

Arcata Historical Resources Survey 2012 - Finding Aid

Collection Number

2012.05

Contact Information

The Library, Special Collections
Humboldt State University
One Harpst Street
Arcata, California 95521

Processed By

Suzanne Guerra

Date Collection Processed

2013

Language

English

Collection Creator

Suzanne Guerra, Guerra & McBane LLC for Historical Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA).
Field work and research volunteers include Les Cook, Brandy Hurtado, Kathryn
Randall, Alex Stillman, Jack Surmani, Susie Van Kirk and Samantha Wise.

Dates Covered by Collection

1850s-2012 (date span)

1970-2012 (bulk dates)

Size of Collection

1 External hard drive; 32.4 Gigabytes; 3,697 Files

Abstract

The Historical Resources Survey 2012 Collection was donated by the Historical Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA). The City of Arcata contracted with Suzanne Guerra, Guerra & McBane LLC, to conduct the cultural resources survey, produce a historical context for Arcata, an architectural style guide, and training materials to assist staff and volunteers in recording historic buildings and structures. The study would focus on the East Arcata-Bay View neighborhood with a preliminary assessment of the planned

community of Sunny Brae. The HSSA provided access to their major collection of photographs, additional research materials on historic properties and local architecture, volunteers, database software and iPad computer hardware. Additional research was conducted in Special Collections, Humboldt State University Library, the Humboldt County Historical Society and the Humboldt County Library, and in personal collections when appropriate.

The final documents include the historical resources survey records on East Arcata, and preliminary contextual themes for the planned community of Sunny Brae, as well as the final project report containing a historic context for the City of Arcata and major themes; training materials; an architectural style guide on local building styles and forms, and reference materials on historical resources published by the National Register and the State Office of Historic Preservation. Research notes and an extensive set of photographs and digitized slides are also included.

All of the records and reports were submitted to the City of Arcata as drafts at the end of the project and final documents may have been altered, edited, or amended by the City for its own use. Original records at the City of Arcata may be available upon request from the Building and Planning Department, Planning Division.

Access

Open for research by appointment

Copyright

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Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by the Historical Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA). The City of Arcata partnered with HSSA on their Arcata Historical Resources Survey project. HSSA provided the City with access to their research collections and archives, data collection software, iPads for field research and co-sponsored a preservation education program. At the completion of the project, the HSSA received a copy of the project digital files on an external hard drive. These comprise the Arcata Historical Resources Survey 2012 Collection.

Scope and Content of the Collection

In 2010, the City of Arcata contracted with Suzanne Guerra, Guerra & McBane LLC, to conduct a cultural resources survey. This would update a survey that had been

conducted between 1972-1979 by the City of Arcata and the newly organized Historic Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA) under local historian Susie Van Kirk. The formation of the HSSA, and the original study were both spurred by the loss of hundreds of homes due to the expansion of the 101 freeway.

This was the first primarily electronic survey and assessment of historical resources with a historical context for Arcata, survey database, an architectural style guide, and training materials to assist staff and volunteers in recording historic buildings and structures. The Historic Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA) provided substantial project support, access to their major collection of photographs, additional research materials on historic properties and local architecture, volunteers, database software and i-Pad computer hardware.

The first study had focused on the oldest examples of buildings designed in formal architectural styles from the settlement era to approximately 1940. The properties identified in the earlier survey report had formed the basis for the first group of resources designated as Arcata Historical Landmarks. Susie Van Kirk noted that not all of the properties that she had studied had been included in the final survey document since she had also assessed historical significance, association with significant people and events, and had included examples of vernacular architecture. Vernacular architecture is based on localized needs and construction materials, and reflects local traditions. All of her research findings were later incorporated into her book *Reflections of Arcata's History: eighty years of architecture*, published in January 1979, and in several guides to local architecture published through the HSSA.

Current historic preservation standards and guidelines now encompasses buildings, structures, objects, sites and landscapes which reflect human use of and cultural adaptations to a natural environment within the definition of historical resources. The architectural styles in the new project expand upon those identified in the earlier study to include Mid-Century Modern through latter day revivals, with a refinement of the styles, periods and building forms that had been identified in the earlier survey, along with folk building forms. The historic context, a historical overview of the development of the City, extends the original historical timeline to 1965.

The original 1979 survey records could no longer be located in the City files and records in the City archive were not accessible at the time of the recent survey project. Digital copies were obtained from the State Office of Historic Preservation. Historic documents held by the City include original maps, blueprints, historic resources reports, and the Historic Landmark files. Extensive research was also conducted in local archives,

including Special Collections, Humboldt State University Library, the Humboldt County Historical Society, Humboldt County Library, and the State Office of Historic Preservation.

Members of the community donated photos and copies of their own research to the project in order to create a more complete set of documentation. These materials include the Stillman collection of photographs, slides and negatives which document aspects of Arcata's involvement in the California Main Street program as well as historic property rehabilitation projects which historic preservation consultant Alexandra Stillman had undertaken. Historian Susie Van Kirk generously donated all of her original research notes and photographs for the first historical resources survey of Arcata. A photocopy of the original 1979 survey was donated to the project by Alex Stillman. Several historical resources reports on properties within the City were contributed by historic preservation consultants Kathleen Stanton and Leslie Heald. Other individuals donated materials from their private collections.

Upon completion of the project, the HSSA received digital copies of draft survey project reports and survey forms, as well as the research notes, photographs and reference materials used in conducting the project. These were added to the digital research files and scanned images from HSSA collection and placed on an external drive.

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection comprises 3,697 files and 328 file folders with a total of 32.4 Gigabytes of data. There are three major subdirectories or series:

CITY OF ARCATA includes scanned copies of the city records on historical resources that were accessible at the time of the project, digitized notes and reports donated by local preservation consultants, as well as copies of the born-digital 2012 Historical Resources Survey Data and the final Historical Resources Report.

HSSA-HISTORICAL FILES includes scanned copies of historic photographs in the HSSA archive, digital copies of selected publications from that organization; scanned photographs collected from personal collections; digital copies of the final records of the earlier survey in 1978; digital research files, notes and reports.

RESEARCH-REFERENCE includes scanned maps, digital historic preservation guides and other reference materials from state and federal sources used in planning the study and in preparing the required reports.

Documents are in PDF format while most maps and blueprints are in TIFF format. Photographs are provided in TIFF or JPEG format. Slides were scanned at 2400 dpi and saved in TIFF format. Negatives were scanned at 720 dpi and saved as JPEGs.

Container List

Series: CITY OF ARCATA

Arcata City Maps & Blueprints: Included are digital copies of some early maps of the City and blueprints for historic structures, along with a list of historic maps found on file at the Planning and Building Departments.

City Codes, Regs, Procedures: This folder includes the preservation element of the General Plan, design review process and other codes, regulations and procedures which apply to historical resources in the City of Arcata.

City Landmarks: The City of Arcata maintains a list of historical resources (contact the city for access the list) significant to the City's cultural heritage which are designated by ordinance as local landmarks. These digital records were compiled from materials located in various project files or original LHP files so the information on some properties may be incomplete or missing. At minimum the official record would include the application and ordinance under which it was designated along with a brief history of the property, a photograph and a location map. The properties are listed with a three part registration number. The first part includes the code for the Landmark Historic Parcel (LHP), the second part indicates the year in which it was registered and the third part indicates the sequence in which it was registered. For example LHP-81-01 indicates that the property was designated in 1981 and that it was the first property to be registered that year.

Historical Resources Reports: Reports are listed by Assessor's Parcel Number (APN). Individual reports were copied from the originals found in city files or were received as intact copies in a single PDF document. Group folders contain reports and other materials which were submitted separately including additional staff analyses, submittals from property owners, or consultant studies.

HR 2012 Survey Data: The data consists of a single PDF document compiled from all of the survey records that were surveyed in East Arcata.

HR Report-Chapters & Appendices: As required in the contract, the project final report was provided as a draft to the City in PDF format for their review and any final revisions. The final version of the Report may be available from the City of Arcata.

Preservation Education: This folder includes copies of the training materials along with materials on the public talks and workshops that preceded the actual field survey. The three part series of public talks was videotaped and is available at <http://www.cityofarcata.org/node/972>.

Sanborn Book 1928-1955 Update: The City of Arcata holds an original copy of the 1955 Sanborn Map book. This was photographed in its entirety in color and each page was saved as a separate TIFF file. Included is a copy of the 1954 Sanborn Map Guide in PDF format.

Series: HSSA-HISTORICAL FILES

Arcata Survey 1979: The original survey files were no longer available locally so digital copies (PDF) were obtained from the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in Sacramento. The files are roughly organized into five volumes which approximate the order in which they are maintained at the OHP. APN numbers were not commonly used at the time of this survey so the records are listed by the OHP reference number and then the local address. This survey focused on properties of architectural significance under the criteria established at that time for historical resources from the settlement era through the 1930s.

Vol 1 7th through 11th Streets

Vol 2 12th through 14th Streets

Vol 3 16th and 17th, A through G Streets

Vol 4 H-I Streets and HSU

Vol 5 I-Q Streets and outlying streets

Arcata_Other Survey Records: Other records may have been submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation, or created by other entities using different types of record forms. These are listed by the OHP reference number and the local address.

Blakeslee-Spiering Tracts: This folder contains research materials on the real estate developments in Arcata by Blakeslee and Spiering, principally the planned communities of Sunny Brae and Westwood Village.

H Co Records Subdiv Maps Bk-12-15-Arcata Subdiv: The original subdivision maps for all of the tracts developed in Arcata are on file with the County of Humboldt.

Oral History: An oral history interview of Edith Stromberg was conducted by historian Susie Van Kirk for the Historical Sites Society of Arcata and donated to the project. Ms. Stromberg was the wife of Kent Stromberg, associated with Blakeslee and Spiering and active in real estate and housing development in Arcata for more than 50 years.

Photos

Arcata Historic_Survey-East Arcata: These photos document the Bay View East Arcata Area study area. They were taken by volunteers from the Historical Sites Society of Arcata and used in the survey project.

Arcata Historic_Preliminary Review-Sunny Brae: These photos record the buildings and structures found in Sunny Brae at the time of the project. They were taken by volunteers from the Historical Sites Society of Arcata and provided preliminary data on the housing stock in this area.

Historic Sites Soc Arcata: These photos were scanned from the collection of the HSSA and represent the buildings, structures, sites and cultural landscapes to be found in the City of Arcata over more than 100 years. They are grouped into folders by subject and were saved as TIFF or JPEG.

Lester Cook Collection: These photos were donated by Lester Cook and come from the Phelps and Cook families who were early residents of East Arcata, then known as Stump Town. These group photos are preserved in JPEG format.

Stillman Collection: These images were donated by Alexandra Stillman, historic preservation consultant, and represent the projects she participated in or coordinated including historic property rehabilitation, commercial rehabilitation, preservation education and the Arcata Main Street program. The collection includes photos, slides and negatives scanned as high resolution TIFF files.

Publications: The HSSA produced two calendars featuring local architects Nelson Johansen and Franklin Georgeson. The biographical text and the representative examples of their works were scanned and compiled into PDF booklets for reference purposes.

S Van Kirk_Research Files 1972-79: Historian Susie Van Kirk began the first historical resources survey of Arcata with extensive research on the properties that she had identified as potentially significant. She maintained research files, including photographs and note, many of which were later incorporated into survey records. These files are more complete histories of the development of specific sites, including vacant lots, because they document the sequence of development including buildings and structures that may have been removed. The histories and property records were scanned and compiled into PDF files and the photos were scanned as TIFF files.

Series: RESEARCH-REFERENCE

Reference-National Register Program: Federal guidelines, standards and practices for documenting and recording historical resources including cultural landscapes, historic contexts, properties under 50 years, and conducting historical research. Programs include the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic American Landscape Survey.

Reference-State: Guidelines, standards and practices for documenting and recording historical resources from various state agencies. These include the State Office of Historic Preservation, California State Historical Building Code, and the California Department of Transportation.

Sanborn Maps: Digital map sets for the City of Arcata, beginning with 1886 through 1941. The index page provides an overall guide to the maps covering each section. Only areas within the City limits or significant adjacent developments are included. See also the photographic images in the Sanborn Book 1928-1955 Update folder in the City of Arcata subdirectory for the subsequent map.

Bibliography

Van Kirk, Susie.

1979. [Reflections of Arcata's history: eighty years of architecture](#) (NA735 A72 V35)

1985. [History of the Arcata Community Forest, prepared for the City of Arcata by Susie Van Kirk](#) (SD144 C2 V345)
1986. [Plaza: a history of its buildings](#) (F869 A72 V347 1986)
1986. [Plaza, Arcata, California](#) (F869 A72 V345)
1988. [Touring Arcata's architecture: Arcata, California](#) (NA735 A72 V36)
2006. Bay View Survey, Historic Research and Documentation, College of the Redwoods: Eureka.

Related Works

Special Collections, Humboldt State University

Fairless (Alexandra) Campaign Collection

Arcata City Collection

Ericson Photograph Collection

Humboldt County Photograph Collection

Northwestern California Forest Communities Collection

Shuster Aerial Photograph Collection

Shuster Photograph Collection

Stewart (Connie) Arcata City Council Collection

Humboldt County Pamphlet Collection, Subject Headings:

ARCATA

Arcata and Mad River Railroad

see RAILROADS - ARCATA AND MAD RIVER

Arcata and Mad River Railroad Historical Society

see REDWOOD COAST RAILROAD MUSEUM

ARCATA - ANNEXATIONS

ARCATA - ANNEXATIONS - JANES CREEK WEST

xJanes Creek West

Arcata - Business Improvement District

see ARCATA DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY

ARCATA - CENSUS

see also DEMOGRAPHICS

xxPopulation

ARCATA - CITY COUNCIL

ARCATA - CITY HALL

ARCATA - CITY MANAGER

ARCATA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

see also ARCATA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- xxArcata Economic Development Corporation
- xArcata - Redevelopment
- Arcata - Conservation and Open Space Element
 - see ARCATA - PLANNING
- ARCATA - DEMOGRAPHY
- ARCATA - DOWNTOWN ARCATA NOTES
 - xxArcata Downtown Business Community
 - xDowntown Arcata Notes
- ARCATA DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY
 - see also ARCATA - DOWNTOWN ARCATA NOTES
 - xArcata - Business Improvement District
- ARCATA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
 - see also ARCATA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
 - xxArcata Community Development Agency
- ARCATA - FAIRS
 - xxFairs
- Arcata General Plan
 - see ARCATA - PLANNING
- Arcata - Historic Houses
 - see HISTORIC HOUSES - ARCATA
- ARCATA - HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ORDINANCE
 - see also HISTORIC HOUSES - ARCATA
 - xxHistoric Houses; Historic Preservation; Historical Sites Society of Arcata
- Arcata Historical Museum
 - see HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF ARCATA
- Arcata - Historical Sites Society
 - see HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF ARCATA
- ARCATA - HISTORY
- ARCATA HOTEL
 - xxHotels
- ARCATA MAIN STREET
 - xArcata Arts!
- ARCATA - MAPS (Divided by date)
 - *To 1969; 1970s; 1980-; Undated
- ARCATA - MAYOR
- Arcata Municipal Code
 - see ARCATA - LAWS, STATUTES, ETC.
- ARCATA - PLANNING (Divided by date)
 - *To 1975; 1976-1979; 1980-1984; 1985-1989; 1990-

ARCATA - PLAZA

see also ARCATA - PLAZA - MCKINLEY STATUE; BUM TIMES; JACOBY BUILDING

ARCATA - PLAZA - MCKINLEY STATUE

xxArcata - Plaza - McKinley Statue

xMcKinley Statue

Arcata - Redevelopment

see ARCATA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Arcata - Redwood Park

see ARCATA COMMUNITY FOREST

ARCATA - STREETS

xxRoads

ARCATA - UTILITIES

xxArcata - Water Supply

ARCATA - VALLEY WEST

xValley West

ARCATA - WATER SUPPLY

see also ARCATA - UTILITIES

xxMad River

FREEWAYS, ARCATA

xBurns Freeway

HISTORIC HOUSES - ARCATA

xxArcata - Historic Preservation Ordinance; Historic Houses; Historical Sites

Society of Arcata

xArcata - Historic Houses

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

see also ARCATA - HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE; EUREKA

HERITAGE SOCIETY; HISTORIC HOUSES; HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF ARCATA

xPreservation, Historic

HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF ARCATA

see also ARCATA - HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE; HISTORIC

HOUSES - ARCATA

xxHistoric Houses; Historic Preservation

xArcata Historical Museum; Arcata - Historical Sites Society; Phillips House

Phillips House

see HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF ARCATA

SUNNY BRAE

City of Arcata

Historical Documents Collection, Vault

Maps, blueprints, drawings, Sanborn Map Book, Public Works Department & Planning Department

[Department of Environmental Services, Arcata Geographic Information System \(GIS\)](#)

Historical Sites Society of Arcata

Caskey (Ruth H.) Collection, 1890-1977

Subject Headings

Arcata (Calif.)

Arcata (Calif.) – History

City Planning – California – Arcata

Sunny Brae (Arcata, Calif.)