy her a season, her beauty, and come down
> And be supplanted; for you also are human."

This passage contains themes expressed in different ways throughout Jeffers's work. In his worldview, human societies were fleeting and insignificant at the cosmic scale. They came and went like the tides and either destroyed themselves or were destroyed by others. In "Hands," Native Americans and their "supplanters," the Euro-American colonizers of the Monterey coast, share a common humanity and thus a common fate. Jeffers was also not without "a sense of justice," as literary scholar Geneva Gano observes.[34] For him, the genocide and dispossession of Native societies underscored the violent tendencies of Western civilization and offered a warning for modern Americans who thought of themselves as exceptional.[35] Nor did he portray Native Americans as entirely without agency. While some of Jeffers's writings evoke the trope of the "vanishing Native," others include Native characters, living and dead, who possess ability to respond to their experiences of loss and alienation. Jeffers displayed little romanticism or sentimentalization in his treatment of these

[29] "Bones found in Sewer Excavation," *Carmel Pine Cone-Cymbal*, October 7, 1949, 1. See also Asaf Shalev, "Developers Want to Build at Carmel Point, Potentially Disrupting Ancient Artifacts," *Monterey County Weekly*, April 18, 2019.

[30] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 418.

[31] The Phoenix button is now on display in the dining room of Tor House. Examples can also be seen in the Carmel Mission Museum.

[32] Emory Strong, "The Enigma of the Phoenix Button," *Historical Archeology* 9 (January 1975): 74–80.

[33] *Collected Poetry*, 2: 4.

[34] Geneva M. Gano, "Violence on the Home Front in Robinson Jeffers's 'Tamar,'" in *Phantom Past, Indigenous Present: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*, edited by Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 47.

[35] Gano, "Violence on the Home Front," 46.

characters. Much like other characters in Jeffers's work, their actions are often violent, driven by anger and desperation. At the end of "Roan Stallion" (published 1925), the multiracial, one-quarter Native protagonist named "California" leads her drunken White husband into a corral where she watches him be trampled to death by his prized stallion before she shoots the horse out of "some obscure human fidelity."[36] In "Tamar" (also published 1925), the main character is visited by ghosts of the Native inhabitants of Point Lobos who violate her as she confronts her incestuous past. While other scholars have struggled to find meaning in this scene, Gano reads the act as symbolic retribution for past abuses and an intervention in a "nightmarish" colonial present.[37]

With the utmost respect for the past and present indigenous residents of the Monterey coast, the trustees of the Tor House Foundation added a land acknowledgment to official records in 2022: "The land on which Tor House stands is part of the ancient homeland of the Rumsen and Esselen people. We wish to honor these great nations, and all of California's native inhabitants, as we acknowledge their value, history, and traditions."

*Construction of Tor House and Jeffers's Awakening*

Construction of Tor House began in 1919 under the oversight of Michael J. Murphy, Carmel's preeminent builder. Murphy was a teenager in 1902 when he arrived in Carmel with his widowed mother and a sister. Already a skilled carpenter, he was soon hired by Franklin Devendorf, one of the developers of Carmel, to build simple vacation-style "show houses" designed to attract a creative-class of buyers from San Francisco. As the artists and intellectuals began to arrive, an "anything goes" attitude toward architecture took hold, resulting in an eclectic mix of idiosyncratic and traditional styles. One house, for instance, was sheathed in vertical strips of redwood bark, another was made from wooden doors shipped to Carmel by mistake. Craftsman bungalows, beach cottages, and board-and-batten cabins were built among homes and businesses that reflected Queen Anne, Spanish Eclectic, Tudor Revival, Cotswold Storybook, Colonial, and other influences—some designed by California's most esteemed architects, including Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, and Charles Sumner Greene.[38] As a designer, master carpenter, independent contractor, and owner of a lumber and building supply business, Murphy was at the center of Carmel's growth. He built or remodeled over three hundred structures in the course of his long career, ranging from relatively simple projects like Mary Austin's "Wick-I-Up" (a tree house used for writing) to showcase homes like Countess Lillian Remillard Dandini's Mediterranean villa, and major municipal and commercial projects, such as the Pine Inn, the Fire Department, and the village library.

In order to keep an eye on the workers and complete the project more quickly, Jeffers persuaded Murphy to hire him as a common laborer. "He hadn't any skill of any kind," Una explained in a letter written later, "so he did the hardest and plainest job, —(at $4.00 a day I think)—mixed mortar and carried the hod to the master mason. —It was thus he learned to handle stone and learn the trade—craft! of *mason* which led to years of building

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[36] Karman, *Poet and Prophet*, 55.
[37] Gano, "Violence on the Home Front," 48-49.
[38] For photographs and descriptions of Carmel's noteworthy homes and buildings, including many built by M. J. Murphy, see Alissandra Dramov and Lynn A. Momboisse, *Historic Homes and Inns of Carmel-by-the-Sea* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2016); Linda Leigh Paul, *Cottages by the Sea: The Handmade Homes of Carmel, America's First Artist Community* (New York: Universe, 2000); and Kent Seavey, *Carmel: A History in Architecture* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2007).

(garage, tower, walls etc) These things I have mentioned were all disciplinary—and he had never encountered discipline really before."[39]

The discipline of hard physical labor prepared the way for a transformation. Writing from notes Jeffers himself prepared, Una explained what happened: "The conflict of motives on the subject of going to war or not was probably one of several factors that, about this time, made the world and his own mind much more real and intense to him. Another factor was the building of Tor House. As he helped the masons shift and place the wind and wave-worn granite I think he realized some kinship with it and became aware of strengths in himself unknown before. Thus at the age of thirty-one there came to him a kind of awakening such as adolescents and religious converts are said to experience."[40]

At the heart of Jeffers's awakening was an experience of oneness with the natural world—an experience that connected him to the stars in the sky through the stones in his hands, and to all forms of life in between. It took the rest of Jeffers's life and the sum of his career to plumb the depths of his epiphany, but at the center of the experience was a philosophical and religious worldview he called Inhumanism—a term that meant "anti-Humanism" and involved a rejection of a key tenet of Western civilization. For Jeffers, humans were not created in God's image, as the Bible asserted; they were not "the measure of all things," as the ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras claimed. Phrases such as "Chosen People," "Promised Land," and "Manifest Destiny" were meaningless, as were all notions of human privilege, superiority, and dominion. For Jeffers, humans were best seen as a unique and highly adaptive species, but qualitatively the same as all other forms of life. And life itself, he believed, was interconnected and divine.[41]

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Jeffers summarized his convictions in an October 1, 1934, letter to Sister Mary James Power, who had written him in regard to a book she was writing titled *Poets at Prayer*.

> I believe that the universe is one being, all its parts are different expressions of the same energy, and they are all in communication with each other, influencing each other, therefore parts of one organic whole. (This is physics, I believe, as well as religion.) The parts change and pass, or die, people and races and rocks and stars; none of them seems to me important in itself, but only the whole. This whole is in all its parts so beautiful, and is felt by me to be so intensely in earnest, that I am compelled to love it, and to think of it as divine. It seems to me that this whole alone is worthy of the deeper sort of love; and that there is peace, freedom, I might say a kind of salvation, in turning one's affections outward toward this one God, rather than inward on one's self, or on humanity, or on human imaginations and abstractions—the world of spirits.[42]

Among the first set of poems Jeffers wrote in the immediate years after his awakening was a verse drama titled *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*. Composed in 1924 and based on the *Oresteia* trilogy by Aeschylus, the play tells

[39] *Collected Letters*, 2: 101.
[40] *Collected Letters*, 2: 310.
[41] Important studies of Jeffers's Inhumanist worldview include Mercedes Cunningham Monjian, *Robinson Jeffers: A Study in Inhumanism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958) and Arthur B. Coffin, *Robinson Jeffers: Poet of Inhumanism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971). For an example of more recent commentary, see Cory Willard, "Uncenter Yourselves: Revisiting Robinson Jeffers's Inhumanism in the Age of the Overstory," *Western American Literature* 56, 3-4 (2021), 237–252.
[42] *Collected Letters*, 2: 364–66.

the story of Agamemnon's fraught return from the Trojan War, and his murder at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra. In choosing this theme, perfect for sharing his emergent Inhumanist vision, Jeffers drew an implicit connection between an ancient archetypal battle and its modern World War I analogue. He also touched a sensitive nerve, recently experienced by millions of servicemen and their loved ones, as soldiers returned home—some scarred by active duty, others to face changed domestic circumstances.

One of the issues Aeschylus explored in his trilogy concerns the unbearable burden placed on human shoulders—specifically, those of Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra—when conflicting obligations require action. According to the laws of life that governed him, Orestes was both duty-bound to avenge his father's death and forbidden to kill his mother. Forced to choose, he opts for the former, and, as Aeschylus told the tale, he is driven mad by guilt-inducing Furies as a result until Athena eventually absolves him and restores his sanity. In Jeffers's version of the tale, after Orestes kills his mother, his mind clears on its own. Waking from the murderous frenzy that gripped him, he sees madness in human life itself, where cruelty, greed, will to power, sexual desire, and self-centeredness predominate. His father, after all, returned home with a concubine (the prophetess Cassandra, whom Orestes also kills); his mother, for her part, had a lover of her own—Aegisthus (killed by Orestes as well) who hoped to take Agamemnon's throne; and his sister Electra proposed an incestuous liaison.

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Two speeches by Orestes at the end of the drama are directly tied to Jeffers's newfound vision of life. In the first, having broken through the net of delusion that previously gripped him, Orestes explains to his sister what he has learned about human self-centeredness. "I saw a vision of us move in the dark," he tells Electra:

> all that we did or dreamed of
> Regarded each other, the man pursued the woman, the woman clung to the man,
> warriors and kings
> Strained at each other in the darkness, all loved or fought inward, each one of the lost
> people
> Sought the eyes of another that another should praise him; sought never his own but
> another's; the net of desire
> Had every nerve drawn to the centre, so that they writhed like a full draught of fishes,
> all matted
> In the one mesh; when they look backward they see only a man standing at the beginning,
> Or forward, a man at the end; or if upward, men in the shining bitter sky striding and feasting,
> Whom you call Gods . . .
> It is all turned inward, all your desires incestuous . . .[43]

In the second speech, Orestes tries to describe for Electra the rapture he experienced once he escaped from the human-centered trap that held him. In words he knows she cannot possibly understand ("Didn't I say this would be dark to you?" he asks), Orestes offers an account of sudden enlightenment, loss of self, and mystical union with nature:

[43] *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, Volume 1: 1920–1928*, ed. Tim Hunt (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 176.

I have cut the meshes
And fly like a freed falcon. To-night, lying on the hillside, sick with those visions, I remembered
The knife in the stalk of my humanity; I drew and it broke; I entered the life of the brown forest
And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of stone, I felt the changes in the veins
In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries, we have our own time, not yours; and I was the stream
Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I was the stars,
Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of his own summit; and I was the darkness
Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me. I was mankind also, a moving lichen
On the cheek of the round stone . . . they have not made words for it, to go behind things, beyond hours and ages,
And be all things in all time, in their returns and passages, in the motionless and timeless centre,
In the white of the fire . . . how can I express the excellence I have found, that has no color but clearness;
No honey but ecstasy; nothing wrought nor remembered; no undertone nor silver second murmur
That rings in love's voice, I and my loved are one; no desire but fulfilled; no passion but peace,
The pure flame and the white, fierier than any passion; no time but spheral eternity . . . .[44]

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These two speeches by Orestes represent a concise statement of Jeffers's Inhumanist worldview. The first communicates the folly and madness that can result from an inward-looking, human-centric worldview, while the second expresses an alternative perspective of oneness with the natural world that Orestes gains when he retreats into a forest after killing his mother.[45] If, to change the metaphor, one thinks of Jeffers's poetry as a refracted beam of light, the first passage, we might say, would be on the infra-red side of the spectrum, where Jeffers's depictions of human pathology, suffering, and tragedy can be found, whereas the second passage would be on the ultra-violet side, where he speaks of nature, the sacred universe, and God beyond God. Both sides of his vision (present to some degree in every poem) blend in the middle, where reflections, observations, and moral advice prevail. "Integrity is wholeness," Jeffers said in the closing lines of another poem, "The Answer," "the greatest beauty is / Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe.

[44] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 176–77.
[45] Monjian, *A Study in Inhumanism*, 12.

Love that, not man / Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions, or drown in despair when his days darken.[46]

*Poet and Stonemason: Art and Architecture*

Over time, Jeffers's awakening changed his appearance. The softer, cosmopolitan features of his youth gave way, under the discipline of artistic creativity and physical exertion, to something harder and more inscrutable. After photographing Jeffers in May 1929, Edward Weston wrote about the experience in his diary. "It was another grey day," he noted, "but I now realize, knowing him better, that Jeffers is more himself on grey days." With his "heroic" build, "penetrating, all seeing eyes," and eagle-like profile, he belonged "to stormy skies and heavy seas."[47] When writer, librarian, and future Jeffers biographer Lawrence Clark Powell first met Jeffers in September 1933, his impressions were similar. Jeffers was "more rugged and weathered and taller and leaner" than he had imagined him to be, he observed, and his face was like that of a thoroughbred animal—"a blend of man and beast, more beautiful than either: a sensitive, sad face, earthy but not coarse."[48]

Anthropologist Loren Eiseley also felt a "haunting presence" when he visited Jeffers in the early 1930s. His face, Eiseley said, was "lined and immobile as a Greek mask" and his eyes looked sidelong with a "remote, almost inhuman animal contemplation." Reflecting on the experience years later, Eiseley claimed he never again encountered a man who left him with so strong an impression that he "had been speaking with someone out of time, an oracle who would presently withdraw among the nearby stones and pinewood." Nor had he ever seen a person so visibly marked by the landscape around him. "Something utterly wild" had crept into Jeffers's mind and marked his features, Eiseley observed: "I cannot imagine him as having arisen unchanged in another countryside. The sea-beaten coast, the fierce freedom of its hunting hawks, possessed and spoke through him. It was one of the most uncanny and complete relationships between a man and his natural background that I know in literature."[49]

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The "impossible wind" Jeffers had hoped for when he was struggling to find his way as artist, came, as it turned out, from the ocean and the hills—from working outdoors, lifting stones, building his home, and surrendering his life and imagination to the Big Sur coast.

Once Tor House was finished in the summer of 1919, Jeffers worked in obscurity for five more years, building a stone garage, a courtyard wall, and then Hawk Tower—writing all the while. "Mornings until 1:00 PM," according to Una, were spent "at his desk, usually in the long attic room over our living room," where Jeffers paced, "—for he writes *and* paces by turn." Afternoons were devoted to "stone work or planting trees," or other outdoor chores. Late in the day, he and Una walked "briskly for two or three miles along the shore just before sunset." Evenings were spent by the fire. While Una sewed by the light of an oil lamp, Jeffers read to the twins "all of W. H. Hudson, 10 Waverly novels, 10 Hardy, 3 Dostoevsky, besides many travel books and others like Lawrence *Revolt in Desert*, parts of Doughty *Arabia Deserta*, Synge's *Aran Islands*, Cellini, etc." After the

[46] *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, Volume 2: 1928–1938*, ed. Tim Hunt (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 536.

[47] Edward Weston, *The Daybooks of Edward Weston, Volume 2: California* (New York: Aperture, 1961), 124–25.

[48] Lawrence Clark Powell, *Robinson Jeffers: The Man and the Poet* (Los Angeles: Primavera Press, 1934), 2–3.

[49] Loren Eiseley, "Foreword," *Not Man Apart: Lines from Robinson Jeffers, Photographs of the Big Sur Coast*, ed. David Brower (New York: Ballantine, 1965), 15.

twins fell asleep, Jeffers did "a little more work . . . not writing much but reflecting and planning the next day's *task*." The day ended with "one invariable habit": "he never goes to bed without going outdoors about midnight and walking around the place—watching the stars in their courses, marking the rising or setting of the constellations—feeling the direction of the wind and noticing the tides at ebb or flow." To this daily routine, Una added one more detail. "At least one complete day in a fortnight" was spent by the two of them "back in the hills and coast redwood cañons" examining "stones & geological formations closely, trees & flowers & water courses, animals & their tracks & old human abandoned enterprises."[50]

With mind and body centered by this daily round, Jeffers worked out the guiding principles of his art. "Poetry in its higher condition," he wrote in an early unpublished essay, was "not a refuge but an intensification, not an ornament but essential, not a diversion but an incitement." Its goal was to open our hearts and minds to universal beauty. To do so, Jeffers contended, "poetry must be rhythmic, and must deal with permanent things, and must avoid affectation."[51]

By *rhythmic* Jeffers meant that verse must have a natural, recurring beat—like the pounding of a heart, fast or slow. Poetry "cannot speak without remembering the turns of the sun and moon, and the rhythm of the ocean, and the recurrence of human generations, the returning waves of life and death."[52] Fundamentals such as these are *permanent* elements of experience, like "light and darkness, mountains and sea, humanity and its passions." Poetry, in this regard, should connect us to the larger world. "It is of the function of poetry," Jeffers contended, "to express the whole human organism; and the human organism finds only a pin-prick of outlet in the exclusive present, it is fitted also to the past, and framed for the future. It is a permanent thing, at home with permanent things."[53] Finally, poetry should avoid *affectation*—anything eccentric or imitative—and speak directly to people, using words and images anyone could understand. "If," Jeffers asserted, "we alter thought or expression for any of the hundred reasons: in order to seem original, or to seem sophisticated, or to conform to a fashion, or to startle the citizenry, or because we fancy ourselves decadent, or merely to avoid commonplace: for whatever reason we alter them, for that reason they are made false."[54] Jeffers disagreed completely with T. S. Eliot who claimed that "poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*."[55] "If a poem has to be explained and diagrammed even for contemporary readers," Jeffers asked, "what will the future make of it?"[56]

To these convictions, Jeffers added a few more. He resolved to "reclaim substance and sense, and physical and psychological reality" in his work; "to write narrative poetry, and to draw subjects from contemporary life; to present aspects of life that modern poetry had generally avoided; and to attempt the expression of philosophic and scientific ideas in verse." He also pledged "not to tell lies" as a poet, which meant "not to feign any emotion" that he did not feel; "not to pretend to believe in 'optimism' or 'pessimism,' or unreversible 'progress'; not to say anything because it was popular, or generally accepted, or fashionable in intellectual circles," unless

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[50] *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers, Volume 1: 1890–1930*, ed. James Karman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 770–72.
[51] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 379.
[52] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 381.
[53] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 374–75.
[54] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 380.
[55] T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), 248.
[56] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 424.

he himself believed it. "These negatives limit the field," he concluded, and he did not recommend them for others, but these were the "principles that conditioned the verse" that began to flow from his pen.[57]

For these and other reasons, Jeffers was out of step with Eliot, Pound, and other Modernist poets of the time. Most of his contemporaries, Jeffers believed, were "going farther and farther along the way that perhaps Mallarmé's aging dream had shown them." They were "divorcing poetry from reason and ideas" and "renouncing intelligibility in order to concentrate the music" of verse.[58] He regarded their work as "slight and fantastic, abstract, unreal, eccentric" and "thoroughly defeatist" in character.[59] Because of his opposition to prevailing trends, Jeffers has often been described as an "anti-modernist." More recently, scholars have characterized him as a modern (even an avant-garde) poet with a more traditional view of his craft.[60]

The principles guiding Jeffers's poetry also guided his work as a stonemason. Had Jeffers been an aspiring architect instead of a poet during his troubled World War I years, he would have faced the same dilemmas before his awakening, for contemporary trends in modern architecture—as in poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and other forms of creative expression—were also forsaking tradition and moving in the direction of abstraction. Instead of citing Mallarmé, however, Jeffers might have mentioned Otto Wagner, whose influential treatise *Modern Architecture* (1896) called for a clean break with the past. "This new style, the modern," Wagner argued, "in order to represent us and our time must clearly express a distinct change from previous feeling, an almost complete decline of the romantic, and an almost all-encompassing appearance of reason in all our works."[61] In practical terms, this meant a series of renunciations and eliminations that would lead, ultimately, to buildings shorn of ornament, composed of simple (mostly rectilinear) geometric shapes, constructed with manufactured materials, set against organic nature, and designed without reference to culture or history. Wagner was a leading figure in the Viennese Secession, part of the broader Art Nouveau movement, which eschewed historicist references in favor of modern, ahistorical ornament. Wagner and the architect Adolf Loos were key figures influencing the nascent trend towards the modern International Style, as it came to be known. The International Style was advanced via the work of a number of leading architects—such as Walter Gropius, who founded the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1919 (the same year Jeffers built Tor House) and Le Corbusier, who called for a "mass production-spirit" in residential design. "If we eliminate from our hearts and minds all dead concepts in regard to the house," Le Corbusier argued in *Towards a New Architecture* (1923), "and look at the question from a critical and objective point of view, we shall arrive at the 'House-Machine,' the mass-production house"—a strictly utilitarian structure inside and out.[62] Le Corbusier's design manifesto that is Villa Savoye in Poissy, France exemplifies the distinct new modernism, as do houses designed and built in the first

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[57] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 391–92.
[58] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 385.
[59] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 391.
[60] See, for example, Tim Hunt, "Robinson Jeffers: The Modern Poet as Antimodernist," in *Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers*, James Karman, ed. (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990), 245–52; Tim Hunt, ed., "Jeffers and the Modern(ist) Terrain: Competing and/or Complementary Poetics? A Panel Discussion with Charles Altieri, Terence Diggory, Albert Gelpi, and James E. Miller, Jr.," *Robinson Jeffers and a Galaxy of Writers*, William B. Thesing, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 182–202; Albert Gelpi, "Yvor Winters and Robinson Jeffers: The Janus-Face of Anti-Modernism," in *A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 423–46; Alan Soldofsky, "Jeffers, Anti-Modernism and a Thousand Years," *Quarry West* 27 (1990): 119–25.
[61] Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center, 1988), 79.
[62] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (London: Architectural Press, 1927; reprinted New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1946), 12–13.

half of the twentieth century by architects such as Gropius, Rudolf Schindler, and Richard Neutra. Two homes that represent mature iterations of the trend are the 1951 Farnsworth House (NHL, 2006) in Plano, Illinois designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and the 1949–1995 Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut designed by Philip Johnson. In both instances, all decorative or extraneous details are stripped from the building, leaving—like a shrine to industrial technology—only a steel rectangular frame sheathed floor to ceiling in glass.

The inspiration for Tor House, on the other hand, more closely followed the Arts and Crafts tradition, with its emphasis on simple, natural beauty. The original cottage was a small, square structure built entirely by hand, using local lumber and granite boulders gathered on site. Una chose the design, which was based on a Tudor barn she had seen in Surrey, England during her 1912 travels abroad.

The Arts and Crafts movement, which flourished in California from 1895 to 1918, lasted longer in enclaves like Carmel. Major precepts of the movement, inspired by William Morris and others in England, included "unity in artistic expression derived from nature, straightforward construction and handcraftsmanship, minimal finish and restraint in ornamentation, use of vernacular sources and reference to the indigenous cultural heritage, as well as cultivation of a family-centered domesticity represented in the open plan and imposing central hearth."[63] Because these principles could be expressed in so many different ways, Richard Guy Wilson argues that it is best to see the tradition "not in a specific style but as a mood, an attitude, a sensibility. At its core the Arts and Crafts movement advocated a search for a way of life that was true, contemplative, and filled with essences rather than superficialities."[64]

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Tor House was not a typical Arts and Crafts home, however, especially for the time when it was built. By 1919, the movement had become commercialized and, to an extent, standardized; people purchased house plans from catalogs, along with mass-produced Craftsman furniture and other goods. Furthermore, the world had changed after World War I, with the proliferation of automobiles, the construction of paved roads and highways, electrification, motion pictures, radio, air travel, and other innovations. As Wilson says, "a signal transforming feature of the early twentieth century was the increasing mechanization of life. Everywhere the machine seemed to dominate."[65]

In building Tor House at a time when the Arts and Crafts movement was fading and Machine Age Modernism was on the rise, Robinson and Una looked beyond prevailing trends to create something unique and vibrantly their own. The same could be said for Hawk Tower, the hand-built, free-standing, forty-foot-high granite structure erected beside Tor House. Jeffers worked on it from 1920 to 1925, and when it was finished, it stood on the hillside like a fortress from the early Middle Ages.

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[63] Cheryl Robertson, "The Resort to the Rustic: Simple Living and the California Bungalow," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, ed. Kenneth R. Trapp, Leslie Greene Bowman, Oakland Museum, Renwick Gallery, Cincinnati Art Museum (Oakland, CA: Oakland Museum, Abbeville Press, 1993), 107.

[64] Richard Guy Wilson, "'Divine Excellence': The Arts and Crafts Life in California," in Trapp, et al., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California*, 16–17.

[65] Richard Guy Wilson, "The Arts and Crafts After 1918: Ending and Legacy," in Trapp, et al., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California*, 238. See also Richard Guy Wilson, Dianne Pilgrim, and Dicran Tashjian, *The Machine Age in America, 1918–1941* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987).

As historian Theodore Ziolkowski points out, Jeffers was not the only artist or intellectual living in or working on a tower at this time.[66] William Butler Yeats moved into Thoor Ballylee in 1919, a Norman tower in County Galway in Ireland that was more than four hundred years old. In the decade that followed, Yeats lived in the tower intermittently while writing such major works as *The Vision* (1925), *The Tower* (1928), and portions of *The Winding Stair* (1933). In similar fashion, Rainer Maria Rilke found his way to Château de Muzot in 1921, a thirteenth-century tower located in the Swiss countryside, where, in a concentrated burst of poetic inspiration, he composed two masterpieces, *Duino Elegies* (1922) and *Sonnets to Orpheus* (1922). At the same time, Carl Jung bought land on Lake Zurich, where he erected a stone tower of his own. Bollingen, as he called it, served not just as a refuge, but, in the changes and additions he made to it over the next forty years, as a locus of self-transformation and the physical embodiment of his ideas. "Words and paper," Jung observed in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), "did not seem real enough to me." "Something more was needed," he added, attempting to explain Bollingen's original significance to him: "I had to achieve a kind of representation in stone of my innermost thoughts and of the knowledge I had acquired. Or, to put it another way, I had to make a confession of faith in stone."[67]

The fact that Jeffers, Yeats, Rilke, and Jung lived and wrote in stone towers at the same time is, in its synchronicity, interesting enough, but the four writers were linked in other ways. All four rejected the mechanistic materialism of their age in favor of something more organic and vital; all four were open to the depth dimension of human life—the Deep Time and Deep Space of natural history and the human psyche; and all four saw through "the disenchantment of the world," in Max Weber's phrase, and found—in mythology, symbolism, and nature—fresh pathways to realms of the numinous.[68] Jeffers was the only American in this quadrumvirate.[69]

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For Jeffers, building with stone and writing poems were interdependent creative activities. Each inspired the other, as Jeffers indicated in the foreword to *Selected Poetry*, where he told how his poem "Roan Stallion" came to be. After discovering an abandoned cabin on a hike in the Big Sur one day, he learned that the owner had been killed by a stallion. Soon thereafter, while gathering boulders from the shore, in the creative wake that followed the completion of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, he weighed ideas for another story. "I was quarrying granite under the sea-cliff to build our house with," he said revealingly, "and slacking on the job sat down on a wet rock to look at the sunset and think about my next poem." In that moment of repose, "the stallion and the desolate cabin came to mind; then immediately, for persons of the drama, came the Indian woman and her white husband," real persons Jeffers had seen driving through Carmel in an old buggy. "The episode of the woman swimming her horse through a storm-swollen ford at night came also," he added; "it was part of her actual history. . . . So that when I stood up and began to handle stones again, the poem had already made itself in my mind."[70]

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[66] Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[67] Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage, 1961), 223.

[68] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," reprinted in *Daedalus* 87, no. 1 (Winter 1958): 133.

[69] For a study of Jeffers and Yeats, see Deborah Fleming, *Towers of Myth and Stone: Yeats's Influence on Robinson Jeffers* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015). A Jungian analysis of Jeffers can be found in Steven B. Hermann, "The Visionary Artist," *San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*, 16, no. 1 (1997): 44–68. Robert Hass notes a connection between Jeffers and Rilke in "Robinson Jeffers: The Poems and the Life," *American Poetry Review* 16, no. 6 (1987): 40.

[70] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 393.

Jeffers also perceived a physical connection between poetry and stone, at the deepest, most primordial level. "The tides are in our veins," Jeffers wrote, addressing the maternal ocean in "Continent's End," and "life is your child." Older than life, however, and much older than the ocean, is Earth itself, which was once completely molten. "Mother," Jeffers declared, in long wave-like lines, "though my song's measure is like your surf-beat's ancient rhythm I never learned it of you. / Before there was any water there were tides of fire, both our tones flow from the older fountain."[71]

Like the rhythms used to construct his poems, the boulders used to build his home were also regarded by Jeffers as archetypally feminine. Granite belonged to "the blood heat" of Mother Earth's youth, "held molten in hot darkness" before rising through the ocean and hardening over ages into its present form. "I am heaping the bones of the old mother / To build us a hold against the host of the air," Jeffers said of his work as a stonemason in "To the House." "Little house," he declared in the closing lines, "each stone / Baptized from that abysmal font / The sea and earth gave bonds to affirm you."[72]

*1920s*

Jeffers's own mother, Annie, died in April 1921. In "The Mother's Cairn," a poem written at her bedside, Jeffers mourned his loss, referring to her as "the white flower I am the fruit of" and "the beautiful home I came from."[73] In the course of the poem, a presence emerges, as if from the depths of Jeffers's psyche, or from a place outside himself—a nameless female deity, described as "the dark giver, the goddess whom the plows worship" and as "She that runs naked in the rayless midnights, terribly tall, dreadful and holy and dear." With her "great flanks," "bare / Grave breasts," "brooding eyes and sheltering hair," the goddess represents the mystery of Being itself, wherein life and death, Eros and Thanatos, conjoin. While Jeffers's sensitivity to this archetypal feminine force predated his mother's death, from this point on in his career, the women who come to life in his narrative and dramatic poems all embody different aspects of her power.[74]

DRAFT

In *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, one of Jeffers's breakthrough works, there are three undomesticated women: Clytemnestra, who undresses her husband for a bath and then, when he lowers himself into the water, snares him with a cloak and stabs him repeatedly with his own knife; Cassandra, the prophetess cursed by Apollo for scorning him, who always speaks the truth but is never believed; and Electra, Orestes' sister, who urges her brother to kill their mother and then offers to be his wife. In "Roan Stallion," the poem Jeffers turned to after *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, the central character is a mixed-race "nobly-formed woman" named California, who (as noted previously) shoots a magnificent stallion—an animal she reveres—after watching it trample her drunken husband to death.[75] In "Tamar," the title character lives with her troubled family in an isolated farmhouse on Point Lobos, south of Carmel. Like her namesakes in the Bible—the widow in Genesis 38:1–27

[71] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 16–17.
[72] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 5.
[73] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 493–99.
[74] The role of women in Jeffers's poetry is examined in a number of studies, including John Paul Tassoni, "Lying with Sea-Gull: The Ecofeminist Dialogics of Beauty in Robinson Jeffers's 'The Inhumanist,'" *International Studies in Literature and Environment* 2, no. 2 (1996): 121–130; Carmen Lowe, "Where the Country of Lost Borders Meets Jeffers Country: The Walking Women of Robinson Jeffers and Mary Austin," *Jeffers Studies* 4, no. 4 (2000): 21–46; and ShaunAnne Tangney, "'The mould to break away from': An Ecofeminist Reading of 'Roan Stallion'" in *The Wild That Attracts Us: New Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers*, ShaunAnne Tangney, ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015), 141–160.
[75] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 179, 198.

who seduces her father-in-law, and the daughter of King David in Samuel 13:1–22 who is raped by her brother Amnon—Jeffers's protagonist is driven by fate and circumstance, and "the wild rock coast / Of her breeding," to a life lived *in extremis*.[76]

Neither *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* nor "Roan Stallion" was included in *Tamar and Other Poems*, a book Jeffers published at his own expense in 1924. "Tamar" was too long, and perhaps too scandalous, Jeffers believed, for a commercial publisher to handle; and besides, a volume of his more conventional verse, written mostly during World War I, was rejected by Macmillan in 1920, and he was reluctant to try again. Five hundred copies of *Tamar and Other Poems* were printed in New York; fifty were distributed for review, but no interest was generated, and none sold. When the crate of books arrived in Carmel, Jeffers stored it in his attic.

Even though Jeffers had not published anything since *Californians* eight years previously, poets George Sterling, James Rorty, and Genevieve Taggard invited him, right around this time, to contribute to an anthology they were compiling for the Book Club of California. "Continent's End," one of the poems Jeffers submitted, was chosen for the title and frontispiece of the book, published in May 1925 as *Continent's End: An Anthology of Contemporary California Poets*. When Jeffers first responded to Rorty's invitation, he sent a courtesy copy of *Tamar and Other Poems.* He also sent one to George Sterling, "because he had lived in Carmel before my time, and knew the scene of my stories."[77]

DRAFT

The two poets were stunned. "I am convinced," Rorty wrote in the first paragraph of a review published in *New York Herald Tribune Books*, "that no poet of equal potential importance has appeared on the American scene since [Edward Arlington] Robinson." He made a greater claim a few sentences later when he said, "the net effect of *Tamar* is that of a magnificent tour de force. It is enough. Nothing as good of its kind has been written in America." "California has another great writer to place beside John Muir," he added in closing; "America has a new poet of genius."[78] Sterling was equally enthusiastic. "If you are such a sensitive plant that you shrink from the hidden horrors of life," he warned, "have nothing to do with *Tamar*. It is the strongest and most dreadful poem that I have ever read or heard of," with its "mingling of terror and beauty."[79]

To meet the sudden demand for the book, Jeffers shipped his copies back to New York; they sold out quickly, as additional reviewers lavished praise. "Few recent volumes of any sort have struck me with such force as this one has," Mark Van Doren exclaimed; "few are as rich with the beauty and strength which belong to genius alone."[80] When Babette Deutsch turned the last page, she "felt somewhat as Keats professed to feel, on looking into Chapman's Homer."[81] James Daly had a similar experience, regarding Jeffers's achievement in "Tamar" as possibly "unsurpassed by any other poet writing today in English."[82]

Almost immediately, Horace Liveright of Boni & Liveright offered to publish an expanded edition of the book. As a champion of free speech and of leading-edge literature, Liveright was one of the most important publishers

[76] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 25.
[77] *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers, Volume 3: 1940–1962*, ed. James Karman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 951.
[78] James Rorty, "In Major Mold," *New York Herald Tribune Books*, March 1, 1925, 1–2.
[79] George Sterling, "Rhymes and Reactions," *Overland Monthly* 83 (November 1925): 411.
[80] Mark Van Doren, "First Glance," *Nation* 120 (March 11, 1925): 268.
[81] Babette Deutsch, "Brains and Lyrics," *New Republic* 43 (May 27, 1925): 23–24.
[82] James Daly, "Roots Under the Rocks," *Poetry* 27 (August 1925): 278–85.

in America at the time, with an eye for talent like no other. In 1925, or a few years on either side, he published *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot; *The Enormous Room* by E. E. Cummings; *Cane* by Jean Toomer; *The Complete Works of Eugene O'Neill* (with a new play, *Desire Under the Elms*); *An American Tragedy* by Theodore Dreiser; *Dark Laughter* by Sherwood Anderson; Ernest Hemingway's debut collection of stories, *In Our Time*; *The Collected Poems of H. D.*; *Soldier's Pay,* William Faulkner's first novel; *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound*; along with important works by Djuna Barnes, Lewis Mumford, Sigmund Freud, Hart Crane, and other authors.

*Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* appeared in November 1925. In addition to the two title poems set on the California coast, the book contained the Greek-themed *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, along with nearly forty more poems of varying length, subject matter, and prosodic form. The book earned critical acclaim and marked Jeffers's emergence as a major American poet of the period. Writing in the *New York* Times, reviewer Percy Hutchison declared, "Robinson Jeffers is not a poet for the adolescent; he is not a poet for the Puritan; he is not a poet whose conception of poetry is confined to the honeyed lyric and to conventional themes." For Hutchison, Jeffers appeared to be something altogether different. "Indeed," he wrote, "it may be questioned whether there is another poet writing in America today—or in England for that matter—who can, when he so desires, write in so indelible a fashion as the author of *Tamar*." "To us," Hutchison concluded, "there are in this book pages, many, many pages, which are equaled only by the very great."[83] Edwin Seaver, writing in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, mentioned Jeffers's sudden appearance on the literary scene, and said, "no one, I think, can forget the thrill of discovery that heightened as page after page of *Tamar* revealed an overwhelmingly poetic imagination, a firm grasp of dramatic values, a profound seriousness, and a fecundity that danced at white heat through his 'mighty line.'" Reflecting on Jeffers's "magnificent achievement" in the expanded volume, Seaver made a broad claim: "Robinson Jeffers is one of Walt Whitman's 'poets to come' whom the earlier primitive hailed on the horizon, 'expecting the main things' from them." Noting an important difference between the two poets, however, Seaver said, "Whitman sang of an advancing republic rejoicing in its youth," whereas Jeffers "faces a 'perishing republic' from the heights of a tougher reality."[84]

DRAFT

The vantage point of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* was not so much a height as an end, as Jeffers himself indicated in "The Torch-Bearers' Race." From the very beginning of civilization, from the moment the first river was forded in Asia, up to the settlement of California, "always there was farther to go," always the torch of civilization was carried westward: from Greece to Rome to Northern Europe and beyond, across the Atlantic from the ancient to the modern world, and then from the east coast of America to the west. "Here," however, Jeffers said, referring to the place where he lived, "is the world's end." Having "climbed at length to a height, to an end, this end," the Western tradition had gone as far as it could go—geographically, intellectually, and spiritually. Standing "at the gate" between land and sea, between past and future, and facing, as a torch-bearer himself, the "huge, inhuman, remote, unruled" Pacific Ocean, Jeffers questioned everything, including the course of present-day American culture. "This old world's end is the gate of a world fire-new," he said of the unbound space he inhabited—a gate open to a "wild future, wild as a hawk's dream."[85]

[83] Percy A. Hutchison, "An Elder Poet and a Young One Greet the New Year," *New York Times Book Review*, January 3, 1926, 14, 24.
[84] Edwin Seaver, "Robinson Jeffers's Poetry," *Saturday Review of Literature* 2 (January 16, 1926): 492.
[85] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 99–101.

Jeffers's next book, *The Women at Point Sur*, published by Boni & Liveright in 1927, was *too* wild for most readers. The long (175-page) narrative tells the story of Rev. Dr. Arthur Barclay, a pastor who loses his faith. "I can tell you what's false," he informs his stunned parishioners in his final sermon, "Christianity is false. / The fable that Christ was the son of God and died to save you, died and lived again. Lies."[86] Part of Barclay's spiritual crisis stems from the fact that he had just lost his only son to the violence of World War I, but there is more to it than that. Leaving his wife and daughter, he wanders down the coast of California until he finds a place to stay at an isolated ranch near Point Sur. There, as his mental health deteriorates, he becomes a charismatic preacher of a new faith, one based on the conviction that humans, like God, are free to do whatever they want. Barclay eventually flees to the mountains and dies alone after impregnating a Native American serving girl, raping his own daughter (who kills herself), and wreaking havoc in the lives of the owners of the home, havoc that leads to the murder of a child. In a letter to his editor at Boni & Liveright, written before *The Women at Point Sur* was published, Jeffers offered a partial account of its origin. "The story grows rather intimately from the rock of this coast," he explained. "Someone said to me lately that it is not possible to be quite sane here, many others feel a hostility of the region to common human life. Immigration overpowers a place, at least for a while, but where the coast is thinly peopled it seems really to have a mood that both excites and perverts its people."[87] Jeffers was not alone in telling a story about a pathological, charismatic preacher. Sinclair Lewis, who lived in Carmel prior to Jeffers's arrival and visited him there in later years, published *Elmer Gantry*—his controversial but commercially successful satirical novel featuring a morally compromised evangelical minister—just a few months before *The Women at Point Sur* appeared.

DRAFT

The next five years of Jeffers's life were extraordinarily productive. In September 1928, the Book Club of California published a keepsake volume of fifteen poems by Jeffers—titled, simply, *Poems*—that featured a portrait photograph of Jeffers by Ansel Adams. In November, Leonard and Virginia Woolf published an edition of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* at their Hogarth Press in England. Also in November, the Woolfs and Horace Liveright released Jeffers's next major book in England and the United States, *Cawdor and Other Poems*. As in *The Women at Point Sur*, the setting for "Cawdor" is an isolated ranch in the Big Sur. In this instance, however, the narrative uses elements of the Phaedra/Hippolytus/Theseus theme from Greek mythology and the Potiphar's wife/Joseph theme from the Bible to tell a story of thwarted desire, family trauma, and jealous revenge. This time, the critics approved. "From first to last," Anne Singleton wrote in her review of the book, "Robinson Jeffers turns up the fresh earth of experienced tragedy, the stuff of reality *Oedipus Rex* must have had in it when the material it was made of was still alive and compelling in men's minds." "It seems to me," she added, "that here Jeffers is writing the most powerful, the most challenging poetry of this generation."[88]

*Dear Judas and Other Poems* was published by Liveright and Hogarth Press in November 1929. The title poem, framed like a Noh drama, offers a transgressive version of Christ's passion, as key figures return as ghosts to reenact events leading up to his crucifixion. "What other profane writer has dreamt such a Christ, such a Judas, such a Mary, let alone setting them down in the glory of such poetry?" asked Theodore Morrison in a review

[86] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 250.
[87] *Collected Letters*, 1: 564.
[88] Anne Singleton, "A Major Poet," *New York Herald Tribune Books*, December 23, 1928, 5.

published by the *Atlantic Monthly*; Jeffers's "power seems at times to be almost without limit—the strong swift compression of his phrases, his rapid, condensed command of narration."[89]

*1930s*

When *Dear Judas* appeared, Jeffers and his family were near the end of a seven-month tour of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Jeffers continued to write while abroad, and when he returned, he offered a collection of poems to Bennett Cerf at Random House, who in 1931 published a limited edition of *Descent to the Dead: Poems Written in Ireland and Great Britain*. Critics had seen enough by this time to know that Jeffers was not an "easy" poet, and some had misgivings about him. "One wrestles with a Proteus so far as his style is concerned," wrote William Rose Benét. "This constitutes my doubt about the man as a great poet, for he certainly possesses certain qualities of greatness. We have to judge him by higher standards than we apply to most poets. The range of his pondering and the power of his language necessitate that. This handful of present poems is but an 'aside' compared with the main body of his work, but it has led me into these speculations. Whatever may be the truth he is one of the most striking poets of our period."[90]

By the time *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* was released in March 1932—the last volume published by Liveright before the firm's bankruptcy—Jeffers was so well known that *Time* (as mentioned previously) could respond to the event with a cover photograph of Jeffers, and *Vanity Fair* could claim that "In the eyes of many, Robinson Jeffers is America's greatest poet."[91]

DRAFT

Following the collapse of Liveright, more than a dozen publishers reached out to Jeffers. "It was obvious," wrote Bennett Cerf in *At Random*, "there was going to be a raid on what few important authors" remained with the firm. "Everybody was making offers for Eugene O'Neill, and also for one of the leading American poets who was on the Liveright list, Robinson Jeffers." Those were "the two I wanted most," Cerf added, and he considered himself fortunate to sign them. In the long and distinguished history of Random House, as it turned out, Jeffers was the company's first poet.[92]

Part of Jeffers's celebrity as an artist rested in his public image as a remote and solitary figure, living hermit-like in a wild location. In truth, however, he and Una lived a very active social life in a vibrant arts community, with visitors coming almost daily to their home. Letters, dashed off to friends, capture the swirl of activity surrounding Robinson and Una. "I must tell you about Edna St Vincent Millay's visit to us," Una wrote in a hurry, "—but this isn't a letter—its two words as I bake my *oaten* bread[.] It *smells* so delicious!!" A few days later, Una wrote another friend, saying, "Edna Millay was here for a day & half— Max Eastman last Sunday—Mabel Dodge [Luhan] has been here for several weeks with Tony & Ella Young—They have taken a house next us." And one more example, from among countless others recorded in the *Collected Letters*: "Various people come and go—Last Sunday Iris Tree (Beerbohm Tree's daughter) with her travelling companion an Austrian

[89] Theodore Morrison, "A Critic and Four Poets," *Atlantic Monthly* 145 (February 1930): 24, 26, 28.
[90] William Rose Benét, "Round about Parnassus," *Saturday Review of Literature* 8 (January 16, 1932): 461.
[91] "Robinson Jeffers," *Vanity Fair*, April 1932, 27.
[92] Bennett Cerf, *At Random* (New York: Random House, 1977), 81, 109.

Count Ledebur who had many letters to us. . . . Then Mrs [Olga] Fish brought Lord and Lady Hastings. He a typical nice Englishman, she beautiful & Italian up from their ranch on an island beside Tahiti."[93]

In addition to the many guests entertained at Tor House, Robinson and Una belonged to a wide circle of friends, many from the upper echelons of society, who invited them regularly to dinner parties and other social events. One night, when Bennett Cerf was visiting, all three went to a small gathering at a home nearby. "Charlie Chaplin was there most amusing & friendly," Una told a friend, "A whole story about him & his excruciatingly funny imitations of speeches—by Hitler & Mussolini[.] Alice Toulmin made a nice *mot*. As the ladies retired to the drawing room she said, 'Well, I never expected to look like David Garrick! —Did you see me sitting there between the tragic & comic muses?' (Robin & C. C.)."[94]

A portrait of Robinson and Una's life at Tor House would not be complete without mention of the animals that lived there with them. Early on they kept three goats—Joyzelle, Selysette, and Tintagiles (named after characters found in plays by Maurice Maeterlinck)—and for more than twenty years they nurtured a flock of bantams that included Athos, El Rojo, Ophelia, Porthos, Rachel, and others. "Porthos is sitting on my lap as I write," Una said in a letter, "—its too wet & windy outside for little one-eyed roosters. He has sat here in the corner by my desk nearly all day—going out now and again to see whether the weather has cleared!"[95] Pigeons named Bona Margie, Etaine, Midhir, and Sorley Boy also nested on the property. And, always, a beloved bulldog—Billie, Haig, or Winnie—held the center of attention, doing what dogs do: "Haig tries to lie asleep in two places at once, on the hearth—which gets too hot, & in a patch of sunshine which isn't quite hot enough."[96]

DRAFT

Random House published *Give Your Heart to the Hawks and Other Poems* in September 1933. As usual, the book featured a long narrative, followed by a number of shorter works—in this case, all the poems previously printed in the special edition of *Descent to the Dead* and several new lyrics. As America plunged toward the depths of the Great Depression—with the drought-caused Dust Bowl migration underway, millions of Americans out of work, and half the banks in the country failing—critics found little in Jeffers's story of fratricide and madness in the Big Sur, or in his meditations on mortality, to cheer them.

As the 1930s progressed, this situation did not change. Jeffers remained a major figure, but critics, left and right, were not always uplifted by his work. Nor were they intended to be. In a preface to "At the Birth of An Age," a verse drama included in *Solstice and Other Poems*, published in 1935, Jeffers surveyed the Christian West, and said "Its civilization is the greatest, but also the most bewildered and self-contradictory, the least integrated, in some phases the most ignoble, that has ever existed." "I believe that we live about the summit of the wave of this age," Jeffers added, "and hence can see it more objectively, looking down toward the troughs on both sides."[97] "I would burn my right hand in a slow fire / To change the future," Jeffers admits in a poem titled "Rearmament," but, in his opinion, human fate was sealed, and nothing could change it—not Christianity in its declining years, or communism, or any other belief system, including faith in science. "The beauty of modern /

[93] *Collected Letters*, 1: 919, 921, 958.
[94] *Collected Letters*, 2: 817.
[95] *Collected Letters*, 2: 17.
[96] *Collected Letters*, 2: 409.
[97] Robinson Jeffers, *Solstice and Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1935), 1.

Man is not in the persons but in the / Disastrous rhythm, the heavy and mobile masses, the dance of the / Dream-led masses down the dark mountain."[98]

In addition to *Solstice*, Random House published an expanded Modern Library edition of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* in 1935, a move that made Jeffers available to an even larger reading public. *Such Counsels You Gave to Me and Other Poems* came next in 1937, a year of worldwide peril. As the United States slipped back into economic depression, the Civil War raged in Spain, Hitler opened a concentration camp in Buchenwald, Mussolini tightened his grip on Italy, Stalin unleashed the Great Terror in the Soviet Union, and Japanese soldiers committed the Nanjing Massacre in China. Jeffers responded to these events with unflinching candor: "Change and the world, we think, are racing to a fall, / Open-eyed and helpless, in every news-cast that is the news" ("Hope Is Not for the Wise"); "the present time is not pastoral, but founded / On violence, pointed for more massive violence" ("Self-Criticism in February"); "The age darkens, Europe mixes her cups of death, all the little Caesars fidget on their thrones" ("Hellenistics").[99]

As much as it sometimes hurt to read Jeffers, he was still highly regarded. In January 1937, the Book-of-the-Month Club awarded him a special prize of $2,500 for *Solstice and Other Poems*. Also, in January of that year, Jeffers was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, an honor that placed him in company with an elite group (just 250 members) of America's most accomplished artists and intellectuals. In June 1937, just before Jeffers left with his family for another six-month tour of the British Isles, Occidental College presented him with an honorary doctorate. In 1938, Random House published *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, a 600-page compendium of his best work, and in 1939 Jeffers was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Southern California, along with a Phi Beta Kappa key.

DRAFT

*World War II Era*

World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. As the 1940s dawned, therefore, Jeffers's worst fears were coming true. Through a static-filled radio broadcast, Robinson and Una listened with mounting dread to the prime minister of France when he announced the surrender of Belgium in May 1940. Una, always the more emotional of the two, "wept & shook" when she heard the news; "one's heart was squeezed in a vice," she wrote in a letter to a friend.[100]

In February 1941, with France already fallen and the Battle of Britain begun, Jeffers traveled across country to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., where he had been invited to serve as the inaugural speaker for a series of programs titled "The Poet in a Democracy." Robert Frost, Stephen Vincent Benét, and Carl Sandburg were scheduled to follow him in subsequent weeks. Accepting the invitation was uncharacteristic of Jeffers, for he never spoke publicly, but he looked forward to the event and he added additional engagements at the University of Pittsburgh, Harvard University, Columbia University, and other institutions. In the course of his talk, Jeffers discussed at length "the tragic conflict that obsesses all our minds at present," and he returned to that topic in his conclusion. "Perhaps I have spoken tonight some words of ill omen," he told the overflow crowd who came to hear him, "but they are not words of despair." More confident in the future than some readers might have thought he would be, Jeffers concluded his presentation on a positive note: "Our business is,

[98] *Collected Poetry*, 2: 515.
[99] *Collected Poetry*, 2: 560, 561, 527.
[100] *Collected Letters*, 3: 36.

to live. To live *through* . . . anything. And to keep alive, through everything, our ideal values, of freedom and courage, and mercy and tolerance."[101]

Jeffers's next book, *Be Angry at the Sun and Other Poems*, was published in October 1941—two months before the United States entered the war, following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. All the poems in the book deal with current events in some way. "Mara," the customary long narrative, tells a story of infidelity, madness, and suicide in the Big Sur at the time of Germany's invasion of Poland; "The Bowl of Blood" features Hitler in a masque about a séance, where the Führer consults a spirit-medium in an attempt to learn his future; "Contemplation of the Sword" is one of more than two dozen poems that reflect on the inevitable tragedies to come. "Reason will not decide at last; the sword will decide," Jeffers ruefully asserts in the first line of the poem, with "sword" standing for "the storms and counter-storms of general destruction," "massacre," "weeping and despair," "blindness, mutilation, locked lips of boys / Too proud to scream."[102] Words like these may not have been what readers of poetry wanted at the time, but Jeffers told the truth as he saw it. "Jeffers' work has always had the force and torment of great art," Stanley Kunitz wrote in his review of the book, singling out "The Bowl of Blood" for special praise. Describing the poem as "the greatest masque since *Comus*," Kunitz included among its virtues "beauty of form; imagination of a high order; a style economical, just, bone clean."[103] R. Ellis Roberts, also impressed with the poem, described it as "a tense, taut piece of work, packed with imaginative understanding and a rare quality of vision. In it . . . Jeffers's profound pity for humanity is nobly, sternly addressed." The book as a whole, Roberts concluded, "will confirm any intelligent reader that here is one of the few major poets now writing in English."[104]

DRAFT

Jeffers served as a volunteer at a coast lookout station during the war, scanning the sea and sky for any sign of trouble. Una received Red Cross first-aid training and worked as a volunteer at nearby Fort Ord. She eventually chaired the Red Cross Staff Assistance Corps at Fort Ord, as well as the agency's Carmel Chapter. Their son Donnan was not selected for military service because of a heart murmur, but Garth was inducted into the U.S. Army in April 1942 and served in both the Pacific and European theaters as a Ranger and member of a military police combat unit. Jeffers was grateful when the war ended in 1945 and Garth returned home unharmed, but he was appalled by the worldwide devastation. No one knows the exact number of fatalities; according to some estimates, however, between 70 and 85 million people lost their lives.

Jeffers wrote *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* after World War I, in part to probe the mystery of human violence and to suggest a way to escape it. He turned to ancient Greece after World War II as well, to Euripides this time, rather than Aeschylus. In adapting *Medea* (a story about a woman who murders her husband Jason's lover and then her own children to hurt him more) for the modern stage, Jeffers plumbed the depths of human violence again, showing it to be an end in itself in Medea's hands, with no way out.

Random House published *Medea: Freely Adapted from the Medea of Euripides* in April 1946. The project was initiated by actress Judith Anderson, a friend of Robinson and Una, and was intended all along for stage production. When the play opened on Broadway October 20, 1947, with Anderson as Medea and John Gielgud as Jason (Gielgud also directed), it was an immediate success. "Here is a performance of such scope and

[101] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 399–406.
[102] *Collected Poetry*, 2: 544–45.
[103] Stanley Kunitz, "The Day Is a Poem," *Poetry* 49 (December 1941): 152.
[104] R. Ellis Roberts, "Lonely Eminence," *Saturday Review of Literature* 25 (April 25, 1942): 8.

forcefulness, of such boldness of imagination, that it is not likely to be forgotten by anyone who witnesses it," said one reviewer after opening night. "This role begins on a pitch of great emotional intensity," wrote another. "It rises to heights that surpass endurance . . . an onlooker is left stunned and numb."[105] Brooks Atkinson, writing in the *New York Times*, praised Anderson: "she set a landmark in the theatre at the National last evening, where she gave a burning performance in a savage part." Praising Jeffers as well for his "sharp and vivid" verse, and for the access it provided to the heart and mind of one of literature's most notorious figures, he concluded, "Anderson has freed Medea from all the old traditions as if the character had just been created. Perhaps that is exactly what has happened. Perhaps Medea was never fully created until Miss Anderson breathed immortal fire into it last evening."[106] Robinson and Una were in the audience on opening night; after Anderson's thirteenth curtain call, Jeffers stood up and took a bow.[107] Atkinson wrote another review of *Medea* a few nights later. "Miss Anderson," he asserted, "always a superb actress, is now crowning her career with an inspired performance of rage and revenge. She is crowding into two hours the accumulated bitterness, savagery and ferocity of the world," exactly as Jeffers intended.[108]

In 1945, while writing *Medea*, Jeffers was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the exclusive fraternity (limited to fifty preeminent individuals, chosen by their peers) within the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In the same year, he was asked to serve as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. In some ways, therefore, *Medea* validated the high regard people had for him.

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This regard was called into question by the appearance of his next book, *The Double Axe and Other Poems*, published by Random House in 1948, two months after *Medea* temporarily closed due to a contract dispute (following 214 sold-out performances and a Tony Award for Anderson). In the immediate post-war years, Americans were ready to put the war and the Great Depression behind them and start over. Jeffers, however, was not ready to move on. In *Medea* he looked at violence through a classical lens, and thus at a distance from the modern world. *The Double Axe* collapses the distance between "then" and "now" and indicts all the world leaders, including Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, along with the people who followed them, for the destruction they had unleashed during World War II. Rather than praising America for its heroism in the war, Jeffers condemned it for its moral failures. In the first half of the title poem of the book, "The Love and the Hate," Jeffers tells the story of a soldier who is killed in the war and then, from the sheer force of anger over the loss of his life, pours his spirit back into his decomposing body and returns home to destroy his adulterous mother and flag-waving father. In one gruesome scene, just before the soldier forces his mother to plunge her hand into his blown-out chest, where she cuts herself on a jagged rib bone, his mother thinks, "Coldly, and it seemed / Slowly . . . that in a world grown monstrous, rabies-bitten / And nightmare-false, where millions of men are sacrificed / For no reason but vanity, thousands of ships and great fleets of planes with crammed wombs day and night / Labor over farthest oceans to debark death, not on armies only, / But old women, babies and little dogs."[109]

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[105] *New York Theatre Critics' Reviews, 1947*, ed. Rachel W. Coffin, 8, no. 16 (October 27, 1947): 295–98.
[106] Brooks Atkinson, "At the Theatre," *New York Times*, October 21, 1947, 27.
[107] *Collected Letters*, 3: 497.
[108] Brooks Atkinson, "Euripides' *Medea* Put on Capably: Judith Anderson Does Best Work of Her Entire Career," *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1947, B1.
[109] *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, Volume 3: 1938–1962*, ed. Tim Hunt (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 229.

Jeffers's editors at Random House, concerned about a backlash to the depictions of violence and criticism of America's involvement in the war, took the unprecedented step of adding a "Publishers' Note" at the beginning of the book—a disclaimer, in effect—affirming Jeffers's right to express his opinion while voicing their objection. The statement says, in part, "Random House feels compelled to go on record with its disagreement over some of the political views pronounced by the poet in this volume." In response, Jeffers added a preface of his own, in which he defended his opposition to the war while acknowledging that "it is futile at present to argue these matters" since, he knew, most people were not inclined to listen to him. Even so, Jeffers offered a concise statement about the origin of the book and its relation to the values that had guided him throughout his career. "The first part of *The Double Axe*," Jeffers explained,

> was written during the war and finished a year before the war ended, and it bears the scars; but the poem is not primarily concerned with that grim folly. Its burden, as of some previous work of mine, is to present a certain philosophical attitude, which might be called Inhumanism, a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence. It seems time that our race began to think as an adult does, rather than like an egocentric baby or insane person. This manner of thought and feeling is neither misanthropic nor pessimist, though two or three people have said so and may again. It involves no falsehoods and is a means of maintaining sanity in slippery times; it has objective truth and human value. It offers a reasonable detachment as rule of conduct, instead of love, hate and envy. It neutralizes fanaticism and wild hopes; but it provides magnificence for the religious instinct and satisfies our need to admire greatness and rejoice in beauty.[110]

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The second part of *The Double Axe*, titled "The Inhumanist," features an old man who sounds, in his various pronouncements, much like Jeffers himself. Near the end of the poem, the old man is accosted by a youth fleeing an apocalyptic fire-blast who accuses him of turning his back on humanity. "You have betrayed us," the young man screams, voicing charges hurled at Jeffers himself, "you have betrayed humanity. You are one of those that killed hope and faith, / And sneered at Progress; you have killed the lies that men live by . . . ." As the youth lunges at the old man with a knife, an act that mimics the futility and absurdity of war, the Inhumanist responds with a laugh, and reaffirms a vision of life that is directed outward, beyond human self-centeredness, toward the universe as a whole. "It is deep peace and final joy," the old man says, expressing Jeffers's own convictions, "To know that the great world lives, whether man dies or not. The beauty of things is not harnessed to human / Eyes and the little active minds: it is absolute."[111] This image of an un-caring nature that had meaning beyond what humans may think or feel, expressed frequently and in different ways by Jeffers through the years, revealed the distance he had traveled from the Romantic tradition of nature writing and its emphasis on the restorative qualities of nature for people. The Inhumanist's proclamation in *The Double Axe*, in contrast, decentered the human experience entirely, laying a foundation for the more decidedly ecocentric environmental literature of the late twentieth century.[112]

[110] *Collected Poetry*, 4: 428.
[111] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 310–11.
[112] Peter Quigley, "Carrying the Weight: Jeffers's Role in Preparing the Way for Ecocriticism.," *Jeffers Studies* 6, no. 4 (2002): 46-68.

*Later Life*

Robinson and Una were out of the country when *The Double Axe* was released, having departed in June 1948 for a three-month trip to Ireland, England, and Scotland. Their first stop was Ireland, where they visited many of their favorite places in Donegal and elsewhere. All was going well until July 12, when, in Kilkenny, Jeffers suffered an acute attack of pleurisy and was taken by ambulance to the Elpis Private Hospital in Dublin. "I have had a ghastly week," Una wrote in a July 19 letter to Judith Anderson, "Robin has been *gravely* ill & only yesterday took an upward turn. It was a strep infection in pleura which also encroached on the pericardium. For that reason (the heart)—he must at best be almost motionless for weeks."[113]

With constant care, Jeffers slowly improved, enough so that Una was able to travel to Edinburgh and London on her own for ten days. In Edinburgh she attended the premiere performance (August 23) of *Medea* at the Edinburgh Festival. This production, directed by John Gielgud and featuring Eileen Herlie in the title role, opened in London at the end of September.

Back in Dublin by August 30, Una planned to rent a car for short excursions with Robinson. A few days after that, however, "Robin had a terrible setback. . . . Nearly died. A bubble got into his bloodstream when pleural cavity was being washed out & penicillin put in. Artificial respiration had to be used & stimulants injected. We had a terrible fright. He was delirious for nearly 24 hrs. afterwards. . . . I feel as though a steamroller had passed over me."[114]

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Once the crisis passed, Jeffers recovered enough strength to return home. Judith Anderson had worked out the details for a new traveling production of *Medea* by this time and had embarked upon a nationwide tour. After three hundred performances coast-to-coast, she brought the play back to Broadway for an extended run.

Now, as fate decided, it was Una who began to fail. Feeling increasingly fatigued toward the end of 1948, she was examined by a doctor early in the new year and then admitted to the hospital for exploratory surgery. Una's doctor found what he feared, the return of cancer, dormant since a 1941 mastectomy. Neither radiation nor chemotherapy could stop the progression of the disease, which had entered Una's spine, and she slowly weakened as the months passed. "Una has a sweet room," Jeffers wrote to Una's sisters, referring to the guest room at Tor House where Una received loving care, "looking down on the ocean and rock-islands covered with birds, gulls, pelicans and cormorants; and the sea-lions passing; and the land-birds, quail and the singing sparrows and linnets, in the bushes under the window."[115] Una died September 1, 1950, having spent all but her very last days in the bed Jeffers describes in "The Bed by the Window," the one he chose for himself as "a good death-bed" when he and Una built their home. On a beam above it, he inscribed a passage from Spenser's *Fairie Queene*: "Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas, / Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please."

This may be true for the person released from suffering, but not for those left behind. Jeffers was shattered by his loss, and never fully recovered. He was not alone at Tor House, however, because his son and daughter-in-law, Donnan and Lee, lived there with him, along with their four children—Lindsay (b. 1947), Una (b. 1951),

[113] *Collected Letters*, 3: 573.
[114] *Collected Letters*, 3: 592.
[115] *Collected Letters*, 3: 676.

Donnan, Jr. (b. 1957), and John Robinson (b. 1960). Garth and his wife Charlotte raised seven children in northern California, where Garth worked for the U.S. Forest Service.

Despite his grief, Jeffers continued to work as a poet and a stonemason. "My business at present is to make verses in the morning," Jeffers wrote to lifelong friends Timmie and Maud Clapp, "and to add a stone or two to the new house-wall in the afternoon. The tasks that Una would want me to attend to if she were here."[116]

*Hungerfield and Other Poems*, the last book with original material published by Jeffers in his lifetime, was released by Random House in January 1954. Seven of the fourteen lyric poems in the book were first published in the January 1951 issue of *Poetry* magazine, where, as a set, they won the Eunice Tietjens Memorial Award later in the year. The title poem of *Hungerfield*, an elegiac narrative addressed to Una, tells the story of a man who wrestles with Death to save a loved one. *Poetry* devoted its entire May 1952 issue to the poem and, in November, selected it for its Union League Civic and Arts Foundation Prize. To complement the narrative and the lyric poems in the book, Jeffers included a verse drama—*The Cretan Woman*, a free adaptation of *Hippolytus* by Euripides. "In taking the road beyond middle age," Horace Gregory wrote in an appreciative review, "few American poets have stepped so far with a more deeply expressed humility and courage. With this book and those that may follow it, Jeffers's contribution to the poetry of our day is of mature inspiration and accomplishment. His position is secure and singular."[117] *Hungerfield* was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1954 and won the Borestone Mountain Poetry Award that year.

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A staged reading of *The Cretan Woman* at the President Theatre in New York in March, just three months after *Hungerfield* was published, was followed by a performance at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. in May. A complete production opened at the Provincetown Playhouse in Greenwich Village in July 1954 and then, after nearly a hundred performances, moved to Broadway. Jacqueline Brooks as Phaedra—the tormented woman who destroys Theseus and his son Hippolytus—won a Theater World Award for her performance in the role. In 1956, when Eric Bentley published a drama anthology titled *From the Modern Repertoire*, he included *The Cretan Woman* and described it as "surely one of the finest of American plays."[118]

Major and extensive translations of Jeffers's poetry were published throughout the 1950s, most notably in Germany by Eva Hesse and in what is now the Czech Republic by Kamil Bednář. *The Cretan Woman* soon joined *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* and *Medea* in performances around the world. *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, for instance, was broadcast as a radio drama in Munich and Bremen in 1951 and was presented later in the decade as a fully staged production in Bad Hersfeld, Nuremberg, Saarbrücken, Baden-Baden, Basel, Braunschweig, and Vienna. *The Cretan Woman* had a similar performance history, with English productions in Canada, Australia, and South Africa, and in native languages across Europe. *Medea* was immensely popular, as Judith Anderson continued to perform the title role in the United States and abroad. Notable performances include a 1951 production in Berlin sponsored by the U.S. Department of State; Paris in 1955, for an international arts festival; Australia in 1955, for a four-month multi-city tour; the United States in 1959, for a live television production that reached an audience of more than two million people.

[116] *Collected Letters*, 3: 733. Frederick Mortimer "Timmie" Clapp knew Una before she met Robinson; he was a poet, art historian, and the founding director of the Frick Collection in New York.
[117] Horace Gregory, "The Disillusioned Wordsworth of Our Age," *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, January 24, 1954, 5.
[118] *From the Modern Repertoire: Series Three*, ed. Eric Bentley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), unpaged foreword.

Anderson was not the only leading actress drawn to the role. *Medea* was also staged by major companies in Scotland, Denmark, Italy, Germany, France, Israel, South Africa, and other countries. Furthermore, Jeffers's depiction of Medea inspired artists in other fields to channel her fierce power. Blanche Thebom, a Metropolitan Opera star, commissioned Ernst Krenek to compose a musical setting of *Medea* for her, which she performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1953, and with other orchestras abroad. Birgit Cullberg, a Swedish dancer and choreographer, brought Jeffers's heroine to life in a ballet she performed with her own company in Sweden in 1950 and 1953, and with the New York City Ballet in 1958.[119]

As Jeffers's fame increased worldwide, he was not forgotten at home even as he remained a controversial figure because of his criticism of conventional values, convictions concerning the environment, and opposition to war. As a memorial to Una, Jeffers edited *Visits to Ireland: Travel-Diaries of Una Jeffers*, published by Ward Ritchie Press in 1954. In 1956, the Book Club of California published a keepsake edition of *Themes in My Poems*, the text of Jeffers's 1941 lecture at Harvard University and lectures at other institutions. Also in 1956, Random House published a deluxe, fine art edition of Jeffers's early narrative poem *The Loving Shepherdess*, illustrated by Jean Kellogg. Jeffers was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Poets in 1958, and in 1960 he was given the Shelley Memorial Award by the Poetry Society of America for his distinguished lifetime achievement.

Jeffers died at Tor House—in the same "bed by the window" where Una had lain—on January 20, 1962. A rare snowfall covered Carmel that day. His body was cremated, and his ashes were buried beneath a yew tree in the courtyard of Tor House, where Una's ashes were placed more than a decade before.

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*Legacy*

*The Beginning and the End and Other Poems*, described on the dust jacket as "the last works of Robinson Jeffers," was published posthumously in 1963. Melba Berry Bennett—a friend of the family and, in later years, Jeffers's secretarial assistant—assembled the volume from the fragments and poems left on Jeffers's desk when he died. The "imaginative grandeur" of the book, as Stephen Spender said of its special quality, stems from the depth and breadth of ideas broached by Jeffers, extending from reflections on life at Tor House to thoughts about modern America, humanity, nature, God, and the universe.[120]

Observations found in *The Beginning and the End* anticipated many of the concerns of the nascent environmental movement of the late twentieth century. In "Birth and Death," Jeffers previewed questions later addressed in Paul Ehrlich's 1968 bestseller *The Population Bomb*. "Have you noticed meanwhile the population explosion / Of man on earth?" Jeffers asked. "We are quite suddenly / Three billion people," he added ruefully in another poem.[121] The poems also addressed various other issues including the destruction of war and the threat of a changing climate. "Do you still make war?" Jeffers asked, when America's defense budget was about $56 billion a year—a small fraction of what it is now. "To heap up weapons—what weapons!" Jeffers observed, "makes war certain as sunrise."[122] "The polar ice-caps are melting," Jeffers further noted, thirty years before

[119] *Medea* continues to attract worldwide attention. Tony winner Sophie Okonedo starred in a highly acclaimed production of Jeffers's play at the Soho Place theater in London, February–April 2023.
[120] Stephen Spender, "Rugged Poetry Imbued with Spirit of the Hawk," *Chicago Tribune Magazine of Books*, May 12, 1963, 3.
[121] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 440, 435.
[122] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 415, 478.

accurate measurements could be made, "the mountain glaciers / Drip into rivers; all feed the ocean; / Tides ebb and flow, but every year a little bit higher. / They will drown New York, they will drown London."[123]

Passages in *The Beginning and the End* have also grown more percipient with the passage of time. "It is only a little planet," Jeffers wrote in a brief poem about the immensity of the universe, "But how beautiful it is."[124] These lines, poignant in their simplicity, predate the Apollo 8 and Apollo 17 space exploration photographs of 1968 and 1972 ("Earthrise" and "Blue Marble"), showing Earth as an orb suspended in the blackness of outer space. Photographed from a distance of 3.7 billion miles by the Voyager 1 spacecraft in 1990, Earth appears as a barely visible "pale blue dot"—a phrase used by Carl Sagan for the title of a book he published in 1994. "Our posturings," Sagan mused in his introduction, "our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."[125] That was Jeffers's message all along.

An observation by physicist Freeman Dyson is relevant here. In a 1995 essay titled "The Scientist as Rebel," Dyson said, "Robinson Jeffers was no scientist, but he expressed better than any other poet the scientist's vision." Dyson compared Jeffers to Albert Einstein in his contempt for "national pride and cultural taboos," and observed that both men "stood in awe of nature alone."[126] Einstein was no poet, but he sounded very much like Jeffers when he spoke these words:

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> A human being is a part of the whole, called by us 'Universe,' a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.[127]

An awakened sense of the fragility of Earth along with an appreciation for its beauty were the twin emotions David Brower sought to elicit in readers when he published *Not Man Apart: Lines from Robinson Jeffers, Photographs of the Big Sur Coast* in 1965. Brower was the executive director of the Sierra Club at the time and a key figure in America's growing environmental movement. With a tribute to Jeffers by the naturalist Loren Eiseley and stunning photographs by Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and others, the oversized, "coffee table" bestseller brought renewed attention to Jeffers and his ideas, and helped secure his place as a leading spokesman for the environment in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold. The title of the book was taken from "The Answer" (mentioned previously) where Jeffers says, "Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is / Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man / Apart from that . . . ."

[123] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 476.
[124] *Collected Poetry*, 3: 450.
[125] Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random House, 1994), 9.
[126] Freeman Dyson, "The Scientist as Rebel," *New York Review of Books*, 42: 9 (May 25, 1995): 31.
[127] Walter Sullivan, "The Einstein Papers: A Man of Many Parts," *New York Times*, March 29, 1972, 1, 20.

By the time *Not Man Apart* appeared, author and philanthropist Melba Berry Bennett had established a National Council dedicated to the preservation of Jeffers's legacy. Random House co-founder Bennett Cerf was a member of the Council, along with Lawrence Clark Powell (*Robinson Jeffers: The Man & His Work*, *California Classics*, *A Passion for Books*), Joseph Wood Krutch (*The Modern Temper*, *The Great Chain of Life*), and Richard Ellman (*James Joyce*, *Yeats*, *The Modern Tradition*), and more than a dozen other cultural figures. In collaboration with Occidental College, Bennett also created the Robinson Jeffers Committee and began publication of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*. Bennett's biography, *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Works of Robinson Jeffers*, was published by Ward Ritchie Press in 1966. Bennett died in 1968, but her *Newsletter* continued under a new editor. The nationwide network she created prepared the way for two subsequent organizations—the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation and the Robinson Jeffers Association. The Tor House Foundation was formed in 1978, with the express purpose of purchasing Jeffers's home and preserving it for posterity. Judith Anderson and Ansel Adams were among the Foundation's first trustees, and they helped establish it as an important local cultural institution. The Robinson Jeffers Association, affiliated with the American Literature Association, was formed in 1990 to meet the needs of academics and independent scholars. In 1996, the Association assumed responsibility for the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, which ceased publication under that title (after one hundred issues) and continued as *Jeffers Studies*. Both organizations remain dedicated to their respective missions: to maintain Tor House as it was when the Jeffers family lived there, and to support the study of Jeffers's life and work.

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The effort to secure Jeffers's place in America's literary canon has been advanced immeasurably by Stanford University Press. Over the past three decades, Stanford has published two sets of definitive texts: five volumes of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (1988, 1989, 1991, 2000, 2001), edited by Tim Hunt, and three volumes of *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers* (2009, 2011, 2015), edited by James Karman. Together, these two works contain close to 6,500 pages of primary material, with notes and commentary. Both editions have been highly praised, with the latter winning the "Oscar Lewis Award for Outstanding Contributions in the Field of Western History," given by the Book Club of California (2016), and the "California Book Award Gold Medal for Contribution to Publishing," conferred by the Commonwealth Club (2016). Stanford has also published *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (2001), edited by Tim Hunt; *Stones of the Sur: Poetry by Robinson Jeffers, Photographs by Morley Baer* (2001), edited by James Karman; *The Wild God of the World: An Anthology of Robinson Jeffers*, selected by Albert Gelpi; *Robinson Jeffers and the American Sublime* (2012), a critical study by Robert Zaller; *Robinson Jeffers: Poet and Prophet*, a biography by James Karman; and *The Point Alma Venus Manuscripts: Preliminary Versions of The Women at Point Sur* (2022), edited by Tim Hunt and Robert Kafka.

Stanford is not the only press interested in Jeffers. Recent books include *Inventing the Language to Tell It: Robinson Jeffers and the Biology of Consciousness* by George Hart (Fordham University Press, 2013); *The Wild That Attracts Us: New Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers*, edited by ShaunAnne Tangney (University of New Mexico Press, 2015); *Towers of Myth and Stone: Yeats's Influence on Robinson Jeffers* by Deborah Fleming (University of South Carolina Press, 2015); *His Place for Story: Robinson Jeffers: A Descriptive Bibliography* by Michael Broomfield (Oak Knoll Press, 2015); *The Atom To Be Split: New and Selected Essays on Robinson Jeffers* by Robert Zaller (Tor House Press, 2019); *The Little Art Colony and US Modernism: Carmel, Provincetown, Taos* by Geneva M. Gano (Edinburgh University Press, 2020); and *Robinson Jeffers Family*

*Travel Diaries, Volume One: British Isles, 1929*, edited by Deborah Whittlesey Sharp (Tor House Press, 2022).[128]

Jeffers's importance has been recognized by the United States government as well—during his lifetime, when he was invited to speak at the Library of Congress in 1941, and after he died, when the U.S. Postal Service honored Jeffers with a 1973 first-class commemorative postage stamp. In addition, the National Park Service added Tor House to its National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and the National Endowment for the Arts featured Jeffers in its influential Big Read program (the first modern poet in the series) in 2008. The National Endowment for the Humanities provided multiple funding grants for both the *Collected Poetry* and *Collected Letter*s, along with grant support in 2018 for a Tor House Foundation conference in Carmel titled "Robinson Jeffers and the Sacredness of Place."

The importance of Jeffers to American literature and culture is also reflected in the artists and authors he inspired. When photographer Ansel Adams resolved to dedicate himself to what became his signature style as a photographer, he declared his intentions in a letter to Alfred Stieglitz dated August 12, 1945. "I am going to do my best," he told his friend, "to call attention to the simplicities of environment and method; to 'the enormous beauty of the world,' as Jeffers writes. Pray for me."[129] Photographer Edward Weston was inspired by Jeffers in a similar way, as were countless other artists and thinkers who sought a direct encounter with reality and who could say with Jeffers "to be truth-bound . . . is my errand here."[130] Jeffers's legacy is perhaps most clearly evident in the work of environmental writers who followed him. Scholars have traced his philosophy of inhumanism as a precursor to late twentieth-century ecocriticism, noting its influence on such authors as the poet Gary Snyder and Edward Abbey, author of *Desert Solitaire*, among others.[131] Poet and literary scholar Temple Cone also sees some of the tenets of Deep Ecology in Jeffers's work, "for it emphasizes reciprocal self-actualization, non-intrusive interaction with the natural environment, and a rural lifestyle at odds with modern, technological society."[132]

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As a reader and translator of English-language verse, Nobel Prize-winning poet Czesław Miłosz closely studied Jeffers's work. "What have I to do with you?" Miłosz asks in his poem, "To Robinson Jeffers." Miłosz answers that question in an essay titled "Carmel," where he says that the spirit found in Jeffers's life and art "challenged

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**128** Important scholarship across a variety of fields can also be found in student research, as the titles of recent MA theses and PhD dissertations attest. See, for instance, Michael J. McDowell, "Finding Tongues in Trees: Dialogical and Ecological Landscapes in Henry David Thoreau, Robinson Jeffers, and Leslie Marmon Silko" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1992); Amy Reiswig, "Robinson Jeffers, Hermit of Carmel: Recontextualizing Inhumanism" (master's thesis, McGill University, 2000); Catherine R. Owen, "Poet of Stone and Planets: Counter-Pastoralism, Inhumanism, and Literary Ecology in the work of Robinson Jeffers" (master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2001); Eunseong Kim, "The Politics of Nature in the Works of Robinson Jeffers and Gary Snyder" (PhD diss., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2002); Mark Hutton, "Only the Earth Remains: Exploring the Machine in Selected Lyric Poetry of Robinson Jeffers" (master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2017); Brett Colasacco, "Robinson Jeffers: Poet at the End of the World" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2018); Jessica Hunt, "Scenes from *Thurso's Landing*" [opera score] (master's thesis, University of Michigan, 2019); and Carter Davis Johnson, "The Dust Dwellers: The Environmental Philosophy of John Steinbeck, Robinson Jeffers, and Jack London" (master's thesis, Virginia Tech, 2022).

[129] Ansel Adams, *Letters and Images 1916–1984*, ed. Mary Street Alinder and Andrea Gray Stillman (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), 160.

[130] *Collected Poetry*, 2: 535.

[131] See for example, Quigley, "Carrying the Weight" and Allan Johnston, "Ecology and Æsthetics: Robinson Jeffers and Gary Snyder," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 13-38.

[132] Temple Cone, "One Temper with the Granite: The Troubling Achievement of Robinson Jeffers's Ecological Lyric," *Jeffers Studies*, 10, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 13.

me to wrestle and, through its courage, gave me courage." As troubling as Jeffers might be, Miłosz contends in another essay, his achievement earned him "a lasting position that will surely endure as long as the English language endures."[133] For a poet, there is no higher accolade.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Several National Historic Landmarks are associated with important twentieth-century poets, but none are like Tor House. Robert Frost (1874–1963), for instance, is represented by the Robert Frost Homestead (NHL #68000008), a clapboard farmhouse in Derry, New Hampshire, where Frost lived from 1900 to 1911. When Frost no longer owned the farm, the property was used to store junk automobiles and the house was neglected. More than a decade of work was required after the state of New Hampshire purchased the homestead in 1964 to restore it to its former state. Frost is also represented by the Robert Frost Farm (NHL #68000046) in Ripton, Vermont, a property with a nineteenth-century farmhouse and a writing cabin where Frost lived and worked in the summer months from 1940 to 1963. The farmhouse, now owned by Middlebury College, was heavily damaged by teenage vandals in December 2007 but it has since been restored. Another residence, the Robert Frost Farm in Shaftsbury, Vermont, also known as "The Gully," was occupied intermittently by Frost from 1929 to 1938. Its status as a Landmark (NHL #68000047) was revoked in 1986 following extensive renovations by a new owner. In addition to these three properties, several more homes associated with Frost are now operated as museums or designated locally for their historic significance: Robert Frost Place, in Franconia, New Hampshire, where Frost lived from 1915 to 1920 and where he summered for twenty years thereafter; the Robert Frost Stone House in Shaftsbury, Vermont, where Frost lived from 1920 to 1929; the Robert Frost House now in Henry Ford's open-air Greenfield Village museum in Dearborn, Michigan, but formerly located in Ann Arbor, where Frost was a Fellow in the Creative Arts at the University of Michigan in 1925–1926; the Robert Frost House in Amherst, Massachusetts where Frost resided from 1931 to 1938; the Robert Frost House in Cambridge, Massachusetts where Frost lived from around 1943 to 1963; and the Robert Frost Cottage in Key West, Florida, Frost's winter home from 1945 to 1960.

Frost was one of four speakers in the 1941 "Poet in a Democracy" series sponsored by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Jeffers was the first speaker in the series, Frost second, Stephen Vincent Benét third, and Carl Sandburg fourth. Benét (1898–1943) lived in the Stephen Vincent Benét House (NHL #71000286) during his early teenage years. The Federal-period house was completed in 1829 as a residence for the Commandant of the United States Arsenal in Summerville, Georgia—a position held by Benét's father from 1911 to 1915. The house is located on what is now the campus of Augusta State University, where it serves as an administrative function as the Office of Admissions. Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) is remembered mostly as a Midwestern poet, but he lived for the last twenty-two years of his life at Connemara, his farm in Flat Rock, North Carolina. The centerpiece of the property, now managed by the federal government as a National Historic Site, is the Carl Sandburg House (NHL #68000013), built in the first half of the nineteenth century in the Greek Revival style. After Sandburg and his wife Lilian died, their ashes were interred on the grounds of Sandburg's birthplace and boyhood home in Galesburg, Illinois, a property maintained by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

[133] For quotations from "To Robinson Jeffers, "Carmel," and "Jeffers: An Attempt at Disclosure," see Czesław Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1975), 96, 94, and *Beginning with My Streets: Essays and Recollections* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1992), 197–98.

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The homes of other poets close to Jeffers in age are also designated National Historic Landmarks. The Edwin Arlington Robinson House (NHL #71000070) is located in Gardiner, Maine. Robinson (1869–1935) lived in the wood-frame family home, purchased by his parents in 1870, until he left for college, and for a few years after. The Paul Lawrence Dunbar Home (NHL #66000619) in Dayton, Ohio, was purchased by Dunbar (1872–1906) for his mother in 1904. Sick with tuberculosis and separated from his wife, Dunbar moved into the home and died there less than two years later. The Vachel Lindsay House (NHL #71000297) in Springfield, Illinois, was also a family home. Lindsay (1879–1931) was born in the 1848 structure, located across the street from the Governor's Mansion, but he left as a young man. He committed suicide in the home two years after returning to Springfield with a young wife and two small children. Steepletop, the Edna St. Vincent Millay Home (NHL #71000534), is a 500-acre estate in Austerlitz, New York. Millay (1892–1950) and her husband Eugene Boissevan purchased the property with its ca.-1870 farmhouse in 1925. Millay lived in rural seclusion there for the rest of her life. The E. E. Cummings Home (NHL #71000048), also known as Joy Farm, is located near Silver Lake in New Hampshire. The farmstead was purchased by Cummings's parents in 1899 and was used by Cummings (1894–1962) as a summer home from 1929 until he died. His primary residence was in Greenwich Village, New York. The James Merrill House (NHL #13000618) in Stonington Borough, southeastern Connecticut, served as a primary residence and summer home of Merrill (1926–1995) and his partner David Jackson for over forty years. The building has space for commercial tenants on the ground floor and apartments above. Merrill and Jackson also had homes in Athens, Greece, and Key West, Florida. The YMCA building at 180 W. 135th Street in New York (NHL # 76002143) is designated as the residence of Jamaican-born author and poet Claude McKay, whose 1919 poem "If We Must Die" is credited as the catalyst for the Harlem Renaissance.

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Several homes of poets who were roughly contemporary with Jeffers are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or carry other designations. The home of mid-twentieth-century modernist poet William Carlos Williams in Rutherford, New Jersey (NRHP #73001082) is the most comparable in terms of years of residence. Williams lived here during the most productive period of his career from 1913 until his death in 1963. Other notable properties listed at the national level of significance include the Robert Penn Warren House in Prairieville, Louisiana (NRHP #92001732), where the author lived briefly from 1941 to 1942; the childhood home complex of poet Theodore Roethke located in Saginaw, Michigan (NRHP #00001485); and the Langston Hughes House in New York City (NRHP #82001198). The third floor of this Harlem rowhouse served as Hughes's workshop from 1947 to 1968. The home of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks where she lived and wrote from 1953 to her death in 1994 is listed as a Chicago Landmark. Three homes associated with T.S. Eliot, whose career closely paralleled Jeffers's, are also worth mentioning. Eliot's home during his teenage years in St. Louis, Missouri, is designated as a City Landmark. A summer house in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and a house in Cambridge where he lived while teaching at Harvard from 1913 to 1914 are also still present but not listed under any historic designations.

Each of the properties listed above is distinguished in its own way. Tor House stands apart, however, in several respects. One distinction is the fact of its location. Jeffers was the only major poet of his generation to live in California. The Landmark homes of his contemporaries are located mostly in New York and New England, with none west of the Mississippi. Some homes of other poets were owned first by their parents; others were purchased from previous residents; in one case, the home belonged to the United States government; several have been extensively renovated. Tor House is the only home designed, built, and exclusively occupied by the poet himself and the poet's immediate family. Whereas most other major poets of Jeffers generation owned or lived in more than one home over the course of their careers—simultaneously, in some instances, when winter or summer residency was involved—Jeffers never lived anywhere other than Tor House during his productive

career. Finally, Tor House provides a particularly dramatic link between poet and place, as Harold and Ann Gilliam contend in *Creating Carmel*. "Probably no renowned poet anywhere has been more thoroughly identified with a community and its environs than Robinson Jeffers with Carmel," they write.

> Like Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond and John Muir at Yosemite, Jeffers absorbed the colors and sounds and flavors of his home region and recreated them in his work until he personified its *genius loci*, the spirit of the place. Carmel and the coast beyond are Jeffers country. Like the house the poet built on Carmel Point, his writings seem to grow out of the wave-worn granite and embody the sun and fog, the shorebirds and salt winds, the white sand and white breakers rolling in from the far Pacific. From this stone house on the point came some of the most eloquent poetry ever written about any region of the earth, glowing with the beauty and passion and storm-fury of this coastline.[134]

## CONCLUSION

Tor House merits National Historic Landmark recognition under Criterion 2 as the home of nationally significant poet Robinson Jeffers. From 1919 to 1962, Jeffers earned worldwide acclaim with the publication of eighteen books of poetry. During the same period, he designed, built, and lived in Tor House—a unique complex of stone structures located on the Carmel coast of California. "Jeffers's art is in the house, and the house in the art," Stewart Brand observed, noting the way Jeffers's vocation as a poet and his work as a stonemason were intertwined.[135]

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[134] Gilliam and Gilliam, *Creating Carmel*, 103.
[135] Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 51.

## 6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

**Ownership of Property**
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

**Category of Property**
Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

**Number of Resources within Boundary of Property**

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|---|---|
| Buildings: 2 | Buildings: |
| Sites: 1 | Sites: |
| Structures: 4 | Structures: |
| Objects: 2 | Objects: 2 |
| Total: 9 | Total: 2 |

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## PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY

### Summary

The home of Robinson and Una Jeffers is located just south of the village of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the central coast of California. Its setting is a low hill on Carmel Point, on the shore of Carmel Bay. The Bay itself is shaped like the number 3, with Pescadero Point at the top (north), Point Lobos at the bottom (south), and Carmel Point in the middle, where the two crescents meet. On that craggy headland, with nothing but open ocean before them and the entire North American continent behind, Robinson and Una Jeffers built Tor House in 1919. They chose the name because the landscape reminded them of the "tors" of Dartmoor, England—the barren hills crowned with outcroppings of stone. The design of the cottage was inspired by a sixteenth-century Tudor barn Una had seen in Surrey, England. The granite boulders that form its walls, gathered from the hill itself and from the shore below, are set in irregular courses so that Tor House appears to rise up naturally from the earth on which it stands. As a workman on the project, Robinson learned the craft of stonemasonry, and used that skill in the following years to build a garage, a wall surrounding the courtyard, Hawk Tower, a dining room, and an east wing—all of which share the same organic connection to the coastal landscape. Preserved in its original state by Robinson and Una, by their sons and grandchildren, and by the Tor House Foundation (a 501(c)(3) non-profit, community-based institution that now owns the property), the entire estate possesses a high degree of historic integrity. A visitor today sees Tor House much as it was when Jeffers and his family lived there.

## Narrative Description

*Location*

Tor House is located at 26304 Ocean View Avenue just outside the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. It consists of an irregularly shaped lot of 0.64 acres (28,000 square feet) situated in a residential neighborhood. To the north, east, and south are residential parcels. To the west, the parcel abuts Scenic Road and the rocky cliffs/beach of the Pacific Ocean to the west below. The parcel slopes steeply at the western edge and more gradually to the northeast, forming a hill with several large granite boulders at its peak—a "tor," like those found in England. The largest of these boulders, named Thuban by Jeffers, acts as the cornerstone at the northwest corner of Tor House. According to the Monterey County Tax Assessor, there is a total of 4,218 square feet of living space.

*Setting*

Tor House is located within the Jeffers Estates residential tract on Carmel Point (also known as Mission Point), south and west of the village of Carmel-by-the Sea. The Jeffers Estates tract is bordered to the north and to the east by the west side of Ocean View Avenue, the north side of Stewart Way to the south, and the east side of Scenic Road to the west.[136]

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Robinson and Una Jeffers bought the land in phases.[137] The first phase was in spring of 1919. They purchased additional acreage in March 1922, and more land to the north in July 1930.[138] The total property comprised approximately five acres.[139] Jeffers planted some two-thousand trees on the land creating a secluded park-like setting.[140]

In March of 1963, Garth and Donnan Jeffers (twin sons of Robinson and Una) re-subdivided the land into the nineteen parcels that comprise Jeffers Estates. The same year, Garth and Donnan deeded the beach west of Scenic Road to Monterey County.

The area is now zoned Medium Density Residential, two units per acre, with an 18-foot height limit in the Coastal Zone in the Carmel Land Use Plan. Based on historic photographs including aerial views, the residential neighborhood surrounding Jeffers Estates was undeveloped in the mid-1930s with just a few large homes. It was substantially developed by 1945 and built-out with single-family residences by 1953. The area, including the Jeffers Estates parcels and the surrounding neighborhood, is now predominantly occupied by two-story custom homes from the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The subdivision does not have sidewalks or curbs—a more rustic approach than urban or suburban developments. The area is dotted with mature Monterey pines and eucalyptus, many of which were planted by Robinson Jeffers.

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[136] The west side of Scenic Road at the south end was deeded to Monterey County around the same time that the Jeffers Tract was platted.

[137] Jeffers ultimately acquired some 36 lots. Today's parcel represents a small fragment of this original acreage.

[138] *Collected Letters,* 1: 944.

[131] *Collected Letters,* 3: 258.

[140] Lawrence Clark Powell, "Robinson Jeffers and His Garden," *Sunset Magazine* 74: 5 (May 1935): 11.

*Overview of Construction History*

Tor House was built as a series of additive vernacular buildings that were connected over time to create a complex, irregular U-shaped plan to the north of the courtyard. Construction of the first of these buildings, Tor House cottage, was supervised by local contractor M. J. Murphy (1884–1959).

Robinson and Una envisioned a small stone cottage, designed after a sixteenth-century barn Una had seen in the south of England. They gave Murphy a sketch of the cottage they desired, and he returned with a cost estimate of $2,230. Robinson and Una accepted the bid, dated May 17, 1919, and construction of the compact structure began soon after.[141]

Jeffers joined the crew as a common laborer and worked alongside Robert Pearson, a mason who taught him how to make "stone love stone."[142] The granite boulders used for construction were gathered from the surrounding hillside or hauled up from the shore. "I am heaping the bones of the old mother / To build us a hold against the air," Jeffers says of them in "To the House."[143] Additional building materials were delivered to the remote site by horse and wagon, and all the work was done by men using hand tools.

As the walls of the cottage were raised, Robinson and Una made countless on-the-spot decisions. In mid-July, when Una was shopping for household goods in Los Angeles, Jeffers sent her a report containing a few construction details. "Fine progress at the house," he wrote, "—rafters cut hip-shape in front—front upstairs window set—foundation of fireplaces laid up to flooring, all ready for chalkstone. Mason asked whether chalkstone in bedroom fireplace—I considered and said 'yes.' Would you like a little mantel in bedroom? The flue will retract from fireplace, so will be either mantel shelf or empty box above—? Rather inclined to shelf but will try keep question open."[144]

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"Once we were well established in the house," Jeffers's son Garth recalled, "Father started outdoor work. I think it was still 1919 when my father built the walls of the garage, but it was some time after that carpenters arrived to put the roof on. During this hiatus Father continued his masonry work, building a pedestal for and installing the sundial Mother had acquired in Cornwall. He used the North Star in determining an approximate north for orienting the dial. After that was completed, he started the project of building a wall around the courtyard."[145]

The garage was built next to Tor House, perpendicular to it. The garage walls and doorway arch were made entirely of stacked stone. According to Jeffers's son Donnan, soon after completing the garage, Jeffers "read that, for proper support, a Roman arch of this kind should have a width of masonry on each side of it of the same size as the arch itself." Though Jeffers "could detect no sign of incipient failure," he "nevertheless hastened to add a massive buttress on each side"—both of which were eventually incorporated into additions to the garage and home.[146]

[141] *Collected Letters*, 1: 439n2.
[142] *Collected Letters*, 3: 258; *Collected Poetry*, 1: 408.
[143] *Collected Poetry*, 1: 5.
[144] *Collected Letters*, 1: 441.
[145] Garth Jeffers, *The House That Jeffers Built, Volume 2: Memories of Tor House* (Covelo, CA: Yolla Bolly Press, 1993), 13–14.
[146] Donnan Jeffers, *The House That Jeffers Built, Vol. 1: The Building of Tor House* (Covelo, CA: Yolla Bolly Press, 1993), 14.

The stone pedestal for Una's brass sundial was erected about 30 feet from the south side of Tor House, opposite the living room window closest to the sea. The sundial is inscribed with an image of a radiant sun, Roman numerals to mark the hours, a date of 1664, and the words "Life is but a shadowe" from Macbeth's "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow" soliloquy.[147]

The courtyard wall created a protective enclosure for Tor House. Jeffers laid the first course on the west side of his property, tying in to the southwest corner of the cottage and working southward, with a break along the way for a wooden Sea Gate. He then turned 90 degrees east and continued to the site where he would soon begin work on Hawk Tower. The sundial was located in the crook of that angle. At first, this portion of the wall was about 3½ feet high. The south wall continued 20 feet past the site of Hawk Tower, toward the east side of the property. With another 90 degrees turn to the north, Jeffers built an east wall fitted with an open Moor Gate, framed by stone columns on both sides and wide enough for an automobile to drive through. At the north end of the east wall, Jeffers turned 90 degrees west and closed in the north side of the property all the way to the garage.

When construction of Tor House began, Murphy's crew hauled loads of stones to the site by horses. Once Murphy's crew was gone, however, Jeffers worked entirely alone. "Father used to get stones from many of the empty beaches adjacent to the point," Garth reported. "He used a wheelbarrow to move the smaller ones—perhaps up to two hundred pounds—but after he broke the handle on an early wheelbarrow when the load was too heavy, he resigned himself to rolling the large rocks end over end."[148] According to Jeffers himself, the boulders weighed about "170 pounds per cubic foot."[149] The larger stones weighed 200 to 300 pounds each, possibly more, and the path to Tor House was uphill. Jeffers "usually went out at night to start the boulders toward the house," Garth added, describing how his father prepared for the next day's work, and this "was a cause of worry to my mother, who pictured all sorts of catastrophes if he stayed for long as he often did."[150]

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In 1920, as soon as the garage and courtyard walls were completed, Jeffers began work on his next project: the massive, free-standing Hawk Tower. The structure "arose from our dreams of old Irish towers," Una explained, "and so often the hawks flying above came to rest on the great granite boulders that at last we called it HAWK TOWER, and had hawks cut with the unicorns in the keystones over the doors. Only the wall enclosing the courtyard joins it to Tor House, standing firm set against the strong trade winds, which sweep in across the Pacific at certain seasons of the year."[151]

Jeffers built Hawk Tower on the south side of the courtyard. "Father insisted that the foundation rest on bedrock all the way around," Garth explained. "Fortunately, he did not have to dig deeply here for, being at the top of a slope, the soil covering was shallow."[152] As Jeffers dug the foundation, he also stockpiled stones, rolling the larger ones up the hillside end over end as before. Since many were larger than those used for the garage and courtyard wall, some may have weighed as much as 300 or 400 pounds.[153]

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[147] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 5, scene 5, line 24.
[148] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 19–20.
[149] *Collected Letters*, 1: 476.
[150] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 20.
[151] *Collected Letters*, 2: 323–24.
[152] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 21.
[153] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 23.

Jeffers worked with stone in the afternoons and evenings; mornings, as stated previously, were devoted to writing. As the walls of Hawk Tower slowly rose, "Tamar," *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, "Roan Stallion," "Continent's End," and other seminal works were completed. The extent to which Jeffers' twin occupations were intertwined is revealed on a large sheet of scratch paper, now in the Jeffers Collection at Yale's Beinecke Library, that dates from this period. Next to lines of verse, story ideas, and plots for poems, Jeffers drew plans for the dungeon, staircase, and other portions of Hawk Tower. In one place, he worked out rhythmic details for a section of "Tamar," deciding on "5 beats to the line doubled in a few passages to iambic 10s quickened to anapests, bring in anapests and ∪∪∪ . . . lyrical passages, sometimes broadened to 8s."[154] Jeffers' work as a stonemason exhibited the same concern for structural integrity and craftsmanship.

Once the foundation was dug, Jeffers began laying stones. The box for mixing his Portland cement mortar, according to Garth, "was placed not far south of the tower location but leaving plenty of room for a scaffolding, which would be needed eventually. Father's recipe for mixing mortar was a good deal richer than that of Pearson, the mason who built the original Tor House or, so far as I know, that of any other mason who did commercial work." The scaffold, Garth added, "was rather a precarious-looking thing, built of driftwood and used lumber." It supported a "ramp up which stones were carried or rolled . . . formed by parallel-sloping planks that were joined every foot or less by heavy cross members to give purchase to the feet."[155] For the first half of the tower, "say the first twenty feet," Donnan explained further, Jeffers "carried, or rolled, the stones up a series of inclined planks in the same manner as, they say, was practiced by the builders of the Egyptian pyramids. For construction of the second half of the edifice, Robin installed a strong block-and-tackle system, but it must be remembered that during construction the tower was never surrounded by scaffolding; all the stones were brought up to one corner of the structure and then moved along the broad, unfinished walls to their final resting place."[156]

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The single scaffold was used to raise the stones to the level at which his father was working, first by way of a ramp and then by rope and pulleys. No other scaffolds, such as ones Jeffers might stand on as he worked from wall to wall around the structure, were built. Once Jeffers lifted a stone to the required height, he carried it or rolled it along the course until he reached the place prepared for it. The walls were thick—6 feet, in places—but uneven, and, one might imagine, ever more dangerous as the walls rose. Once Jeffers got a stone to where he wanted it, he still had to bend down to position it just so, in wet cement, which he also carried bucket by bucket along the row.

"The tower is finished," Jeffers declared in a letter written on September 4, 1925, "except two little jobs of paving. I laid the last stone in the parapet of the turret yesterday."[157] By November—the same month Boni & Liveright released Jeffers' first major book, *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems*—his work was done.

As soon as Hawk Tower was completed, Jeffers began work on a dining room addition to the cottage. "Yesterday I started laying foundations for our inn-kitchen of a dining-room, between the garage and the house," Jeffers told George Sterling in a November 12, 1925, letter.[158] The room Jeffers planned was located on

[154] Aaron Yoshinobu, "The Great Sheet: A Rosetta Stone of Poetics, Stonemasonry, and the Seeds of Robinson Jeffers's Mature Voice," *Jeffers Studies* 10–11, nos. 1 & 2 (2006–2007): 230.
[155] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 21.
[156] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 23.
[157] *Collected Letters*, 1: 509.
[158] *Collected Letters*, 1: 520.

the north side of Tor House, directly off the kitchen. With the west wall of the garage serving as the east wall of the new structure, Jeffers laid the foundations for a perpendicular hall about 22 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 15 feet high. In an area set aside for a large fireplace, Jeffers dug nearly 5 feet down and found, according to Donnan, "evidence on the bedrock granite that his Indian predecessors at the site had their fires at the same location."[159]

Construction proceeded slowly, spanning a period of intense creative activity for Jeffers, when writing, stonemasonry, tree planting, and other work all required sustained effort. "I've planted three hundred more cypresses since you were here, in the hollow north of us," Jeffers told Arthur Davison Ficke in an April 1928 letter, "and raised the dining-room wall a few inches. Perhaps we'll get a roof on that room before the rains begin again."[160] A year later, progress was interrupted when Jeffers and his family embarked upon a seven-month sojourn in the British Isles, lasting from June to December 1929. By July 1930, however, Una could report that "Robin is now full swing at the work on the dining room, afternoons and absorbed in his writing mornings," and by the end of the year, the room was almost completed.[161] "We have been desperately busy," Una told Albert Bender in January 1931. "Carpenters have been here to put roof on dining-room & cupboards inside. Robin has worked very hard afternoons to finish the stonework. The great chimney being complicated by a dovecot built into one side! . . . Robin writes all the morning as usual."[162]

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The project was completed in May 1931. The six years that passed as Jeffers built the dining room were among the most productive in his life. In addition to stonework, he planted hundreds of trees on his property (mostly Monterey Cypress and Eucalyptus) and wrote the poems that filled five major books: *The Women at Point Sur* (1927), *Cawdor and Other Poems* (1928), *Dear Judas and Other Poems* (1929), *Descent to the Dead* (1931), and *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* (1932).

A few years went by before Jeffers began work on the east wing, a construction project that would occupy him off and on for the rest of his life and would require the help of his son Donnan to complete. Jeffers finished digging the foundation for the east wing in December 1937 and began laying stones soon after. A long family trip to the British Isles interrupted his work, however, and he proceeded slowly when he returned. Once World War II began in 1941, progress ceased altogether. Work resumed in 1945 and continued intermittently for the next twelve years.

In 1954, with construction of the east wing continuing, Donnan decided to undertake a project Una had proposed. "Years before her death," he wrote, "Una had suggested that perhaps some day the garage might make a good kitchen. She felt no rush about the plan, but she had found that the small original kitchen, lying as it did between the sitting room and the dining room, presented some awkward problems." Contractors were called in and, using a jackhammer, managed to create an opening in the west wall of the garage just big enough for a door to the dining room. Donnan removed the arched doors at the front of the garage and laid the foundation for a bay extension. He then built a fireplace and chimney in the southeast corner of the room, just inside the bay, where floor-to-ceiling redwood windows were installed on either side of matching French doors. A concrete floor was poured, which he and his wife Lee covered with red ceramic tiles, and carpenters were hired to finish

[159] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 25.
[160] *Collected Letters*, 1: 731.
[161] *Collected Letters*, 1: 944.
[162] *Collected Letters*, 2: 3.

the interior with redwood cabinets. "The final result was a most attractive combination of breakfast room in front, warm from the open fire and light from the bay window, and in the back, separated by the sink and counter space, a very efficient little kitchen. Robin had been somewhat dubious about the project, one imagines, but when it was complete he was thoroughly approving; he declared that it was his favorite room in the house and spent long hours there reading before the fire."[163] Once the new kitchen was finished, the old one was stripped of its counters and cooking equipment. Shelving was then installed and the space was converted to use as a library.

Donnan also built a new garage in 1954, on the southeast corner of the east wing, using bricks instead of stone. Jeffers was sixty-seven by this time and not as strong as he once was, but he continued to work, and with Donnan providing much of the labor, managed to finish the east wing in 1957. "Twenty years after the foundations had been laid," Donnan wrote, the inverted L-shaped wing was complete. Constructed primarily of the same locally quarried granite boulders used elsewhere on the property, the new wing "consisted of a very spacious and pleasant abode with the sitting room, office, and garage on the ground floor and three bedrooms and bath above, and the younger Jefferses, now with three children, moved in."[164]

Following the completion of the dining room and spanning the time when the east wing and new kitchen were constructed, Jeffers published *Give Your Heart to the Hawks and Other Poems* (1933), the Modern Library edition of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1935), *Solstice and Other Poems* (1935), *Such Counsels You Gave to Me and Other Poems* (1937), *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (1938), *Be Angry at the Sun and Other Poems* (1941), *Medea, Freely Adapted from the Medea of Euripides* (1946), *The Double Axe and Other Poems* (1948), *Hungerfield and Other Poems* (1954), and *The Loving Shepherdess* (1956). *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems* (1963) was published posthumously.

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Donnan remodeled the east wing in 1963, a year after his father died. "The inconvenience of having to go outside to get from one part of the house to another"—from the living quarters in the east wing to the new kitchen, Donnan wrote—"especially during the winter rains, was obvious, and it was taken for granted that a connection should one day be made.[165] Jeffers himself planned the expansion, which consisted of an entrance hall off Ocean View Avenue, a bathroom, sitting room (featuring a wall of French doors and a patio), laundry room, and back kitchen. Donnan, Lee, and their children used the east wing as their primary residence, renovating and redecorating the space several times in subsequent years. The wing currently houses the administrative offices of the Tor House Foundation, a visitor reception center and bookstore, a gallery, library, and rooms for special events.

In *How Buildings Learn*, Stewart Brand described the construction of Tor House as a "geological event that occupied Jeffers's hands all his years." "Tor House is a poem-like masterpiece," he declared, with admiration for the evolutionary way it was built, for its dramatic use of local materials, and for its adaptation to the environment. "It may express more direct intelligence per square inch than any other house in America."[166]

[163] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 30–31.
[164] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 29.
[165] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 33.
[166] Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, 49–50.

## Architectural Description

26304 Ocean View Avenue consists of two contributing buildings (Tor House cottage and additions, and Hawk Tower), the courtyard walls as contributing structures, and the Tor House grounds—both eastern and western—as a contributing site. Two contributing objects (a sundial and a statue of boy riding a dolphin) and two non-contributing objects (sculptures placed after the period of significance) are also located on the grounds. Almost all of these resources are clustered on the eastern portion of the parcel. The vehicular entrance to the property is located at the east end of the parcel on Ocean View Avenue. The pedestrian entrance is located through the courtyard on the east façade of Tor House cottage.

The following provides an architectural description for each of the contributing resources that comprise Tor House.

*Tor House Cottage and Additions (contributing building)*

The Tor House cottage and additions consist of the original cottage, the dining room, and garage/kitchen conversion, as well as the east wing and attached garage. The east wing is connected to the other additions by a L-shaped larder room/archive room/library/entry addition constructed after the period of significance in 1963, the year after Robinson Jeffers's death.[167] Together, these elements form a complex, irregular U-shaped plan, chiefly composed of uncut granite stone and Portland cement construction with some interior wood framing.[168] A combination of two-story and one-story volumes constructed over decades suggests an additive vernacular English country cottage. Exterior cladding of the Tor House cottage and additions is primarily exposed, uncut grey granite stone and Portland cement with used red brick cladding in selected areas.

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Main/east elevation

The main/east elevation of Tor House includes the east elevation of the original Tor House cottage at the west end of the courtyard. Square in plan and aligned with the cardinal directions, the two-story volume of Tor House cottage features a clipped, front-gabled roof clad in wooden shingles.[169] From the ground to the ridge of the roof is 16 feet high. A square stone ridge chimney is visible at the center of the square volume from the apex of the gabled roof.

The main/east elevation features an asymmetrical distribution of entry and fenestration. The vertically planked wooden, grey painted entry door, approximately 35 inches by 70 inches in size, is located at the south end of the main elevation and recessed approximately three to four feet from the main elevation.[170] The door is accessed via a granite paved entryway and single granite stair.

At the first-floor level, one two-by-four, fixed-paned wooden window and one two-by-four sliding wooden window are located to the north of the entry door. A three-by-two fixed-paned wooden window flanked by a pair

[167] The larder room/archive room/library/entry addition is also referred to as "the library/entry addition" in this document for the sake of brevity.
[168] All construction was made with hand tools.
[169] Although these are not the original wooden shingles, they were replaced in-kind with wooden shingles.
[170] The lock for the door came from the Monterey home of Juan Bautista Alvarado, governor of California from 1836 to 1842.

of two-by-two sliding wooden windows is located at the northern end of the cottage façade. A single, two-by-four fixed-paned wooden window is located within the south wall facing the entry recess. At the second-floor (attic) level, there is a small, single-paned window made from the windshield of the family's model-T Ford at floor level and two, two-by-two fixed wooden windows flanked by a pair of two-by-two sliding wooden windows below the clipped gable roof. [171] A single, two-by-two fixed-paned wooden window is located on the second level on the south wall facing the entry recess. All wooden windows are painted grey. A large concrete and stone bench is located on the main façade just north of the entry recess.

The main/east elevation of the Tor House cottage and additions also includes portions of the 1954 garage addition and the larder room/archive room/library/entry addition. From south to north, these consist of a one-story garage clad with irregular brick bond of alternating headers and stretchers with a gabled roof clad in wood shingles; the asymmetrical two-story volume of the east wing composed of uncut granite stone and Portland cement with a gabled wood shingle roof and a truncated used-brick chimney;[172] and the asymmetrical, one-story uncut granite stone and Portland cement library/entry addition with a composition shingle-clad shed roof.

There is no fenestration in the east elevation of the garage. Two two-by-two, fixed-paned wooden windows are located near the center of the first floor of the east wing volume with a pair of two-by-three, wooden casement windows on the second floor just north of a brick chimney. An opening is present under the gable. A painted vertical plank wooden entry door is asymmetrically located in the library/entry addition with a two-by-one fixed-paned leaded glass window at the northern end.

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A contemporary wrought iron fence lines the property at the street. A non-historic concrete paver system lines the driveway from the street to the garage. A non-original French drain is also located in the driveway near the garage.

South/secondary elevation

The south/secondary elevation of Tor House cottage and additions features a complex combination of two- and one-story volumes revealing the additive nature of construction and evolution of the building over the decades. Moving from west to east, the south elevation features the two-story south elevation of Tor House cottage, one-and-a-half-story volume of the dining room addition[173] with its wood-shingle clad shed roof, the garage/kitchen conversion[174] now housing the kitchen with its faceted, conical-roofed entrance, the two-story east wing with side-gable roof clad in wooden shingles, and the one-story brick garage from 1954 with front-gabled roof clad in wood shingles. Uncut granite stone chimneys are visible above Tor House cottage and the dining room addition, and brick chimneys are visible above the new kitchen and the east wing addition.

The south elevation includes four entry doors: a vertical plank wooden entry door with two-by-two fixed-paned window in the dining room addition; a pair of one-by-four wooden French doors in the one-story garage/kitchen conversion; a painted wooden-plank entrance door with a large stone lintel located just north of the center of the

[171] *The Tor House Source Book: Buildings, Grounds, and Their Contents* (Carmel, CA: Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, 2015), 13.
[172] The chimney is only exposed on the second-floor volume. It does not extend the full height from ground to roof.
[173] The dining room addition is 22 feet long, 16 feet wide and 15 feet high.
[174] Measuring approximately 12 feet wide, 16 feet long, and 12 feet high.

east wing; and a two-by-five wood and glass entry door at the east end of the original front-gabled garage (now the docent office) that projects from the east end of the south elevation of the east wing.

With respect to fenestration, the south elevation of the Tor House cottage features a two-by-four, fixed-paned painted wooden window flanked by two pairs of two-by-four wooden sliding windows. The one-and-a half story high dining room addition has a two-by-two fixed-paned wooden window located at loft height. The one-story kitchen volume features a pair of one-by-four fixed-paned French doors, flanked on-angle by two two-by-four fixed-paned redwood wooden windows. The brick garage is accessed by two large padlocked wooden double doors beneath a large wooden beam lintel.

On the south elevation of the two-story east wing, the first-floor volume contains a two-by-three wooden casement window and three two-by-four fixed-paned windows on each of the three sides of the two-story bay window to the west of the wooden entrance door. A pair of two-by-four wooden casement windows is located to the west of the two-by-five-paned wood and glass entry door to the original garage, which now houses the docent office. A wooden lintel extends across the top of the door and windows.

The second floor of the east wing features a pair of two-by-three wooden casement windows, and three two-by-four fixed-paned wooden windows on each of the three sides of the two-story bay window to the east. A pair of two-by-three paned wooden casement windows is located directly above the wooden entrance door. A large four-by-three fixed-paned wooden window, flanked by two two-by-three wooden casement windows is located on the second floor above the door to the docent office. A small three-paned fixed wooden window with a used-brick sill and arched lintel is located under the gable of the garage. Under the window is an inset brick inscribed with the garage's date of construction 1954. All wooden windows are painted gray.

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West/tertiary elevation

The west/tertiary elevation of the Tor House cottage and additions includes (moving from north to south), the side-gabled one-story library/entry addition, the side-gabled dining room addition, and the asymmetrical two-story clipped gable Tor House cottage. An outcropping of ancient coarse-grained, crystal-flecked porphyritic granodiorite boulders, called the Standing Stones by Robinson and Una Jeffers, is located at the northwest corner of the cottage and the dining room addition. The largest boulder—which Robinson and Una named Thuban, after a binary star that serves every 25,800 years as Earth's polestar and was last in that position 5,000 years ago (when the Egyptians built the Great Pyramid of Giza)—serves as the cornerstone. A stone perimeter wall connects to the south end of the Tor House cottage.

Within the dining room addition, there is a wooden entrance door with a two-by-two fixed-paned window. The wooden entrance door has a tile and stone patio that extends toward the Standing Stones.

With respect to fenestration, the one-story library/entry addition features a two-light casement window at the north end of the elevation. A large fixed-paned wooden window is located to the north of the wood and glass entrance door in the dining room addition. On the first floor, the Tor House cottage features one two-by-two fixed-paned wooden window flanked by a pair of two-by-two sliding wooden windows at the north end and a two-by-four fixed-paned wooden window flanked by a pair of two-by-four sliding windows at the south end of the elevation. At the second floor (attic) level, there is a small, single-paned window made from the windshield

of the family's model-T Ford[175] at floor level and two, two-by-two fixed-paned wooden windows flanked by a pair of two-by-two sliding wooden windows under the clipped gable.

The west elevation of the east wing also features an uncut stone stile with wooden gate that was used to access the formerly free-standing east wing. [176]

North/quaternary elevation

The north/quaternary elevation of the Tor House cottage and additions includes (from east to west), the one story brick garage from 1954, the side-gabled second floor of the east wing, the long one-story side-gabled larder room/archive room/library/entry addition with an uncut stone chimney at center, the gabled one-and-a-half story dining room addition with an uncut stone chimney at its northeast corner with four dovecotes, and the two-story, side-gabled Tor House cottage. Large tor stones are visible at the corner of the dining room addition.

A wood and fixed-paned entrance door on the gabled kitchen volume is accessed from the ground level by a wooden exterior stair mediating a change in grade.

Fenestration on the north/quaternary elevation (moving from east to west) includes a two-by-three fixed-paned wooden window beneath a three-paned window on the brick garage; a two-by-two fixed-paned wooden window on the first floor of the east wing, with a two-by-three wooden casement window, a two-by-three fixed-paned wooden window, a three-by-three fixed-paned wooden window, a three-by-three fixed-paned wooden window, and a pair of two-by-three paned wooden casement windows on the second floor. The library/entry addition features a pair of two-by-three wooden casement windows to the east of the exterior stair. At the center of the dining room addition are two two-by-three, fixed-paned wooden windows with vertical stone lintels. The Tor House cottage contains a small fixed-paned wooden window, a two-by-four wooden casement window, and a two-by-two fixed-paned wooden window flanked by two two-by-two sliding wooden windows at the west end.

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Patio

The enclosed patio features the exposed stonework of the north elevation of the east wing, the exposed stonework of the east elevation of the garage/kitchen conversion, and the red brick cladding on the west elevation of the entry portion of the L-shaped entrance.

The east elevation of the garage/kitchen conversion also has a small, uncut stone enclosed shed structure at the south end of the elevation that incorporates the wall of the garage/kitchen conversion and an eight-foot stone wall. A shed-style roof clad in wooden shingles slopes from a height of 8 feet to 6 feet. The shed has a wood and glass entry door with a two-by-three fixed-paned window. To the north of the shed entrance door is a small two-by-two fixed-paned window. To the north of the enclosed shed structure is an uncut stone open shed structure approximately 5 feet high, 7 feet wide, and 4 feet deep with a sloping slate-clad roof.

[175] *Tor House Source Book*, 13.

[145] A stile is a structure or opening that provides people passage over or through a boundary via steps, ladders, or narrow gaps. Stiles are often built in rural areas along footpaths, fences, walls, or hedges that enclose animals, allowing people to move freely.

The north elevation of the east wing features a large Tudor-shaped arched recess that leads to the stone stile and the exposed stonework of the 8-foot-tall wall set between the old garage and the east wing. The brick-clad entry wall on the east end of the patio features a three-by-three fixed-paned wooden window with brick lintel and sill.

The patio floor is clad in used brick and a large, low, irregularly shaped used-brick planter lies in the southeastern corner of the patio.

Interiors[177]

The following description describes the interior of the building as experienced from the main entrance door to Tor House cottage, traveling northwest through the additions in a roughly chronological manner.

Tor House Cottage

The rectangular living room of Tor House cottage is accessed directly from the front door of the east façade. Redwood board-and-batten paneling, Douglas fir wooden floors, large redwood ceiling joists, and a wood ceiling create a uniform interior design. None of the exterior stonework is visible on the interior. A wooden stairway to the attic featuring a plain banister and six slat balusters anchored by a square newel post with no cap, is located in the northeast corner of the living room.[178] A trap door in the ceiling at the top of the stairs opens into the attic.

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At the west end of the living room is a 1904 Model O Steinway small grand piano. Centered on the north wall of the living room is a fireplace and hearth made of Carmel stone (a.k.a., Monterey shale or chalk rock). The fireplace has a narrow redwood mantel.

Two stamped-metal plates are fixed to the ceiling, one depicting a heraldic griffin and the other a lion, placed in strategic locations to protect against heat rising from kerosene lamps used for lighting.

At the east end of the living room is Una Jeffers's alcove, also clad in wood paneling with an antique sea captain's writing desk. A wooden settle located at the foot of the stairs directly across from Una's alcove serves as a room divider as well as seating near the fireplace.

The guest bedroom is accessed via a five-panel redwood door at the west end of the north wall of the living room.[179] Redwood board-and-batten paneling, Douglas fir wooden floors, exposed large wood ceiling joists, and a wood ceiling characterize the bedroom as well. A Carmel stone fireplace is located on the south wall of the guest bedroom, creating a double fireplace with the living room, sharing a chimney but with separate flues.

[177] Figure 5 on the Maps and Figures page is "as built" so the room designations differ from those used elsewhere in this narrative. For example, the "Children's Sitting Room" was repurposed and remodeled as a "Library" by the Foundation and is so referenced in the narrative.

[178] The stair treads were sent to Una Jeffers by her father who salvaged them from the Ingham County, Michigan courthouse around 1877.

[179] This room was historically reserved for guests. The family slept in the attic space of the cottage. However, Una and Robin occupied the guest bedroom from 1948 until Una's death in 1950, after which, Robin continued to use it as his bedroom until his death in 1962.

Above the guest bedroom fireplace is a redwood bookcase with modern metal security screens. Above a wooden closet door in the south wall west of the doorway is the inscription, painted by Robinson Jeffers, "Bien faire et laisser dire." ("Do well and let them talk.")[180]

A built-in bench with storage is located beneath the large wooden windows on the western wall of the guest bedroom.[181] A narrow wooden door on the east wall of the guest bedroom leads to the bathroom.

The small, wooden paneled bathroom contains original ca. 1920 plumbing fixtures including a clawfoot porcelain bathtub, sink, and toilet. Red wallpaper (a 1950s replacement for the original light blue oil cloth) covers the west wall to a height of 4 feet behind the tub and below the window. A non-original cork floor (also installed in the 1950s) replaced original red, white, and black checkerboard linoleum.

A wooden door on the south end of the east wall of the bathroom opens to the book room (originally the kitchen).

The small book room, north of Una's alcove, features redwood board-and-batten paneling, wooden floors, large wood ceiling joists, and a wood ceiling. Bookshelves, with modern metal security screens, line the walls of this space. Non-original, red industrial carpeting is on the floor of the book room.

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A wooden door on the west wall of the book room leading into the bathroom bears a hand-painted motto reading "Prest d' Accomplir" ("Quick to Accomplish"), followed by lines of verse.

The attic of Tor House cottage features wooden paneling, exposed redwood roof rafters, and wooden gable roof.[182] A brick chimney rises through the attic to the west of the stairway with its trap door. A metal Franklin stove sits next to the west side of the chimney. Wood storage closets line the east and west walls of the attic, one of which contains the retrofitted HVAC heating system from the 1980s. The heating system sent heat to the ground floor through rows of circular openings in the ceilings on the north sides of the guest bedroom (forty-four openings) and the bookroom (nineteen openings).

Jeffers painted lines from three poems on the attic ceiling. On the northwest slope are lines from one of the first poems composed by Jeffers at Tor House:[183]

> There are only simple things here,
> Three huge people my dear,
> The Earth's old hard strength,
> The keen Air's messenger powers,
> The coiled Sea's moving length,
> Immense neighbors of ours.

[180] *Treasures of Tor House: Inscriptions and Embossments* (Carmel, CA: Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, 2022), 30.
[181] The built-in window seat and storage compartment were made from the case of an old upright piano.
[182] The attic area, used by Jeffers as a writing space, served as the family's sleeping quarters.
[183] Melba Berry Bennett, *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Work of Robinson Jeffers* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1966), 79.

On the northeast slope are lines taken from the poem "Lavengro" by George Barrow (1803–1881):

> Life is sweet, brother…..
> There's Day and Night, brother, both
> Sweet things; Sun, Moon, and Stars,
> All sweet things; there's likewise a
> Wind on the Heath.

On the south slope of the ceiling is a poem by William Butler Yeats, "The Wind Blows Out Over the Gates of the Day." It reads:

> The wind blows out over the gates of the day,
> The wind blows over the lonely of heart
> And the lonely of heart is withered away,
> While the faeries dance in a place apart,
> Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
> Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
> For they hear the air laugh and murmur and ring
> Of a land where even the old are fair,
> And even the wise are merry of tongue;
> But I hear a reed of Coolaney say,
> "When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
> The lonely of heart is withered away."

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The rectangular plan of the original Tor House cottage, from the living room to guest bedroom, kitchen (book room) and back to living room, requires fewer than fifty steps.

Dining Room Addition

A wooden door with a two-by-two fixed-paned window at the northeastern corner of the north wall of the book room leads into the rectangular dining room addition featuring wood paneling, exposed wooden ceiling rafters, a wood ceiling, and extensive granite stonework. At the northeast corner of the dining room addition is a large stone fireplace with wooden mantel. A large wooden antique communal dining table with benches is located parallel to the large fixed-pane wooden picture window on the west wall of the dining room. The floor is clad in square red terracotta pavers.

On the south wall of the dining room is an entrance door, and a 6-foot-wide wooden gallery/loft with a 3-foot-high railing finished with decorative sawn balusters accessed by a freestanding wooden ladder. A door in the west wall under the balcony leads to a small storage shed attached to the west elevation. A series of built-in redwood cabinets as a cupboard are located on the south wall and extend along the east wall to the northeast corner of the fireplace. The redwood cupboard, centered on the south wall of the dining room, features a base of two cabinets, an open-buffet midsection and upper shelves flanked by narrow cabinets. The cabinet doors are decorated with a carving of a unicorn and a hawk (east and west, respectively).

The dining room houses several embedded architectural relics, including an ancient carved torso from India, the remains of a wall painting from Pompeii, and piece of white marble from the Greek Island of Delos. There are also three small mosaic fragments from the Baths of Caracalla in Rome.[184] In addition, embedded in a stone wall in the dining room are seven pre-Columbian terracotta heads from Mexico and a fragment of an obsidian sacrificial dagger from the area around Mexico City.[185] A small, carved mask from the Aztec civilization is also in the dining room wall with fragment of a mosaic from the Roman city of Timgad above it.[186] At the apex of the gable on the north wall is a limestone piece from the Great Pyramid of Giza.[187]

The dining room also houses several inscriptions and embossments. Above the west door in the dining room is a wood carving reading "Love is the Fulfilling of the Law."[188] In the west wall next to the door is a large stone inscribed "Hardy 1.11.28."[189] On a ceiling joist of the gallery loft an inscription reads, "No Noise nor Strife nor Swear at all/But all be Decent in the Hall."[190] On another joist is "Time and I against any two," and on the joist above the gallery ladder, "Facilis Descensus."[191]

Garage/Kitchen Conversion

A two-by-two fixed-paned wooden door on the east wall of the dining room leads to the rectangular garage/kitchen conversion. The kitchen features uncut granite stonework on three walls (including the arched stonework of the former garage entry door), with a pair of wooden French doors on the south wall, and a terra cotta paver floor. A series of original exposed A-shaped wooden ceiling trusses run along the exposed gable roof.

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The kitchen plan is punctuated by a half-height partition with sink, at the center of the rectangular kitchen space, running perpendicular to the north/south walls. On the south end of the east wall of the kitchen is a brick fireplace and exposed brick chimney. The wooden French doors and the angled redwood fixed-paned windows flanking them create a breakfast nook.

Larder Room/Archive Room/ Library/Entry Addition (Non-historic addition connecting the garage/kitchen conversion to the east wing)

A wooden door in the north wall of the garage/kitchen conversion leads to the L-shaped larder room/archive room/library/entry addition (constructed after the period of significance in 1963). From the southeast corner of the larder room bordering the garage/kitchen conversion, two steps lead down into the archive room (with non-original shelving)—formerly the laundry room—and the library. The library is a rectangular board-and-batten, wood-paneled room with pairs of fixed-paned clerestory wooden windows and French doors on the south wall opening to an enclosed patio space created by the L-shaped addition, the north elevation of the east wing, the

[184] *Treasures of Tor House: Distant Lands* (Carmel, CA: Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, 2021), 9.
[185] *Treasures of Tor House: Distant Lands*, 10.
[186] *Treasures of Tor House: Distant Lands*, 11.
[187] *Treasures of Tor House: Distant Lands*, 12.
[188] *Treasures of Tor House: Inscriptions and Embossments*, 16.
[189] *Treasures of Tor House: Inscriptions and Embossments*, 17.
[190] *Treasures of Tor House: Inscriptions and Embossments*, 18.
[191] *Treasures of Tor House: Inscriptions and Embossments*, 22–23.

east elevation of the garage/kitchen conversion, and the uncut stone wall that borders the north side of the courtyard. Exposed wooden rafters of the addition's shed roof are visible from the patio.

The north wall of the library is lined with a series of six wooden closet doors with leaded, stained-glass insets. The floor is clad in non-original gray industrial carpet.

Through the pair of two-by-five wooden French doors in the east wall of the library/entry addition, there is a non-original ADA accessible bathroom to the north. The north-south portion of the entry features plaster walls and ceiling. At the south end of the north-south portion of the entry is an exposed stone wall and the original stone staircase of the east wing.

East Wing

The first floor of the east wing is accessed either through the vertically planked, wooden entry door to the living room or through the two-by-five wood and glass entry door to the gift shop/bookstore, formerly the garage. The exposed uncut exterior walls of the east and west elevations are visible from this room. Immediately to the north of the gift shop/bookstore is the docent office space. Located to the west of the docent office space, the large, rectangular-shaped first-floor living room features wood paneling, exposed ceiling joists, a large uncut-stone fireplace in the northwest corner, and cork-tile flooring. A three-sectioned bay window seat is located on the south wall of the east-wing living room.

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A wooden staircase leads from the first floor to a small hallway landing on the second floor. Directly above the first-floor living room of the east wing on the western side of the hallway, is a large wood-paneled, wood-floored conference room (formerly the east wing master bedroom) with a marble fireplace in the northwest corner. The ceiling is clad in plaster.

In the northeastern corner of the second floor is a small, plaster-clad bathroom with original sink and new toilet fixtures. On the south side of the second floor of the east wing are two administrative offices (formerly bedrooms), with plaster walls and ceilings and contemporary industrial grade carpeting.

The east wing interior has undergone more changes than the rest of Tor House. After Robinson Jeffers died, his son Donnan Jeffers and Donnan's wife and children occupied the wing as their primary residence. As early as 1963, they redecorated and renovated the spaces to suit their needs. In 1968, Jeffers's heirs sued Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Tuttle who briefly leased Tor House. The Tuttles were charged with painting a hall, bathroom and two bedrooms, replacing carpeting and "losing some of Jeffers' mementos."[192] Although the precise nature of these charges are unknown, it is believed that these alterations were likely confined to the rooms and hallway on the second floor of the east wing, which have since been remodeled and repainted.[193]

In 1999, when the Tor House Foundation assumed ownership of the property, it renovated and redecorated some of the rooms of the east wing and the entry to suit their needs. This included the conversion of three bedrooms

[192] "Robinson Jeffers' Heirs Allege Damage to House," *Salinas Californian*, September 9, 1968, 10.
[193] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.

on the upper floor of the east wing into offices, and the conversion of the east wing garage and an office into the docent office spaces.

As a result, only the first-floor living room of the east wing retains its historic plan and historic materials from the period of significance. These include, flooring, wood paneling, marble fireplace and wooden windows. While the integrity of the east wing interior is diminished due to these changes, no significant alterations to the exterior have occurred since the period of significance and overall integrity is retained at a high level.

*Hawk Tower (contributing building)*

Hawk Tower is a four-story, freestanding building located just south of the Tor House cottage and additions, about 20 feet east of the west wall. Rectangular in plan, it measures about 24 feet wide (east to west), 18 feet deep (north to south), and 40 feet high. It is composed of uncut granite stone and Portland cement construction with walls between 4 feet and 6 feet thick.[194] Hawk Tower faces the courtyard and the Tor House cottage and additions.

The main/north façade of Hawk Tower reveals an asymmetrical volume with flat roofs and landings and a small, one-story, shed-roofed ell with a wood-clad roof on the east side. A square turret tops the tower on the west end and a chimney tops the tower on the east end. The main entrance to the tower is via a recessed solid core wooden door, 25 inches by 70 inches, in a painted wooden door surround with a vertical stone lintel located on the ground floor of the four-story volume. A large keystone with the initials "U RJ" sits over the recessed entrance.[195] A large stone and terracotta paver entrance step leads to another stone step to the entry door.

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Immediately to the east of the recessed entry is a series of exterior stone steps that curve upward to the second floor of the tower. A large metal chain affixed to the stones and to a metal rod at the base of the stair acts as a handrail. A second chain below the steps is decorative. These chains were added after the period of significance as a safety measure. A secondary wooden entry door with two-by-four fixed-paned windows in a Gothic arch configuration is accessed on the second floor via this stairway. Above this entry door is a hand-carved stone of a unicorn as keystone.

A two-by-one, fixed-paned, wooden window and a two-by-three fixed-paned wooden window are located at the second and third floor levels. Above the third-floor window is a hawk gargoyle drain spout, an in-kind replica of the original.[196] A two-by-one, fixed-paned, wooden window sits at the center of the north elevation of the one-story shed-roofed ell.

The secondary/west elevation of Hawk Tower features a cantilevered oriel window, also made of uncut stone, at the southern end of the second-floor level. In each of the three facets is a long, horizontal, one-by-three wooden window, the central one a casement window. On the first-floor level, a small, three-by-three fixed-paned wooden window is located at the center of the elevation. At the third-floor level, two small square window

[194] Jeffers describes them in his writing as "four feet thick." However, observation suggests the walls are more than 4 feet thick in some places.

[195] The initials stand for Una and Robinson Jeffers.

[196] This gargoyle drain spout is an in-kind replacement, using the original gargoyle drain spout on the north façade as a model and the original mold found on the premises.

openings penetrate the turret, but from the inside reveal themselves to be round metal porthole windows salvaged from ships that sank in Monterey Bay.

The tertiary/east elevation features a four-by-two, fixed-paned wooden window on the ground floor, with a two-by-four paned Gothic-arched, wooden window at the second-floor level. Above the second-floor window is an original gargoyle drain spout.

On the quaternary/south elevation, the oriel window on the west and the one-story shed volume on the east are clearly visible. With respect to fenestration, this elevation features a Roman-arched three-by-three fixed-paned wooden window on the first floor, and three two-by-four, Gothic-arched, wooden windows on the second floor. The two side windows are fixed panes; the bottom two panes on the middle window are a movable sash. A single, orthogonal two-by-two, fixed-paned wooden window in the shed volume.

The first-floor interior of Hawk Tower features the uncut stone walls and includes original furniture-grade redwood cabinetry and shelving on the west wall of the main room. Upper cabinet doors are incised with a hawk and a swan. A seat beneath the window has three storage doors with carvings by Garth and Donnan Jeffers of a whale, a seahorse, and a fish. The ceiling is clad with redwood paneling; from it hangs a glass and metal kerosene lamp. In the southeast corner, there is a small, uncut stone fireplace. To the east, three steps down lead to the "dungeon"—a small stone room with an exposed redwood shed ceiling. The floors of both rooms are uncut, granite stones. At the northwest corner, immediately behind the recessed door, is a spiral passageway/stair up to the second floor.

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The second floor is accessed via the exterior steep uncut stone steps or via the interior passageway. The second-floor interior of Hawk Tower is completely clad in Japanese oak paneling. In the southeast corner of the room is an uncut stone fireplace with a carved wooden mantel depicting hawks, a round tower, and the phrase "Ipsi sibi somnia fingunt" ("Unto each the dreams of his own fashioning"). All windows are deeply recessed; the three south facing with Gothic arches, the floor and ceiling are made of Japanese oak wood planking. At the northwest corner, behind a wooden paneled touch-latch door is the concealed passageway/stair down to the first floor.

A facsimile, carved in wood, of the Lion of Lucerne monument serves as a door to the rectangular uncut-stone niche in the northwest corner of this room. Cemented into the uncut stone of a niche in the south wall of the gothic archway between the room and the oriel window is a Babylonian tile from the Temple of Uruk.[197] Cemented into an uncut-stone niche in the north wall of the archway is a twelfth-century stone carving of the head of an apsara from the Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia.[198]

Protruding from the west end of the second floor is an oriel window of uncut stone and used brick.

The third floor of Hawk Tower, including the enclosed lower section of the turret and an outside landing, is accessed via steep uncut stone steps on the exterior of the second floor of the tower. The landing on the third floor is composed of pieces of marble salvaged from various sites around the world including Tennessee,

[197] *Distant Lands*, 14.
[198] *Distant Lands*, 15.

Alaska, and Italy, and from the Bank of Monterey that was being razed. Against the exposed chimney on the diagonal in the southeast corner of the third floor landing is a built-in uncut stone seat with a marble plaque reading, "WHY LEAP YE,/ YE HIGH HILLS?/ THIS IS THE HILL WHICH/ GOD DESIRETH/ TO DWELL IN." On this same level, on the east side of the stairs leading to the parapet is a marble plaque reading "RJ/ SUIS MANIBUS ME/ TURREM FALCONIS/ FECIT MCMXXIV."[199]

The top of the turret/parapet of Hawk Tower is reached via a steep, eight-step exterior stairway from the third-floor landing. A large metal chain affixed to the stones by a metal ring above the stairway acts as a handrail. This chain was added after the period of significance as a safety measure. The five-foot by four-foot open viewing platform has a three-foot, two-inch wall on all four sides. The floor of the platform is composed of the same salvaged marble as the floor of the third level. At the top of the stair, a small tan stone from the Great Wall of China is embedded in the uncut stone masonry.[200] In the southeast corner is a stone seat protruding from the south and east walls.

*Stone Walls (four contributing structures)*

After he built the stone sundial ca. 1920, Robinson Jeffers began constructing a series of uncut stone walls to create a protective enclosure for the Tor House cottage. The walls were constructed to approximately 3 foot, 6 inches high. Four sections of large uncut granite and Portland cement constructed stone walls are on the parcel:

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- A long L-shaped, uncapped stone wall, approximately 6 feet in height, extends southward from the southwest corner of Tor House cottage and turns at a right angle, eastward to the southwest corner of Hawk Tower. This wall contains one wooden gate at center, called "Sea Gate" by the Jefferses. Sea Gate is composed of non-original weathered wooden pickets, a non-original wooden sign reading "PRIVATE," and a metal mesh screen bringing the gate to the stone wall height. An unnamed wooden gate is part of a wooden fence to the south of the wall.
- One freestanding L-shaped stone wall, approximately 3 feet in height, extends south from the central east-west pathway and, then, from the corner, approximately 4 feet in height, extends west to the northeast corner of Hawk Tower. On these two stone walls, oversize square stone pillars are located on either side of the east-west pathway traversing the parcel from the garage to Sea Gate. This open passageway, originally the main entrance to the courtyard, known as Moor Gate, was wide enough for an automobile to drive through on its way to the old garage. The oversize square stone pillars are topped with two Native American grinding stones.
- From the north pillar, a low stone wall, approximately 2 feet in height, extends eastward from the pillar to the path leading to the entrance of the docent office in the east wing.
- A freestanding, uncapped stone wall, approximately 3 feet in height extends southward at the eastern end of the courtyard from the southwest corner of the east wing to the Moor Gate.

As with the stone masonry in the building of the Tor House cottage and additions and Hawk Tower, architectural fragments and relics collected by Jeffers, his family, and his friends are embedded in the uncut stone masonry.

[199] *Inscriptions and Embossments*, 9. "RJ with his own hands made Tower of the Hawk, 1924."
[200] *Distant Lands*, 22.

For example, a bright green ceramic fragment embedded in the planter wall near the docent office is from the Temple of Heaven in China.[201]

The stone walls at Tor House were originally constructed to a height of 3 feet, 6 inches by Robinson Jeffers. In 1967-68 more privacy was required and Donnan Jeffers constructed an additional 2 feet of wall on top of the existing western and southwestern stone walls, using the same uncut stone and Portland cement construction technique, but using significantly smaller rocks. Donnan's use of the smaller stones was both compatible with the original design and visibly differentiated from the original fabric of the walls.

*Tor House Grounds (contributing site)*

The eastern Tor House grounds consist of the relatively non-sloping, eastern half of the irregularly shaped lot of 0.64 acres. The grounds include a series of curvilinear landscaped paths that connect Hawk Tower with Tor House cottage, various landscape and hardscape features, and sculptures. The general plan of the grounds and courtyard was initiated in 1948, when Lee and Donnan Jeffers planted lawn and flower beds in the western section of the courtyard as a surprise for Robinson and Una on their return from a trip to Ireland.[202]

The courtyard area of the Tor House grounds is bordered by Tor House cottage and additions to the north, the stone walls and the north elevation of Hawk Tower to the south, the wooden fence with wooden gate connecting the east wing to the southern property line to the east, and the western stone wall connecting Tor House cottage with Hawk Tower to the west.

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The best description of the courtyard's historic planting is from letters by Una Jeffers. She mentions a number of flowers and trees in the courtyard including lavender, rosemary, thyme, mint, lemon verbena, bergamot, pennyroyal, asphodel, campion, iris, and Irish yew. "Inside courtyard wild grass and a carpet of sweet alyssum everywhere…then in general, yellow flowers like marigolds, lion tail, and roses and the masses of gray santalina against the gray rocks. Some wildflowers & weeds left in."[203] Some original species such as sweet alyssum and lemon verbena remain in the garden today.

The curved path outside the courtyard at the western perimeter of Tor House cottage and Hawk Tower consists of a pathway with non-original decomposed granite surfacing and plastic edging. It extends from the northwest corner of the dining room addition, along the west elevation of Tor House cottage past the Sea Gate to the wooden gate in the wooden fence that terminates at the southern edge of the property.

The brick path on the southern side of the parcel extends from the unnamed wooden gate that is part of the wooden fence at the southwest corner of the courtyard, past the south elevation of Hawk Tower to the grass lawn at the southeast end of the courtyard area. Flower and shrub gardens on the north side of this brick path are bordered by curved rows of abalone shells.

[201] *Distant Lands*, 1.
[202] *Collected Letters*, 3: 598.
[203] *Collected Letters* 2: 360.

A non-historic stone pathway also runs along the north elevation of Tor House cottage and additions but is not visible from the street or the main courtyard.

An analysis of historic aerial photos yields little information about the pathways over time. Early historic aerials (prior to 1950) lack the clarity to distinguish historic pathways and planting; details of historic aerials after 1950 are obscured by a heavy tree canopy. Pictures of the courtyard printed in the May 1935 issue of *Sunset* magazine suggest a less formal courtyard landscape than how the property evolved during the 1950s. *Sunset* described the garden as "no showy flowers…an artful garden in which herbs and bushes, weeds and wildflowers blend naturally."[204]

The grounds at the eastern side of the parcel are minimally landscaped, shaded by nearly twenty trees. A rustic picket fence on the west side of the driveway separates the paved driveway from the courtyard. A wooden gate in the picket fence opens to a brick pathway that extends about twenty feet west where it passes through Moor Gate in the original courtyard wall. A semi-enclosed rose garden on the north side of the path is bordered by a low stone wall that extends west along the pathway and ties into the north post of Moor Gate. A grass lawn edged with shrubs and flowers fills the south side of the path from the picket fence to the courtyard.

From Moor Gate west, a short step down, the path becomes a used-brick patio, 9 feet, 6 inches wide, that extends some 25 feet where it divides into three pathways: 1) south to the entrance of Hawk Tower, 2) west to the front door of Tor House cottage, and 3) north to a pathway that branches to the south door of the dining room addition and the French doors of the kitchen addition. Some portions of the path were constructed by Donnan Jeffers during the 1950s. Others were bricked-in later, but all the brickwork was laid over long-established footpaths.

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Over the years, the courtyard filled with notable stones and artifacts set amidst the flowers or cemented into paths and walls. These artifacts (still extant) include a Roman statute of a boy on a dolphin, a millstone used by Tiwa in New Mexico, mortars found on hikes in Big Sur, the statue of a seated Buddha, benches made from slabs of granite from a ship's ballast, and stones gathered from Ben Nevis and other sites in the United Kingdom, and a small tombstone from Ireland.[205] The tombstone, now embedded in the walkway, originally stood in front of the kitchen window.

The grounds contain four objects described separately below as stand-alone resources. These are a contributing sundial, a contributing stone sculpture of a boy on a dolphin, a non-contributing statue called "Eagle for Robinson Jeffers," and a non-contributing bronze sculpture of an eagle.

Finally, twenty mature trees planted by Jeffers remain on the Tor House grounds. These include eighteen Monterey cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*), one eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*), and an Irish yew (*Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata'*). Of the original plantings of Monterey cypress, all but two, one by poet George Sterling and one by poet Edgar Lee Masters, were planted by Jeffers himself. Fifteen of them are located on the east side of the parcel, as is the sole remaining eucalyptus. The additional three Monterey cypress are located on the north side of the parcel. The Irish yew is located on the west elevation of the east wing.

[204] Powell, "Garden," 66–67.
[205] Donnan Jeffers, *The Stones of Tor House* (Covelo, CA: Jeffers Literary Properties / Yolla Bolly Press, 1985), no page.

The western Tor House grounds consist of the steeply sloped, western half of the irregularly shaped lot of 0.64 acres. The boundaries are, roughly: to the east, the western edge of the decomposed granite pathway from the dining room to the southern end of the property; to the west, the east side of Scenic Road; and to the north and south, the property lines.

The western grounds remain, by and large, the same as they were during the time that Robinson and Una Jeffers lived at Tor House. During the spring season it becomes, to use Una's description of the "hollow" to the north now covered with buildings, a "milles-fleur tapestry," filled with the colors of both native and non-native wildflowers.

The western portion of the parcel is home to the following native plants: California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), coppertips (*Crocosmia aurea*), bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), lizard-tail yarrow (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium*), and wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*). Notably missing are the poppy and lupine Jeffers refers to in his poem "Carmel Point," but these natives are being reintroduced.

Also growing on the grounds are flowering plants introduced by Una Jeffers: iris (*Iris*), sea lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*), and sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*). Other long established non-native plants that were most certainly on the property during the period of significance include calla lily (*Zantedeschia*), sour grass (*Oxalis pes-caprae*), wild mustard (*Sinapis arvensis*), and oat grass (*Arrhenatherum*). Ice plant (*Carpobrotus*), an invasive species, is being removed from the hillside. Two cypress trees, one possibly planted by Jeffers, are at the northwestern edge of the grounds.

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In October of 1992, an as-built plot plan of the parcel was drawn by professional architects. Comparison of the as-built plot plan with today's grounds and courtyard reveal no changes in the essential plan of the pathways and landscaped areas. As Lindsay Jeffers, grandchild of Robinson Jeffers, remembers:

> Essentially, the paths that go around the west and northwest of the original cottage are versions of walking paths that date to the original construction of the house. Similarly, the inner courtyard between the East Wing and the West Wing and the Tower and the kitchen remains much as it was, barring the removal of overarching cypress trees that grew in the raised bed in front of the tower.
> The path between the house and the small lawn and sundial remains the same and the abalone borders are also the same, although the shells have mostly been replaced during the Foundation's tenure.[206]

Since the Tor House Foundation took over the property, a few changes have been made: the western path from the dining room to the southern property line was converted from used brick to decomposed granite in 2016 to prevent tripping hazards; a series of stepping stones have been added along the north elevation of the Tor House cottage and additions; and a north-south flagstone path was added from the driveway along the east/front elevation; and a short flagstone pathway was added from Ocean View Avenue to the entrance door on the east elevation of the library/entry addition. Additionally, while specific plantings and species have changed somewhat from the historic period, the general planting pattern, varieties, and overall character are consistent with the historic appearance from 1962.

[206] Lindsay Jeffers, email to Sian Winship, March 1, 2023.

*Sundial (contributing object)*

A metal sundial embedded on an uncut stone pillar atop an uncut stone platform built by Robinson Jeffers sits at the southwest corner of the courtyard. Acquired by Una in Cornwall, England, the sundial is inscribed with an image of a radiant sun, Roman numerals to mark the hours, and a date of 1664. The metal dial bears the inscription "Life is but a shadowe."[207]

*Boy on a Dolphin Sculpture (contributing object)*

A stone sculpture of a boy on a dolphin sits on a concrete base in the middle of the rose garden at the south elevation of the east wing. The statue is an antiquity originally acquired in Rome by the painter John Singer Sargent. It stood in his garden at 31 Tite Street, London, and on his death, passed to his friend and pupil Julie Heyneman, who gave it to the Jeffers family in 1939.[208]

*Eagle for Robinson Jeffers Sculpture (noncontributing object)*

A noncontributing granite sculpture entitled "The Eagle for Robinson Jeffers" by Gordon Newell in the southeast corner of the courtyard along the path to the south of Hawk Tower was a gift to the Tor House Foundation in 1987.

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*American Cross-Tail Eagle Sculpture (noncontributing object)*

A noncontributing bronze sculpture of an American cross-tail eagle by Philipp Harth, owned by the County of Monterey, was donated in 1975 to honor Robinson Jeffers. It sits on a stone and cement base by the entrance to the larder room/ archive room/library/entry addition from Ocean View Avenue.

**Summary of Character-Defining Features**

Character-defining features of the Tor House exterior include:

- Granite boulder construction with Portland cement
- Low, horizontal one- and two-story massing for Tor House cottage and additions
- High, vertical stone massing of Hawk Tower
- Wooden, multi-light windows
- Wood shingle roof cladding
- Vertical wooden plank entry doors
- Uncut stone walls delineating the courtyard space
- Found objects, art pieces, and salvaged materials embedded in uncut stone walls and pathways
- The uncut stone platform and pillar with metal sundial
- Brick hardscape around grounds

[207] *Distant Lands*, 13.
[208] *Tor House Source Book*, 9.

- Curvilinear pathways
- Mature Monterey cypress, eucalyptus and Irish yew trees

Character-defining features of the Tor House interior include:

- Uncut granite boulder construction with Portland cement
- Redwood board-and-batten paneling
- Japanese oak wooden paneling
- Redwood and other wooden cabinetry, benches, and millwork
- Large, exposed redwood ceiling joists, trusses, and rafters
- Wooden floors
- Carmel stone (Monterey stone or chalk rock) fireplaces
- Embedded relics and architectural salvage in the uncut stone masonry
- Painted and carved inscriptions and embossments
- Original ca. 1920s bathtub, toilet, and sink

**Property Development Timeline**

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The period of significance for Tor House under Criterion 2 is 1919-1962. The period of significance reflects the original construction of the house in which Robinson Jeffers participated until his death in 1962 and reflects the period in which he composed his most revered poems.

Monterey County did not require building permits until 1955, therefore, the construction of the buildings and walls is mostly undocumented in city/county records. However, Robinson and Una Jeffers were prolific letter writers and a chronology can be pieced together from these documents.

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|---|---|
| Spring 1919 | Land purchased |
| August 15, 1919 | Jeffers and family move into Tor House cottage |
| Late 1919 | Walls of garage built by Robinson Jeffers[209] |
| 1920 | Wall around the courtyard built by Robinson Jeffers[210] |
| ca. 1920 | Jeffers constructs sundial during hiatus of building old garage[211] |
| 1920–1925 | Construction of Hawk Tower;[212] construction finished September 1925 |

[209] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 13–14.
[210] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 13–14.
[211] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 13–14.
[212] Garth Jeffers, *Memories*, 21.

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|---|---|
| November 1924 | Construction in Hawk Tower of interiors of Una's room on the second floor and the boys' "dungeon" on the ground floor level.[213] |
| November 1925 | Lays foundations for "inn-kitchen of a dining-room"[214] |
| January 1931 | Dining room is completed[215] |
| December 1936 | East wing construction begins[216] |
| June 1942 | Phone service installed[217] |
| December 1948 | Electricity installed[218] |
| 1948 | Lawn and flowerbeds of courtyard installed by Donnan and Lee Jeffers[219] |
| 1951 | East wing construction continues[220] |
| ca. 1953 | New brick garage constructed[221] |
| 1954 | Completion of garage/kitchen conversion by Donnan Jeffers[222] |
| 1954 | Original kitchen in Tor House cottage converted to book room |
| 1957 | East wing is completed[223] |
| 1962 | Robinson participates in design of L-shaped addition with Donnan. |
| 1963 | Completion of L-shaped larder room/archive room/library/entry addition[224] (Architect/Contractor: Herb Vial; permit #MB-5090) |
| 1967–1968 | West and south garden walls raised by two feet by Donnan Jeffers[225] |

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[213] Robinson Jeffers to George Sterling, November 22, 1924, *Collected* Letters, 1: 477.
[214] Robinson Jeffers to George Sterling, November 12, 1925, *Collected Letters*, 1: 520.
[215] Una Jeffers to Albert Bender, January 1931, *Collected Letters* 2: 3.
[216] Una Jeffers to Mabel Dodge Luhan, December 31, 1936, *Collected Letters*, 2: 645.
[217] Una Jeffers to Blanche Matthias, June 8, 1942, *Collected Letters*, 3: 198.
[218] Una Jeffers to Jean Kellogg, December 14, 1945, *Collected Letters*, 3: 607.
[219] Una Jeffers to Frederick and Maud Clapp, October 26, 1948, *Collected Letters*, 3: 598.
[220] Robinson Jeffers to Frederick and Maud Clapp, August 31, 1951, *Collected Letters*, 3: 733.
[221] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 30–31.
[222] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 30–31.
[223] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 29.
[224] Donnan Jeffers, *Building*, 33.
[225] Lindsay Jeffers, email to Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, March 26, 2023.

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| 1979 | Conversion of east wing garage to docent office/bookstore (Architect/Contractor: Joseph Snyder; permit #29097) |
| ca. 1985 | Addition of current HVAC system[226] |
| 1987 | "Eagle for Robinson Jeffers" statue donated by Dorothy Atkinson[227] |
| ca. 1995 | Wrought iron fence and gates installed at east property line[228] |
| 1998 | Driveway pavers installed[229] |
| 2000–2002 | Master bedroom in east wing converted to conference room/office; two smaller bedrooms to offices for administrative assistant and Foundation President |
| 2001 | North-facing gargoyle replaced in-kind[230] |
| 2003 | Stone walkway running north-south across the front of the parcel installed[231] |
| 2004 | ADA accessible bathroom remodel in library/entry addition[232] |
| 2010 | Removed 2,500 square feet of wooden shingles and replaced with wooden shingles (Contractor: Williams Roofing Co.; Permit #10CP01474) |
| 2013 | Continued roof repair of east wing and second story – delay from 2010 permit due to funding (Contractor: Williams Roofing Co.; Permit #10CP01474) |
| 2015 | Sandstone unicorn on Hawk Tower replaced with a limestone replica[233] |
| 2016 | Replacement of brick path on west side of the property with decomposed granite |

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[226] Lindsay Jeffers, email to Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, March 26, 2023.
[227] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[228] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[229] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[230] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[231] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[232] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.
[233] Stonemason Al Giovanni, conversation with Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, January 23, 2024.

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|---|---|
| 2017 | Removed 1,500 square feet of brown wood shingles and replaced with brown wood shingles (Contractor: Williams Roofing Co.; Permit #17CP01349) |

**Integrity**

According to the National Historic Landmark Bulletin, "Guidelines for Preparing National Historic Landmark Nominations" (2023), integrity is "a measure of how a property conveys its historic significance." To qualify for NHL designation, a property must demonstrate a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The following analyzes all seven aspects of integrity for Tor House.

*Tor House Cottage and Additions*

Location: Tor House cottage and additions remain in their original location, therefore, the integrity of location is high.

Design: The exterior of Tor House cottage (along with the dining room, kitchen, east wing and new garage additions) has had no substantial alterations. The library/entry addition made after Jeffers's death is not visible from the south elevation and minimally affects the west elevation. When standing in the courtyard, the view of Tor House cottage and additions remains unchanged from the period during which Robinson Jeffers lived there. Jeffers actively participated in the design and construction of the then freestanding east wing. Although he did not participate in its construction, Jeffers consulted with Donnan Jeffers on the design of the larder room/archive room/library/entry addition prior to his passing. The interiors of Tor House cottage have also experienced minimal alterations that do not prevent the cottage, dining room, or kitchen from conveying their historic significance. Only the interior of the first floor living room of the east wing retains its original design and historic fabric. The non-historic larder room/archive room/library/entry addition is primarily visible on the north elevation and a relatively small portion of the east elevation. In total, however, Tor House cottage and additions retain a sufficiently high level of integrity of design to convey their historic significance and their association with Robinson Jeffers and his family.

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Setting: While Tor House is no longer surrounded by approximately five acres of open land, the east-west orientation of the parcel maintains, from the house and grounds, unobstructed views of the Pacific Ocean, the little beach where Una Jeffers bathed in the ocean, and the rocky cliffs below from which Robinson Jeffers collected stones and salvaged other materials used in the construction of Tor House. Broader vistas of the ocean and Carmel Point are still visible from the various floors of Hawk Tower. Therefore, despite encroaching residential development, Tor House cottage and additions maintains integrity in key aspects of its historic setting.

Materials: Tor House cottage and additions retain a high level of integrity with respect to their historic materials. Repairs through the years have been made in kind, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Examples include replacement of the shingle roof with exactly the same type of wooden shingles and a wooden window in the west elevation of the cottage. Tor House cottage and additions also clearly express its builders as Robinson Jeffers or Donnan Jeffers through its materials. While Robinson and Donnan both used uncut granite stone from the beach to the west, Donnan was primarily responsible for the use of used

brick in some areas of the building and grounds, including the noncontributing larder room/archive room/library/entry addition. As a result, Tor House cottage and additions clearly convey their construction evolution and the contributions of members of the Jeffers family through its materials, displaying its historic significance.

Workmanship: The stone buildings and walls remain intact and display the workmanship of builder Robinson Jeffers in the masonry construction. When necessary, repairs at Tor House cottage and additions have been made by craftspeople experienced in their respective craft and utilizing hand tools and equipment. Therefore, Tor House cottage and additions retain a high degree of integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: Despite the later addition of the larder room/archive room/library/entry and renovations/remodeling of some east wing interiors after the period of significance, Tor House cottage and additions retain a high degree of integrity of feeling on the exterior and interior of the building to convey their historic significance.

Association: The majority of the Tor House cottage and additions remain unchanged from the 1950s. The hand of the poet is visible in the construction of the uncut stone walls, the patina of living on the interiors, and the additive nature of the construction. In many ways, Tor House cottage and additions are a reflection of the life of Robinson Jeffers and his family. Therefore, Tor House cottage and additions retain integrity of association.

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In summary, Tor House cottage and additions retain a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and contribute substantially to the parcel's overall historic significance.

*Hawk Tower*

Location: Hawk Tower remains in its original location; therefore, the integrity of location is high.

Design: The design and interiors of Hawk Tower remain exactly as designed and built by Robinson Jeffers. There have been no additions or alterations. Therefore, the integrity of design for Hawk Tower is high.

Setting: Although subdivision of the property to the south of Hawk Tower has resulted in residential encroachment and reductions of views to the south of Carmel Point, the south elevation of the tower is still visible from the south parcel property line. The relationship of the north/main façade with Tor House cottage and additions remains completely intact. Views of Hawk Tower from the east and west also remain intact. Therefore, the integrity of setting for Hawk Tower is sufficient for the tower to convey its historic significance.

Materials: Except for the replacement of the unicorn keystone and a gargoyle downspout and the installation of chain handrails, Hawk Tower retains all of its original materials including the uncut stone and Portland cement construction, as well as its interior wooden paneling. Replacement of the gargoyle downspout on the north façade was made within the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for in-kind replacement. Therefore, Hawk Tower retains a high degree of integrity with respect to materials.

Workmanship: Repairs and maintenance to Hawk Tower have been conducted by stonemasons and other master craftspeople who have taken great care in preserving the historic fabric and quality of workmanship. For

example, the replacement unicorn keystone on Hawk Tower was re-carved from a photograph of the original. Similarly, repair of one of two hawk gargoyle downspouts on Hawk Tower was made in-kind by recasting from the original mold. Most of the masonry construction and carpentry of Robinson Jeffers remain intact. Therefore, Hawk Tower retains a high degree of integrity with respect to workmanship.

Feeling: With its high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, Hawk Tower conveys virtually the same experience today as for Robinson Jeffers and his family. Therefore, Hawk Tower retains a high degree of integrity with respect to feeling.

Association: Hawk Tower is a contributor to the historic district known as Tor House and is significant for its association with the poet Robinson Jeffers and his family. Designed and constructed by Jeffers himself and named for a bird frequently mentioned in Jeffers's poems, Hawk Tower is emblematic of Jeffers's life and work. In summary, Hawk Tower retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to be a contributor to the historic district and to convey the parcel's overall historic significance.

*Stone Walls*

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Location: The stone walls at Tor House remain in the same location as originally built by Robinson Jeffers, and therefore retain a high degree of integrity of location.

Design: The uncut stone walls were designed and constructed by Robinson Jeffers circa 1920. These walls, between approximately 3 and 6 feet in height, were constructed using large granite stones retrieved from the beach below Tor House and assembled using Portland cement. These walls were constructed in the manner of English cottages, and as such, contribute to the design of the property as a whole. In 1967 or 1968, Donnan Jeffers extended the height of the western and southwestern stone walls an additional two feet. The family had discussed raising the height of the walls as early as 1947, after the successful production of *Medea* on Broadway, which made Jeffers the source of attention.[234] When Donnan Jeffers extended the height of the walls, he inadvertently followed the Secretary of the Interior's standards by using smaller stones for construction. The net result of this is that the distinction between the original Robinson Jeffers walls and the extension is clearly demarcated by materials. Jeffers's original design remains intact and distinguishable from the new construction. Therefore, the stone walls retain integrity of design.

Setting: The uncut stone walls continue to serve their role in providing privacy and delineating areas of the landscaped courtyard. Therefore, the uncut stone walls at Tor House retain a high level of integrity of setting in their relationship to the courtyard.

Materials: The stone and Portland cement that Jeffers used in the construction of the walls are present. Therefore, the integrity of materials for the stone walls is high.

Workmanship: The extension of the wall height did not alter the workmanship of the original lower portion of the wall constructed by Robinson Jeffers. Therefore, the integrity of workmanship for the stone walls is high.

[234] Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, email to Sian Winship, February 16, 2023.

Feeling: With the subdivision of adjacent parcels in the early 1960s, encroaching development began to impact the sense of privacy at Tor House. With the extension of the height of the walls, the stone walls help preserve the feeling of privacy once enjoyed by Jeffers and his family.

Association: The stone walls at Tor House built by Robinson Jeffers (within the period of significance) and his son, Donnan (after the period of significance), are sufficiently differentiated to convey the association of the lower portion of the wall with the poet.

In summary, the stone walls at Tor House retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic significance and to qualify as contributing structures to the Tor House historic district on the parcel.

*Tor House Grounds (including contributing Sundial and Boy on a Dolphin Sculpture)*

Location: The location of pathways, planters, landscape and hardscape elements, sundial, and embedded artifacts, with the exception of the tombstone from Ireland, on the Tor House grounds remain in the same location as originally built by Robinson Jeffers. Therefore, the Tor House Grounds retain a high degree of integrity of location.

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Setting: Pathways, planters, landscape, and hardscape elements, sundial, and embedded artifacts on the Tor House grounds remain unchanged as originally built by Robinson Jeffers and Donnan Jeffers, prior to the poet's death. Therefore, the Tor House Grounds retain a high degree of integrity of setting.

Design: The spirit of the early garden, as described in *Sunset* in 1935, was a combination of wild and formal landscape. This element remains in the current garden, which does not reflect more formal English garden types. When the west pathway was converted from used brick to decomposed granite, the shape and contour of the historic pathway was replicated, retaining the design of the original. Also while a new stone pathway along the northern elevation of the Tor House cottage and additions has been added after the period of significance, the path is not visible from the street or the main Tor House courtyard. The relatively recent addition of an intersecting flagstone path adjacent to the driveway and Ocean Avenue are reversible. Therefore, the Tor House grounds retain sufficient integrity of design to convey their historic significance.

Materials: Although some of the garden vegetation has changed from the historic period, the general varieties have not. The garden remains a combination of lawn, grass, wildflowers, roses, trees and planted flowers. Two new noncontributing sculptures have been added over time to the periphery of grounds; however, one is clearly marked/dated from outside the period of significance. Therefore, the Tor House grounds retain sufficient integrity of materials to convey their historic significance.

Workmanship: The used-brick pathways lain by Donnan during Robinson Jefferson's lifetime and afterward were constructed in the Tor House tradition of manual labor with hand tools. Repairs and replacements to bricks have all been made in-kind. Therefore, the Tor House Grounds retain sufficient integrity of workmanship to convey their historic significance.

Feeling: Tor House grounds have experienced minimal changes over time. Historic pathways linking various entrances of the south elevation of Tor House cottage and additions with Hawk Tower remain intact.

Association: Although the platescape of Tor House Grounds has waxed and waned over the years, the general planting patterns, pathways, and overall character maintain sufficient integrity from its historic period to convey its association with Robinson Jeffers.

In summary, the Tor House Grounds retain sufficient integrity to convey historic significance and to qualify as contributing elements on the parcel.

**Conclusion**

Tor House (26304 Ocean View Avenue) retains a sufficiently high level of historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its historic significance and meet the integrity thresholds for designation as a National Historic Landmark.

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Robinson Jeffers Association: robinsonjeffersassociation.org

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

_X_ Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)
____Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in **only** 4, 5, and 6 below)

1. NR #: 75000444
2. Date of listing: 10/10/1975
3. Level of significance: National
4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A__B_X_C__D__
5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__B__C__D__E__F__G_X
6. Areas of Significance: Architecture, Art, Literature

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___Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:
___Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:
___Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No.
___Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.
___Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

**Location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office:
Other State Agency:
Federal Agency: Library of Congress
Local Government:
University: See Robinson Jeffers Manuscript Collections, below.

**Other (Specify Repository):** Robinson Jeffers Manuscript Collections

MAJOR ARCHIVES

Academy of American Poets (New York, New York)
American Academy of Arts and Letters (New York, New York)
California State University, Long Beach (Long Beach, California)
Columbia University (New York, New York)

Huntington Library (San Marino, California)
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Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation (Carmel, California)
Stanford University (Stanford, California)
University of California, Berkeley (Berkeley, California)
University of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois)
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University of Texas at Austin (Austin, Texas)
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## Maps and Figures Log

Figure 1: Location map, showing the location of Tor House (UTM Reference: Zone 10, Easting 595565, Northing 4044603).

Figure 2: Jeffers Estates parcel map.

Figure 3: Tor House plot plan (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 4: Aerial view (Google Maps) with lot lines superimposed and showing environmental setting, including the cypress tree canopy. The lot lines correspond to the National Historic Landmark boundary. (Map created by Aengus Jeffers, 2022).

Figure 5: Tor House cottage and additions, floor plans (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 6: Tor House cottage and additions, front (east) and south elevations (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 7: Tor House cottage and additions, rear (west) elevation and north elevation (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 8: Tor House cottage and additions, courtyard and patio elevations (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 9: Hawk Tower, floor plans and elevations (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Figure 10: Stones for building Hawk Tower (foundation left), ca. 1920-23; Tor House cottage, and original freestanding garage (right) converted to kitchen mid-1950s under Jeffers's direction and guidance. Photo taken before dining room was added in 1932, connecting the cottage and the original garage. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 11: Hawk Tower, ca. 1924-25. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 12: Robinson Jeffers at Sea Gate in the courtyard wall in front of Hawk Tower, 1932. (Photograph by Julian P. Graham, courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 13: Robinson Jeffers inside Hawk Tower, 1948. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 14: Una Jeffers inside Hawk Tower, 1948. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 15: Robinson Jeffers in front of the cottage and Hawk Tower, 1948. (Photograph by Nat Farbman, courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 16: Jeffers in the Tor House cottage doorway, view from the original front gate. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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Figure 17: Tor House cottage living room, 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 18: Una's alcove, Tor House cottage, 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 19: Dining room (north), 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

Figure 20: Dining room (south), 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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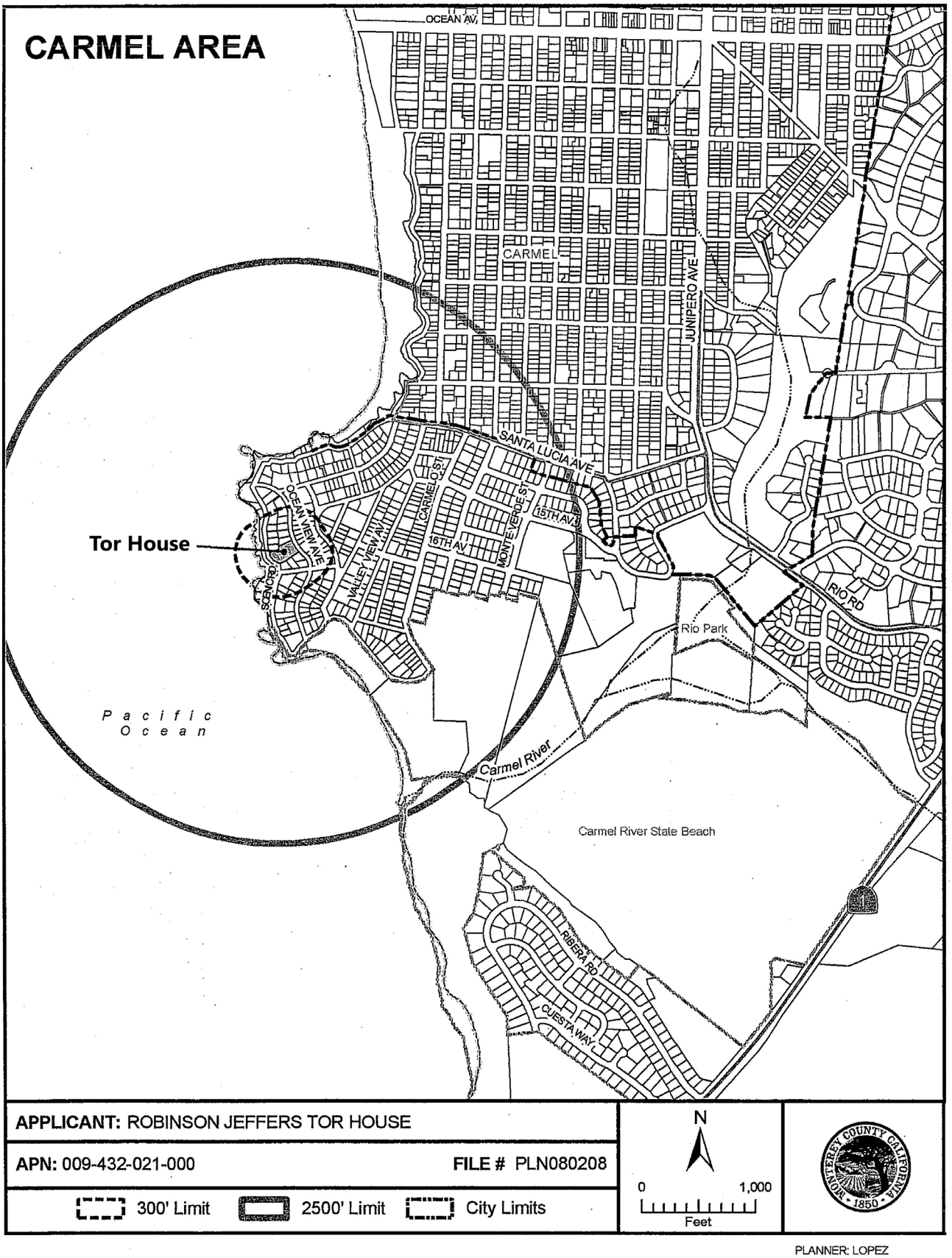



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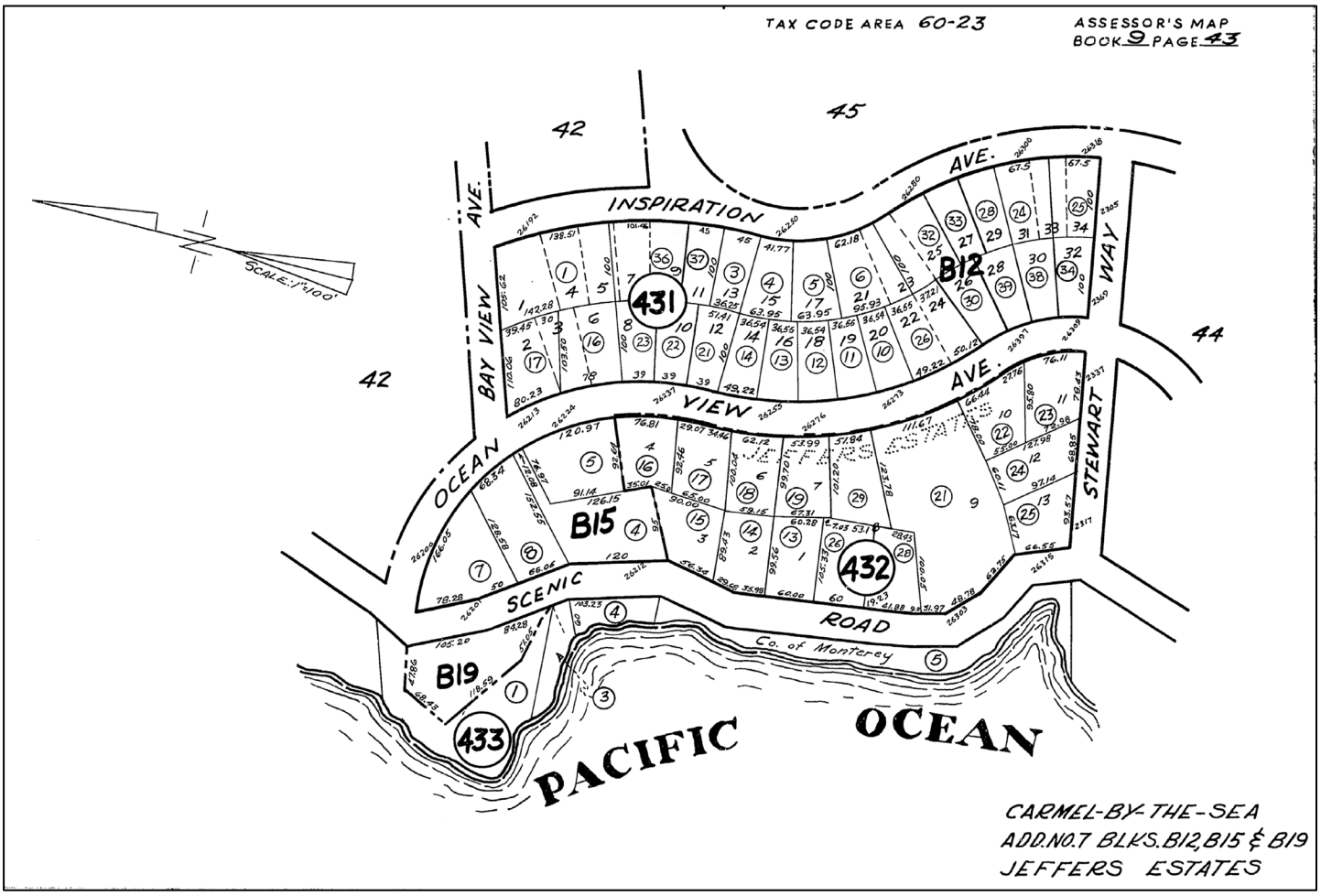



Figure 2: Jeffers Estates parcel map. Tor House is Parcel 21.

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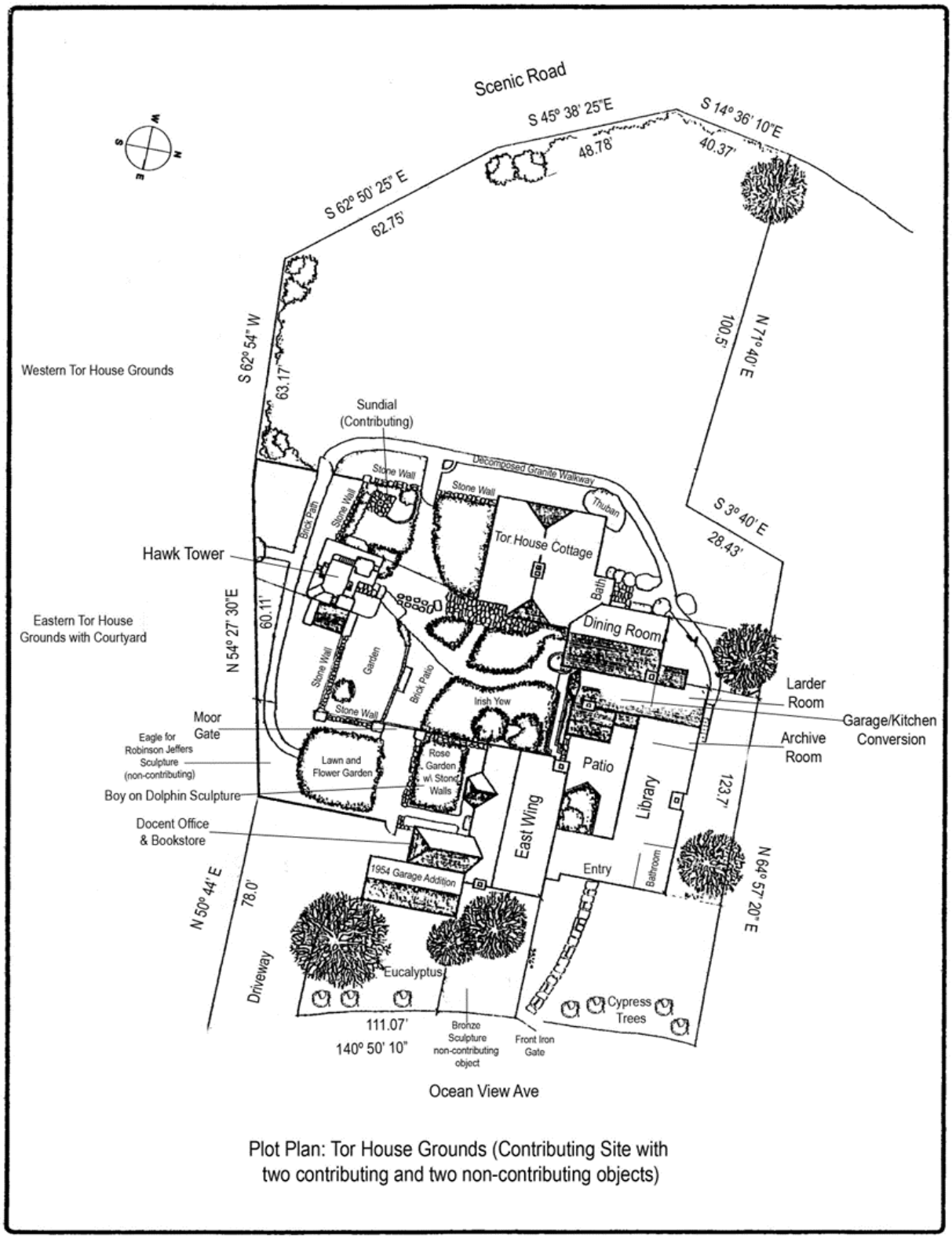



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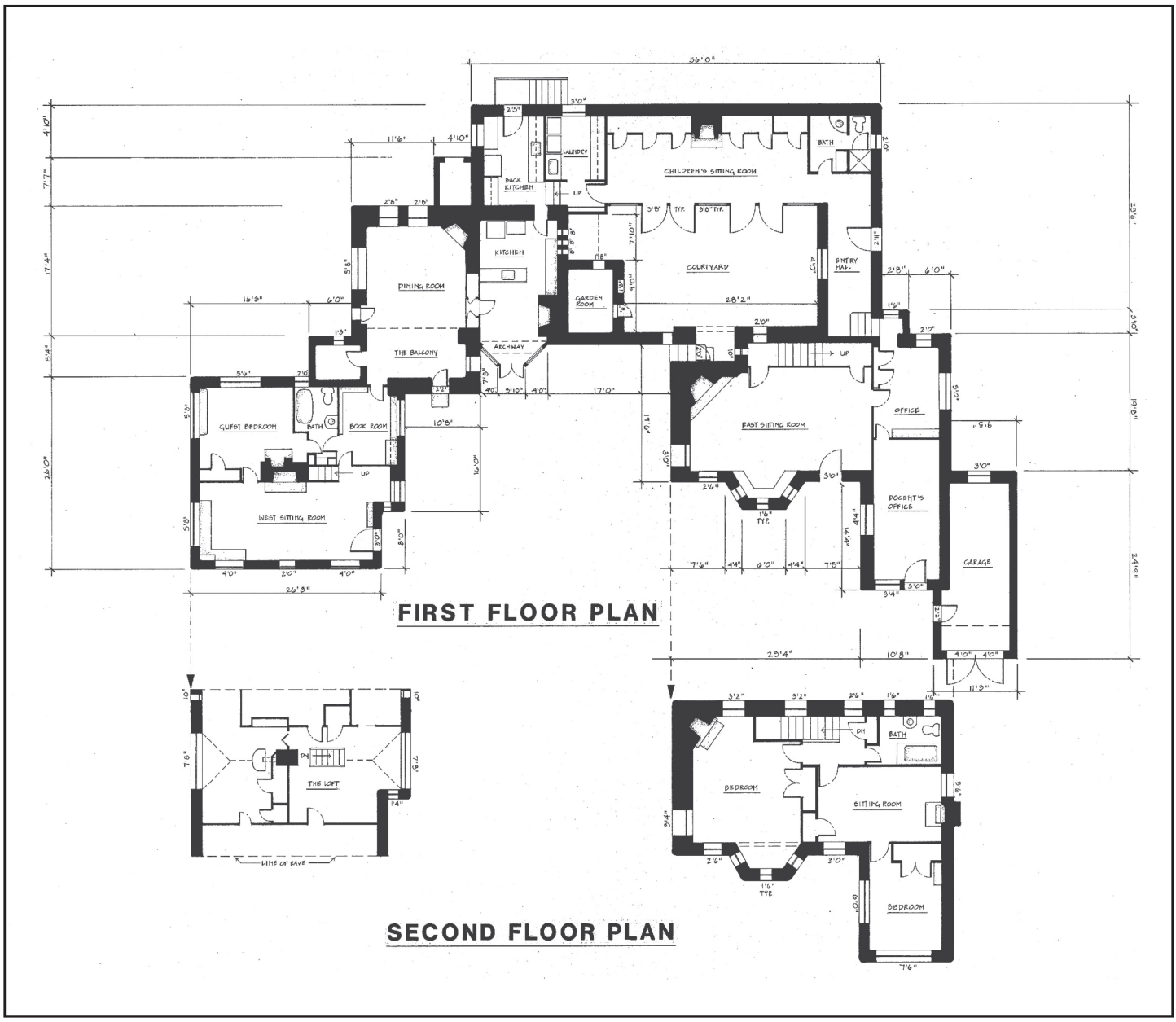



Figure 5: Tor House cottage and additions, floor plans (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

Note that these plans are "as built" so the room designations differ from those used in the nomination narrative.

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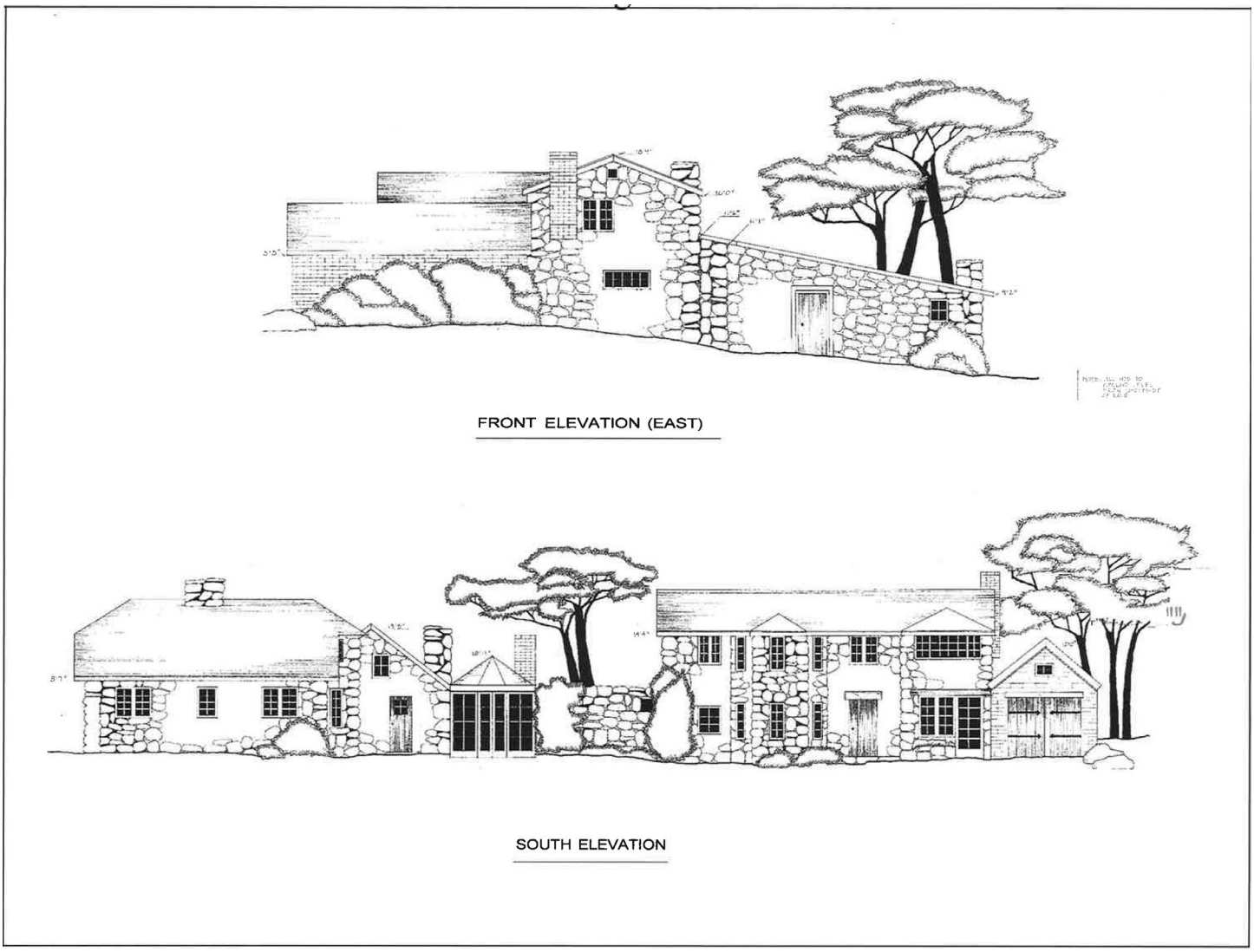



Figure 6: Tor House cottage and additions, front (east) and south elevations (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

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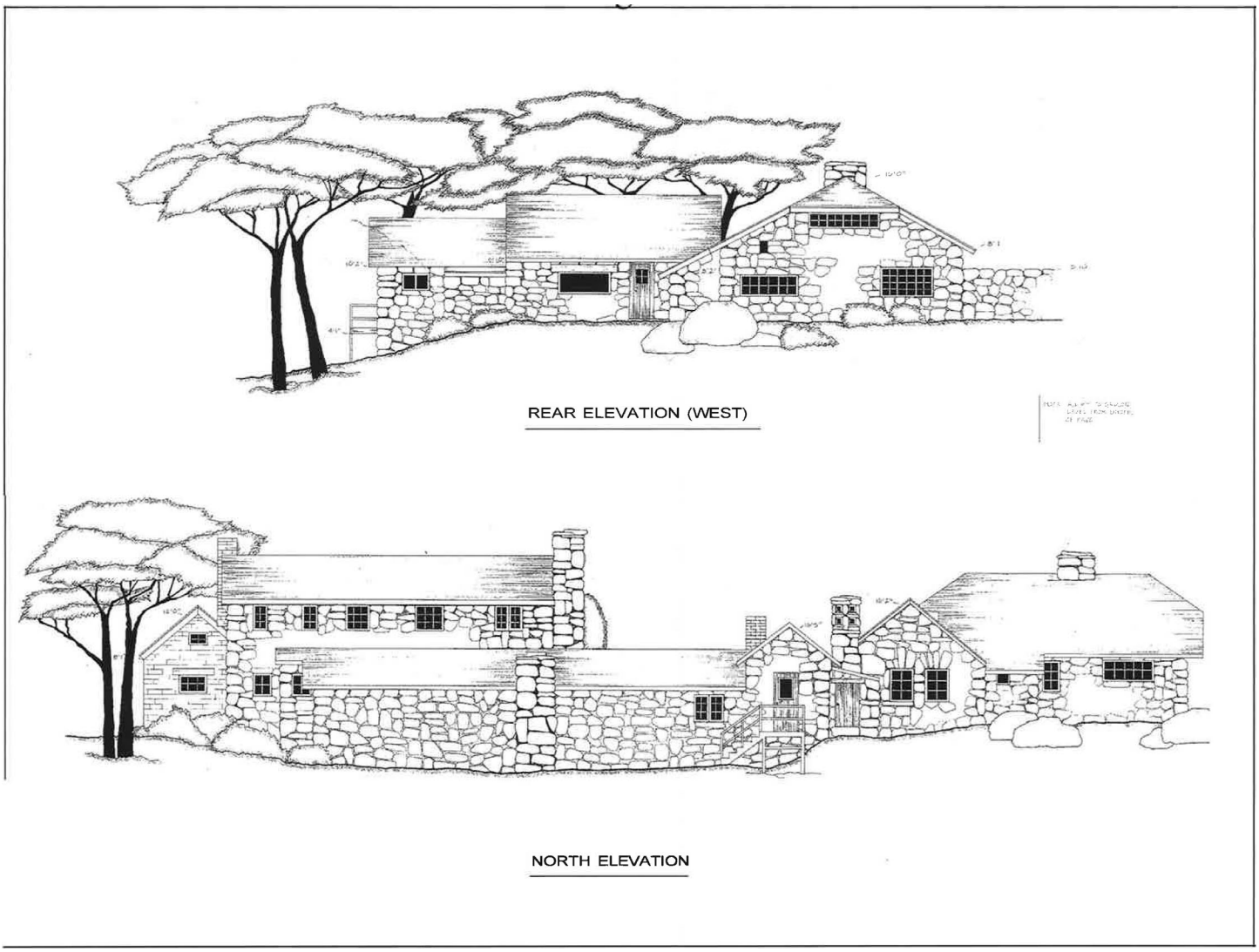



Figure 7: Tor House cottage and additions, rear (west) elevation and north elevation (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

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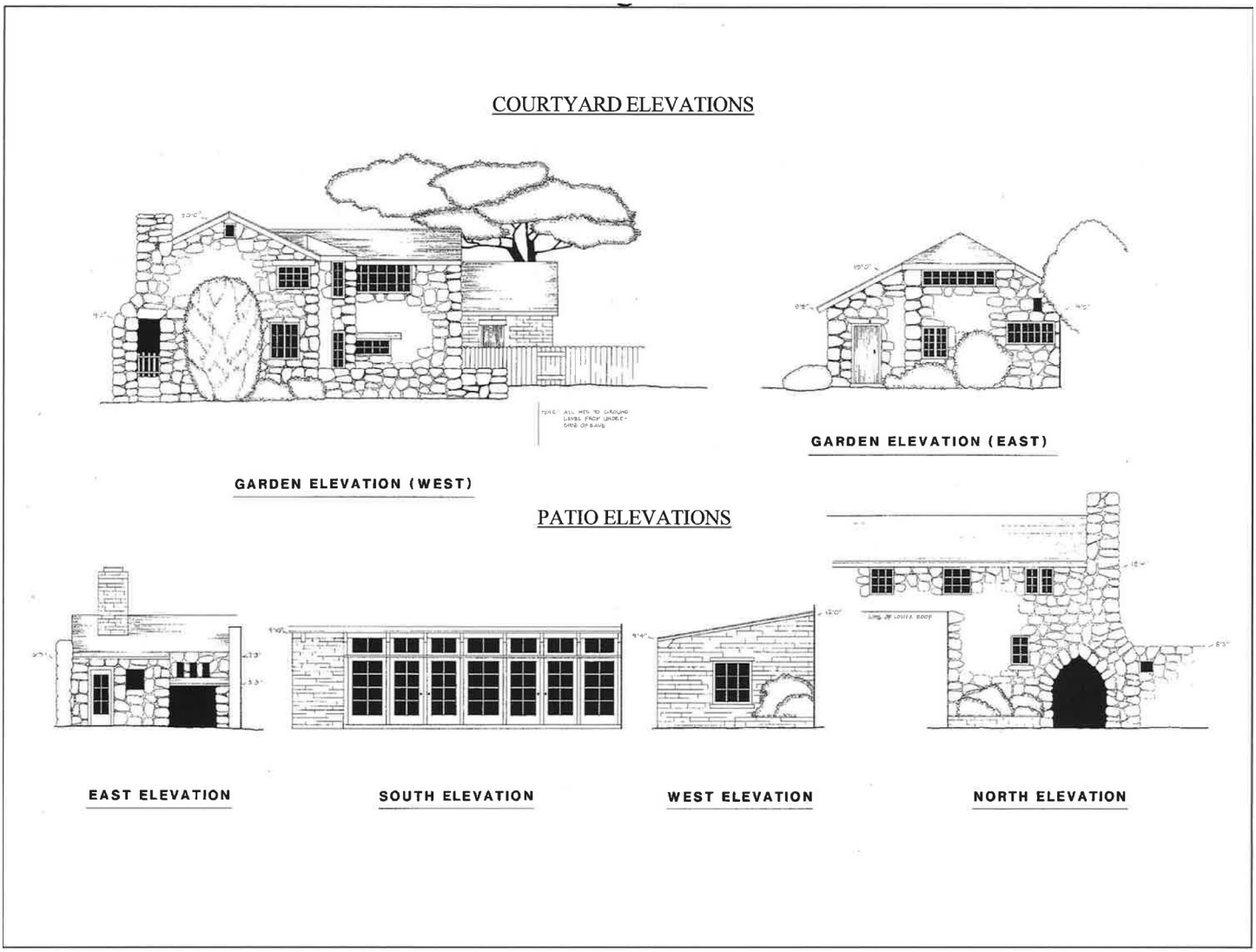



Figure 8: Tor House cottage and additions, courtyard and patio elevations (Prepared by Christopher and Susan William, 1992, revised by Alan Stacy and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, 2023).

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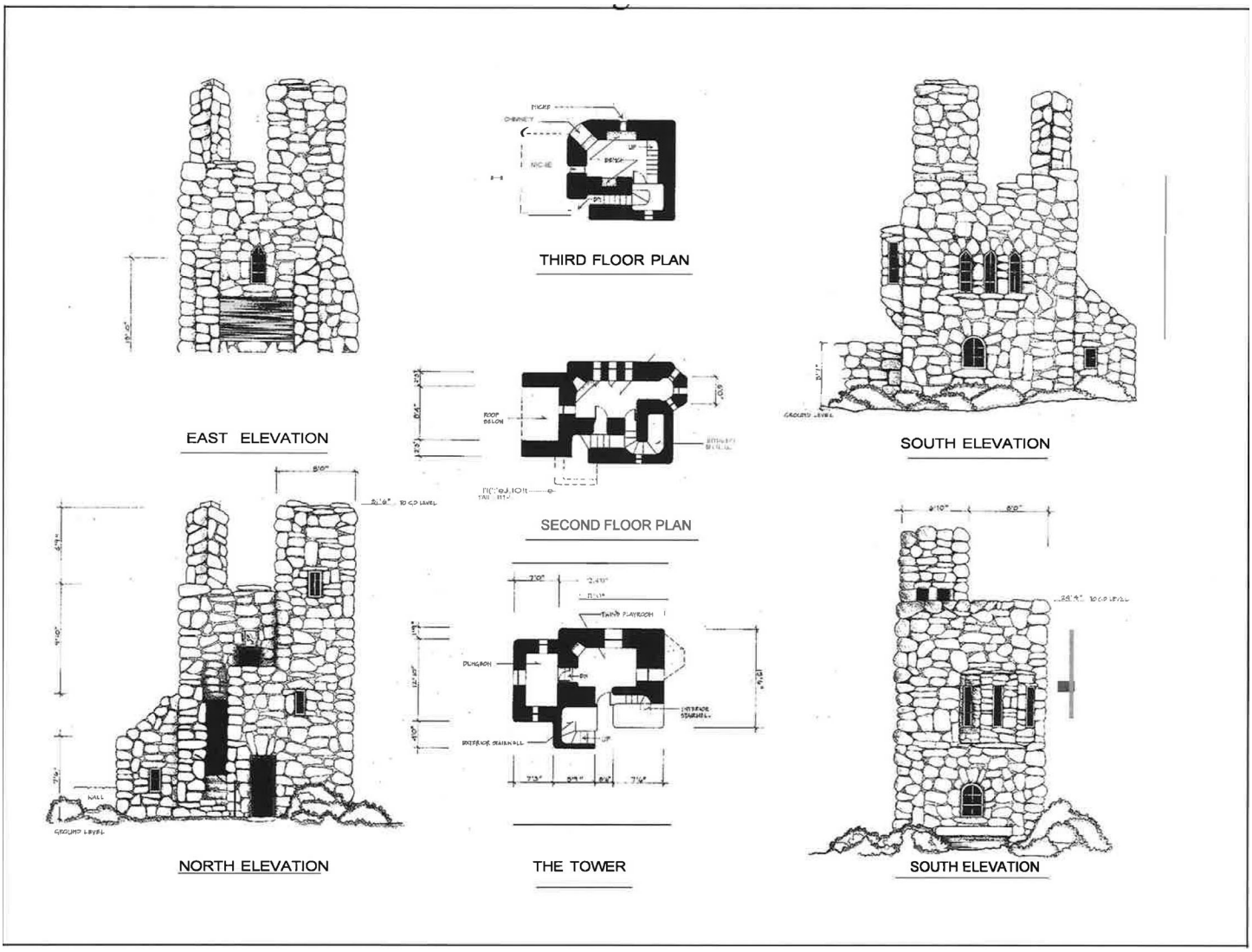



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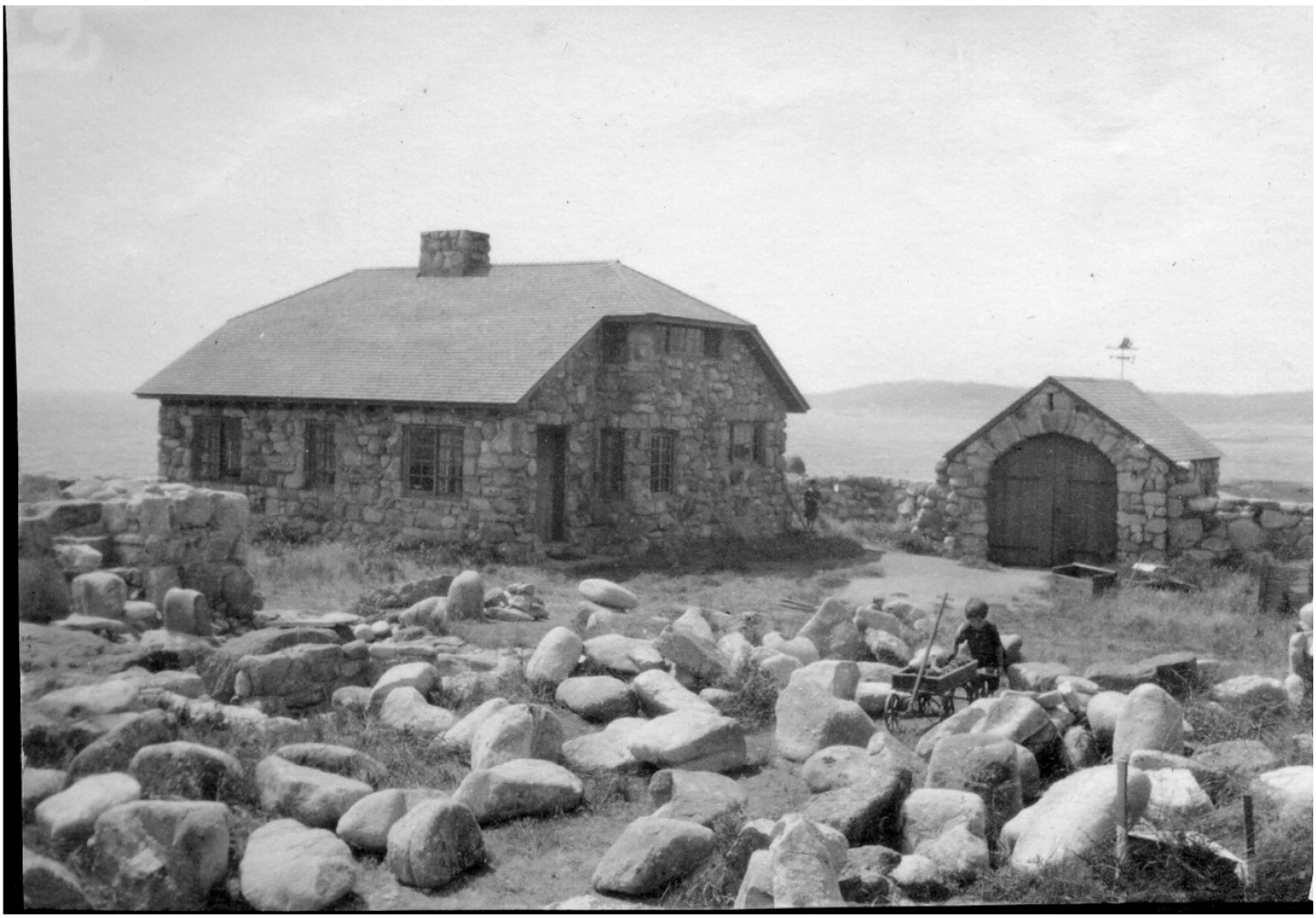


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Figure 11: Hawk Tower, ca. 1924-25. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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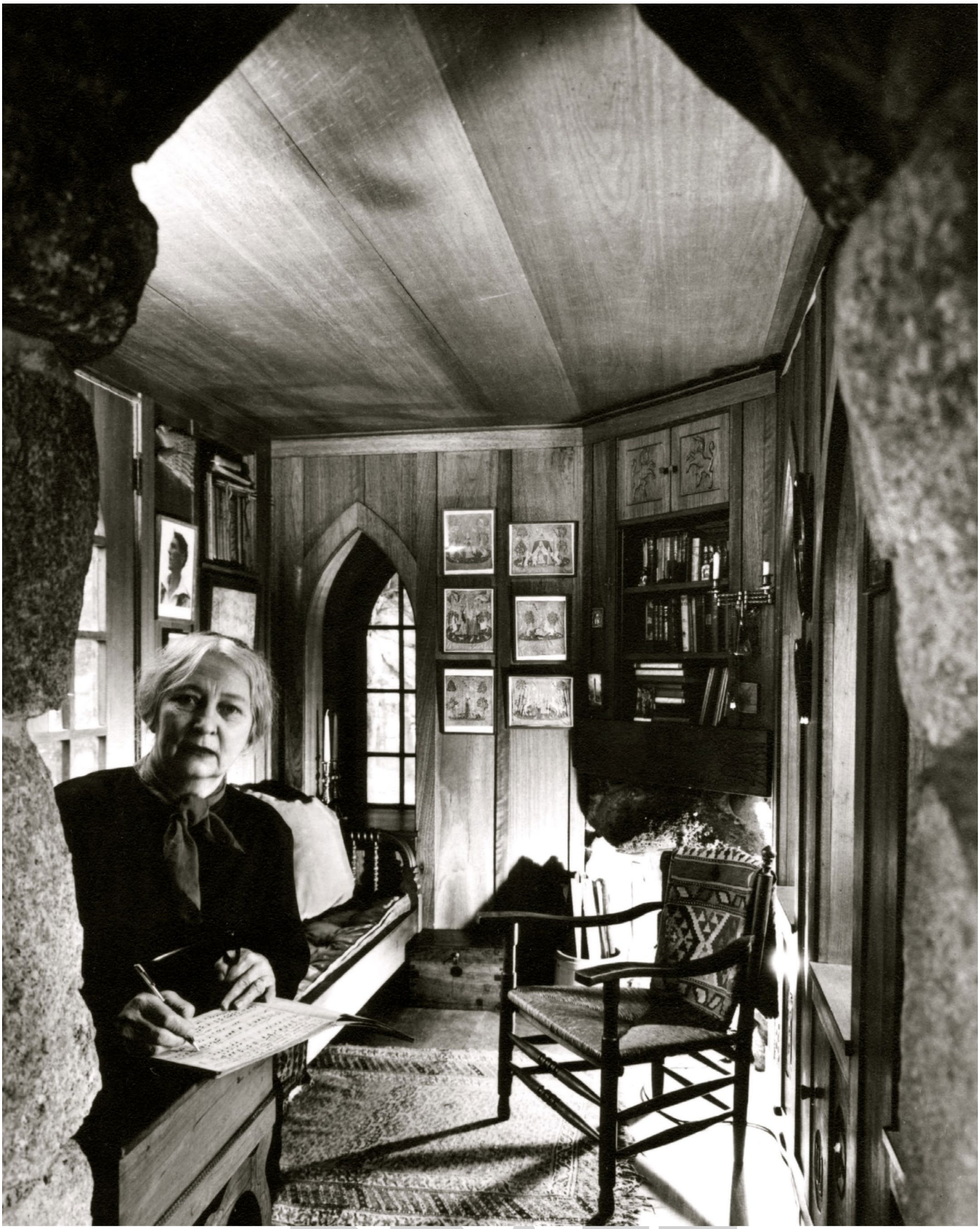


Figure 14: Una Jeffers inside Hawk Tower, 1948. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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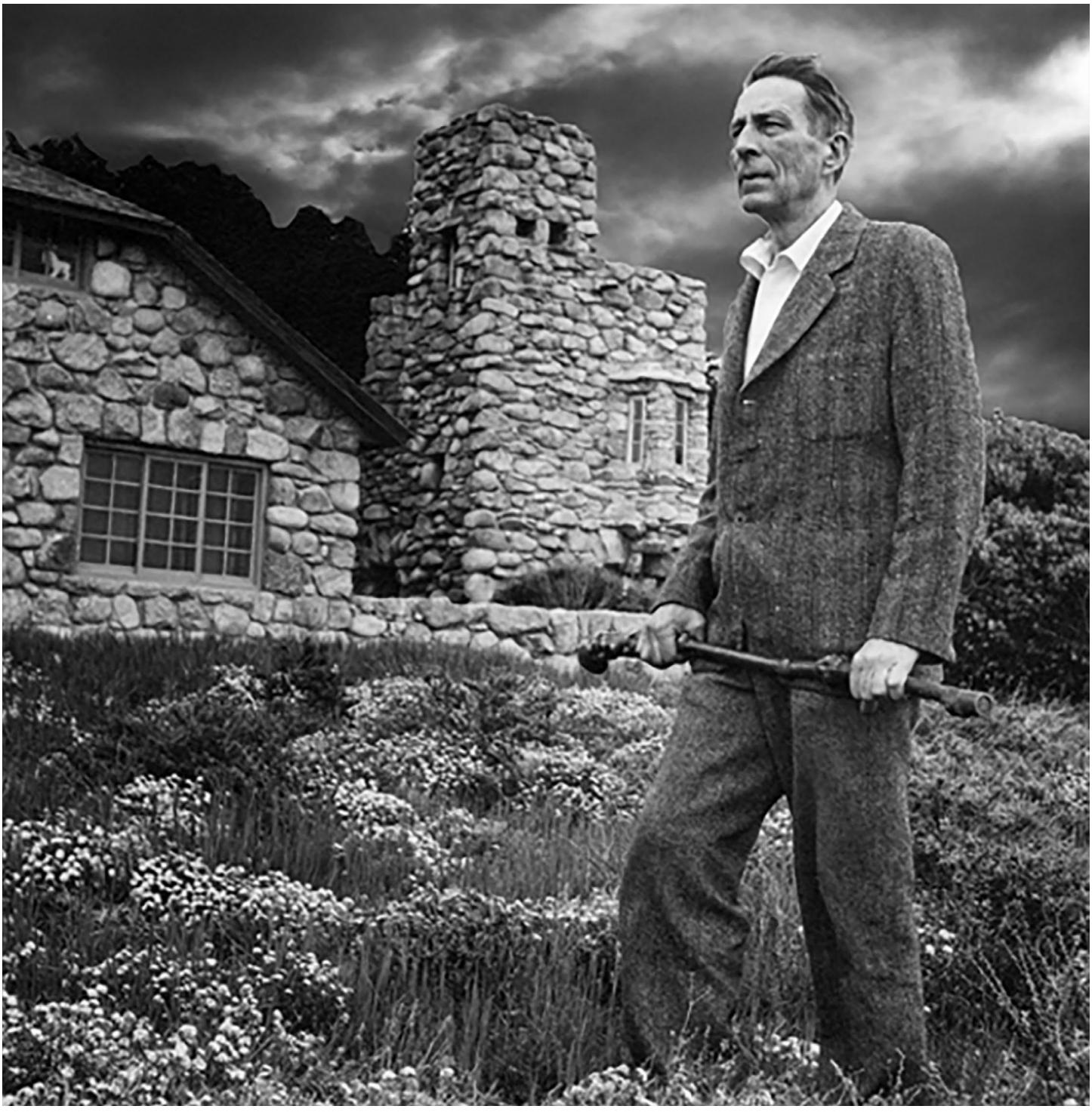


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Figure 19: Dining room (north), 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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Figure 20: Dining room (south), 1938. (Courtesy of Tor House Foundation)

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## Photo Log

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Property: | Tor House (Robinson Jeffers Home) |
| City or Vicinity: | Carmel-by-the-Sea |
| State: | CA |
| Name of Photographer: | Alan Stacy |
| Date of Photographs: | July 2023 |
| Location of Digital Files: | Tor House Foundation |
| Number of Photographs: | 42 |

Photo 1: West (rear) elevation of Tor House cottage. Note the three sets of fixed-paned wooden windows flanked by pairs of wooden sliding windows, and, to the left, the stone known as Thuban, "the rock that is a cornerstone of the house."

Photo 2: West (rear) elevation of dining room. On the right is Thuban, and other outcroppings of rock that comprise the tor upon which Tor House is built.

Photo 3: North elevation of Tor House cottage. On the right is Thuban.

Photo 4: North elevation of dining room. Note the stone chimney with dovecotes.

Photo 5: North elevation showing, right to left, non-contributing entry addition, two-story east wing, and brick garage. The eucalyptus tree was planted by Jeffers, and is the last of its kind on the property.

Photo 6: East (front) elevation of the two-story east wing, showing the uncut granite stone and Portland cement construction and truncated used-brick chimney, and the east and north elevations of the brick garage. The cypress and eucalyptus (now just trunks) were planted by Jeffers.

Photo 7: East elevation of brick garage.

Photo 8: South elevation of brick garage. Cypress trees and the eucalyptus tree are visible behind the garage.

Photo 9: South elevation showing, right to left, brick garage and east wing. Note the stone walls and the brick walkway.

Photo 10: South elevation of dining room (left) and garage/kitchen conversion (right). Note the stone wall extending to the right from the garage/kitchen conversion, the brick walkway lined with abalone shells, and the garden with floral display.

Photo 11: Tor House cottage, south elevation.

Photo 12: Hawk Tower, north elevation.

Photo 13: Hawk Tower, west (right) and north (left) elevations. Note the cantilevered oriel window on the second floor on the west elevation.

Photo 14: Hawk Tower, east elevation.

Photo 15: Hawk Tower, south (right) and west (left) elevations. Note the cantilevered oriel window on the

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second floor of the west elevation.

Photo 16: Courtyard (west) elevation of the east wing and brick garage. The Irish yew tree planted by Robinson Jeffers is behind the plum tree.

Photo 17: Courtyard (east) elevation of Tor House cottage. Note the clipped, front-gabled roof clad in wooden shingles and the vertical plank front entry door.

Photo 18: Patio (east) elevation of garage/kitchen conversion with small, uncut stone enclosed shed structure (on left) and uncut stone open shed structure (on right); a portion of the brick library/entry addition is on the right. Note the brick chimney of the garage/kitchen conversion and the uncut stone chimney with dovecote from the dining room.

Photo 19: Patio (north elevation) of the east wing. Note the 8-foot-high uncut stone wall to the right and a portion of the west elevation of the library/entry addition on left.

Photo 20: Keystone of Hawk Tower (north elevation) with initials U/RJ over the recessed entrance.

Photo 21: View from Hawk Tower to the northeast, showing the components of Tor House arranged around the courtyard. Note brick walkways, abalone-lined garden areas, and Irish yew tree, planted by Jeffers alongside the west elevation of the east wing.

Photo 22: The sundial on a stone base in the southwest corner of the courtyard, looking southwest, with the uncut stone walls that delineate the courtyard shown in the background.

Photo 23: View of Moor Gate, the courtyard area, and the Sea Gate, looking west. Hawk Tower is on the left and Tor House cottage is on the right.

Photo 24: The stone statue of a boy riding a dolphin, a Roman antiquity which once stood in the garden of the London home of painter John Singer Sargent and was given to Una and Robinson by artist Julie Heyneman in 1939. It stands in the little rose garden on the south elevation of the east wing.

Photo 25: The house-dogs' graves: Haig's grave is in foreground; Winnie's is partially covered by vegetation. The graves are in front of the south elevation of Tor House cottage.

Photo 26: View of western Tor House grounds from Sea Gate. Note the "mille fleur tapestry" of both native and non-native flowers.

Photo 27: View from Scenic Road east to the property with Tor House cottage, Hawk Tower, and stone walls visible. Note the "mille fleur tapestry" of both native and non-native flowers on this, the western Tor House grounds.

Photo 28: Tor House cottage: view of living room looking west. Note the redwood board-and-batten paneling, the Douglas fir wooden floors, the redwood ceiling joists, the Carmel stone fireplace, and the sliding windows. The original 1904 Steinway Model O Grand Piano is still present.

Photo 29: Una's alcove in the cottage living room, looking east. Note the redwood paneling and the antique sea captain's writing desk.

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Photo 30: The guest bedroom in the cottage, looking west. Jeffers described the antique bed as "a good death bed" in a poem "The Bed by the Window." In fact, he did die in this bed on January 20, 1962.

Photo 31: The Carmel stone fireplace located in the south wall of the guest bedroom in Tor House cottage.

Photo 32: The wood-paneled bathroom in Tor House cottage with original ca. 1920 plumbing fixtures including clawfoot porcelain bathtub, sink, and toilet, looking north.

Photo 33: View of attic in Tor House cottage showing wooden paneling, exposed redwood rafters, and a wooden gable roof.

Photo 34: This poem, "There are only simple things here" was painted by Jeffers on the ceiling in the northwest corner of the attic of Tor House cottage.

Photo 35: View of dining room, looking north, showing extensive granite stonework, the fireplace, wood paneling, square red terracotta pavers, table and benches, and two-by-three fixed-paned windows.

Photo 36: View of the dining room, looking south, showing granite stonework, wood paneling, terracotta pavers, table and bench, ladder to loft, unicorn banner, and doors.

Photo 37: Detail view of pre-Columbian terracotta heads and obsidian dagger blade (lower panel) and panel of stones from round towers in Ireland (upper panel) on southeast wall of dining room.

Photo 38: Garage/kitchen conversion: view from the north end looking south through the French doors to Hawk Tower. Note brick fireplace to the left, exposed redwood rafters, red terracotta pavers, and wooden gable roof.

Photo 39: Carved hawks, round tower and Latin inscription on mantel of the uncut stone fireplace on the second floor of Hawk Tower.

Photo 40: Japanese oak paneling and deeply recessed windows with Gothic arches on the second floor of Hawk Tower, looking south.

Photo 41: Marble plaque on the third-floor landing of Hawk Tower, looking southeast. The Latin 'RJ/SUIS MANIBUS ME/TURREM FALCONIS/FECIT MCMXXIV" translates as "RJ with his own hands made Tower of the Hawk 1924."

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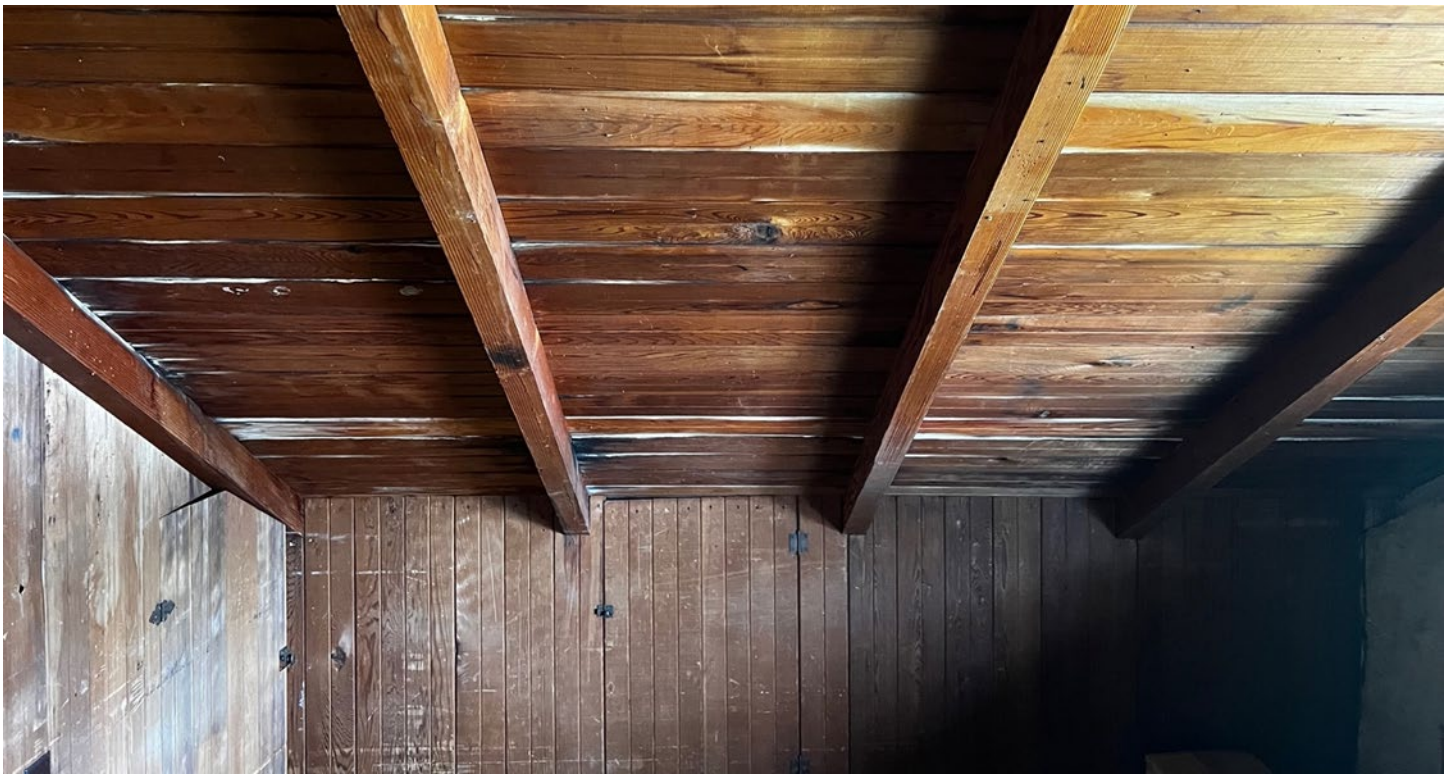


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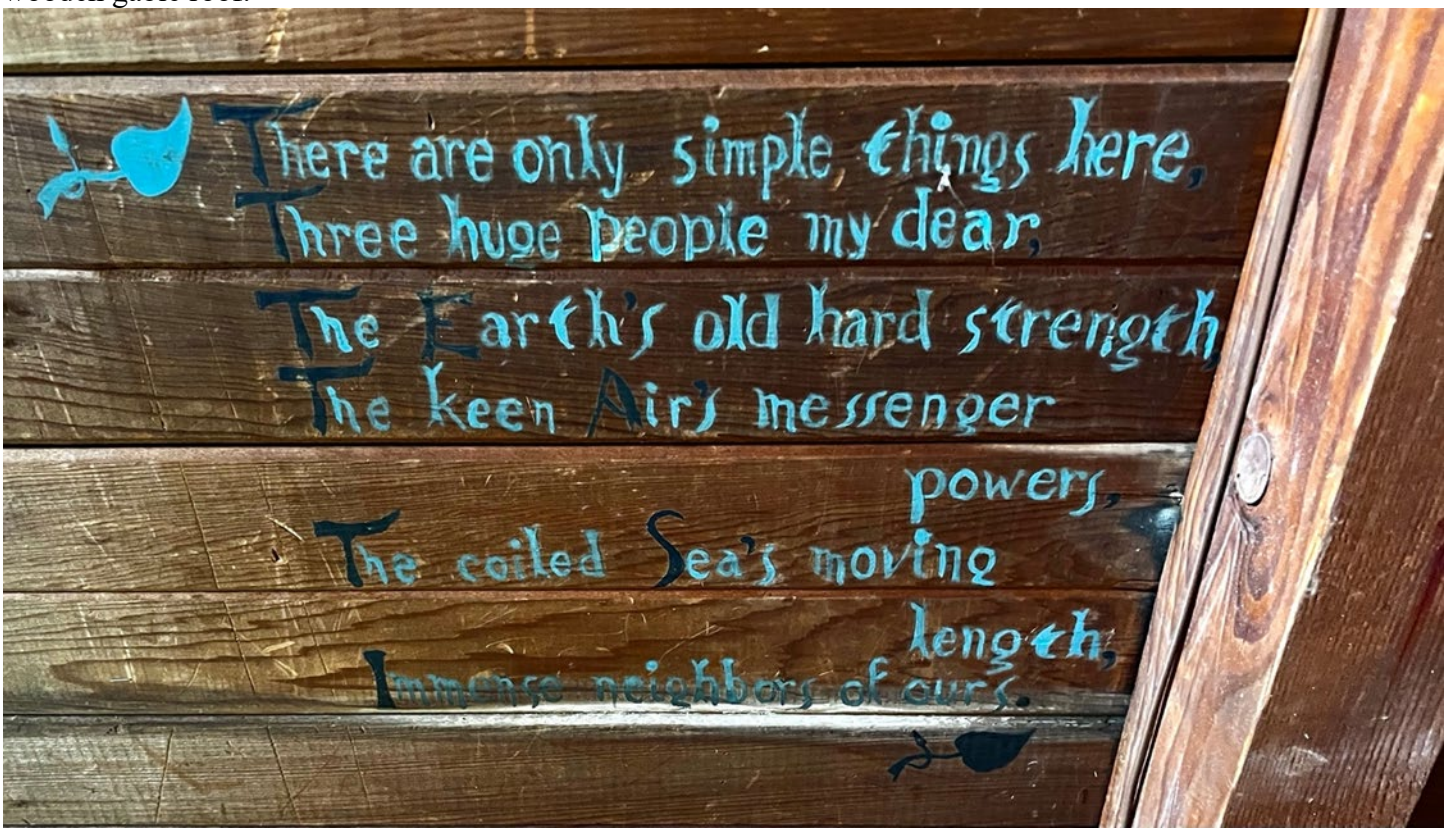



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