Arcata Historical Resources Survey 2012

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Arcata Historical Resources Survey 2012
Dates: 1850s-2012
Collection Number: 2012.05
Creator/Collector: Suzanne GuerraGuerra & McBane LLC for Historical Sites Society of Arcata (HSSA).
Extent: 1 External hard drive; 32.4 Gigabytes; 3,697 Files
Repository: Humboldt State University Library
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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.
Language of Material: English
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Preferred Citation
Arcata Historical Resources Survey 2012. Humboldt State University Library
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 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.

Indexing Terms
Arcata (Calif.)
Arcata (Calif.) – History
City Planning – California – Arcata
Sunny Brae (Arcata, Calif.)

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