



## Informational Materials Series

### **A Report by the Historical Society of Mendocino County Alyssa Ballard, Archivist and Tim Buckner, Executive Director**

Preservation stimulates community revitalization, heritage tourism, improved quality of life, greater shared knowledge about our past, and strengthened regional identity and local pride. Historic buildings are the physical representations of a town's cultural history. They give people a sense of place and connection to the past. They add character and give the area more prominence compared to the homogenized landscapes of suburban sprawl.

Preservation is a forward looking, economic development strategy that is as much about community and positive economics as it is about protecting our architectural heritage. Preserving places fosters economic development by attracting visitors to historic places which promotes tourism, creating jobs through rehabilitation projects, and revitalizing neighborhoods thereby spurring investment.

### **Economic Benefits**

#### **Property Values**

Historic designation may affect property value. Several studies have been conducted throughout the country and a majority of the studies have determined that property values generally increase for properties in designated historic districts. However, there is no way to be certain how historic designation would affect a particular property.

Historic districts can protect the investments of owners and residents, and potential buyers know that the aspects that make a particular area attractive to them will be protected over time. Real estate agents in many cities use historic district status as a marketing tool to sell properties.

Donovan Rypkema, principal of Place Economics and one of the nation's leading preservation economists, says:

*"Protecting the character of a neighborhood can have economic benefits. No matter the region of the U.S. or the wealth within a neighborhood, rates of real estate appreciation in local historic districts outpace comparable neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Local districts' property appreciation even outperforms those on the National Register. It's almost counterintuitive, but it's really because of the protections that a local district provides that the National Register does not provide."*

#### **Financial Assistance**

The City of Ukiah's goal is to develop a meaningful historic preservation policy that protects historic resources now, and into the future. To make this a reality, the city intends to pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the CLG Program at the State of California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). It is a partnership among local governments, the OHP, and the National Park Service (NPS) which is responsible for administering the National Historic Preservation Program. To apply, the city must have a historic preservation policy in place

that meets the State's criteria. As part of the CLG Program, federal grants are awarded annually to local governments to assist with historic preservation policies.

There are state, federal, and private grants and incentive programs for historic preservation, however, nearly all require the town/city of to have a historic preservation code and be a CLG, as the loaning body wants to see that municipality has a plan and commitment to preservation in place.

### **Assistance Available to Individual Property Owners**

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program (20% federal tax credit on qualified rehabilitation expenses, must be on the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Places); State Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program (20 to 25% state tax credit on qualified rehabilitation expenses, must be on the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Places). Ukiah may have more buildings eligible for these registers but it would require further surveys and research. Such surveys could be taken on by the individual, but costly for the City of Ukiah to update our historic resource surveys that have not been updated since 1999.

### **Mills Act**

Having the structure of a historic preservation policy in place could allow for the City of Ukiah to participate in the Mills Act. The Mills Act is an economic incentive program in California for the restoration and preservation of qualified historic buildings by private property owners. The Mills Act Program is administered and implemented by local governments. Mills Act contracts are between the property owner and the local government granting the tax abatement. Each local government establishes their own criteria and determines how many contracts they will allow in their jurisdiction. Currently the City of Ukiah does not participate in the program.

### **Community Benefits**

Historic preservation is not the opposite of development and is not intended to stop growth. Instead, it can facilitate growth and make sure that it is rooted in the history and character of the community. A community benefits from having a concerted and well-defined planning approach for the protection of historic buildings while accommodating healthy growth. Preservationists recognize that communities need to grow and be dynamic to remain viable, but that development can be carefully considered and planned with an overall vision that includes all aspects of the past, present, and future.

### **Transparency & Consistency**

Over the past 40 years, there have been multiple attempts to develop a historic preservation policy in Ukiah. The demolition code we currently use was adopted over 40 years ago. It was intended to be a temporary code until a historic preservation code could be developed. It is designed to catch all buildings over 50 years old for historic review. The majority of Ukiah's buildings are now over 50 years old. In order to streamline the process, so that buildings with no historic significance do not have to go through extra review, a historic preservation code needs to be developed.

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### **Environmental Benefits**

Adaptively reusing and rehabilitating historic buildings is the quintessential form of recycling, and the greenest building is almost always the one already standing. It reduces construction waste and reduces carbon emissions from new materials production and construction.

Adaptive reuse is a key element of historic preservation because as time passes, and communities evolve, historic buildings must be adapted to new uses that keep them functional while preserving their original character. Some great examples in town are the old Eversole Mortuary which has not been converted into housing. Another is the old grammar school now being used as the Ukiah Civic Center. Or the old St. Mary's Catholic Church, once slated for demolition, saved and now the home of S.P.A.C.E.

## Ukiah's Historical Resources

The State of California keeps a list of historic resources across the state and assigns each resources a level of significance based on the State's criteria.

- Criterion 1: The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
- Criterion 2: The property is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- Criterion 3: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
- Criterion 4: The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

These criteria are used to determine the significance of a property and to guide the protection and recognition of historic resources in California.

How to resources get added to this list? They are reported by local government through historical and architectural surveys or they are applied for individually by a citizen.

## Ukiah has 251 cultural resources listed in the State of California Built Environment Resources Directory.

Of those 251 resources:

Ukiah has 1 California Historical Landmark within city limits.

- Sun House

5 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listings within city limits.

- Held-Poage House
- Sun House
- Charles Hofman House
- Palace Hotel
- Ukiah Main Post Office

9 structures listed on the California Register of Historic Places (CRHP) within city limits. 25 structures identified as eligible for the NRHP and/or CRHP.

That leaves **over 200 currently identified historical resources without State protections**. It is up to the local government to provide protections for these structures. This list includes buildings like the Marks Building at the heart of our downtown.

## Historical Resource Surveys

Ukiah conducted its first survey of historical resources in the mid-1980s. The result of this survey was the *City of Ukiah Architectural and Historical Inventory Report*, published in 1985.

- Volunteers contributed 3067 hours. The Ad Hoc committee members contributed 400 hours. City staff hours totaled 500 hours. The consultant totaled 1604 hours.

In 1999, Ukiah still had not developed a historic preservation policy and there was a new push to get it done. Since it had been almost 15 years since the last survey, it needed an update. The result was the *Ukiah Historical and Architectural Survey Update*, published in 1999.

This was the last update to Ukiah's historical and architectural survey. It has been 26 years since Ukiah has reevaluated its historic resources, or made any additions to its list. **In addition to individual structures, the survey identified 5 historic districts in Ukiah.**

The National Register defines a district as: "...a geographically definable area...possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, and/or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development."

- **Bench and Bar Historic District**

*The Bench and Bar Historic District consists of 8 single family homes and their landscaping features, along the 600-700 block of West Clay Street, the 200 and 300 blocks of South Hortense and the 400 block of South Dora. The homes were built between 1883 and 1912, and vary in style from a vernacular common to Ukiah in the late 19th century, to Queen Anne, and Period Revivals, The District is characterized by large, well-kept homes and mature landscaping.*

*Boundary Description : The District is bounded on the north by the northern property lines of 214 S. Hortense and 610 W. Clay Street; on the east by the eastern property lines of 304 and 214 S. Hortense, 610 W. Clay, and 404 S. Dora; on the south by the southern property lines of 404 S. Dora and 611, 617, 701, and 709 W. Clay; and on the west by the western property lines of 709 and 700 W. Clay and 304 and 214 S. Hortense.*

*Significance: Period of Significance 1883-1912. As the county seat for Mendocino County, Ukiah was home to an unusual number of attorneys and politicians. All of the residences in this District belonged to men who were prominent attorneys, judges, or state or local politicians. Some of them inherited their property from their fathers, or passed it on to their sons, in the style of early Ukiah families. While there are homes of lawyers and legislators scattered throughout the older residential areas of Ukiah, this concentration included some of the most prominent from this period. The homes are reflective of the prominence and resultant prosperity of these men. Several of the homes are eligible for separate listing for their architectural merit. See original survey and continuation sheets for survey update.*

- **Wagenseller Historic District**

*This District consists of 10 residences along both sides of the 100 block of Clara Avenue. the homes are modest; vernacular or Queen Anne dwellings built between 1889 and 1904. The homes have very little in the way of embellishments, though a few carry some Queen Anne detailing. They are modest in size and characterized by mature landscaping. Although some have been restored, several are in poor condition.*

*Boundary Description: The boundaries are: on the north, the alley behind the houses on the north side of Clara Avenue; on the east the eastern property lines of 148 and 143 Clara Avenue; on the south, the alley behind the homes on the south side of Clara Avenue; and on the west the western property lines of 122 and 123 Clara Avenue.*

*Significance: Theme early subdivision Area Ukiah. Period of Significance 1889-1904. This area in the northeast portion of Ukiah was called "Tar Flats" because of its sticky clay soil. Norton Wagenseller, a prune grower in the area, apparently could not make a living growing prunes, so subdivided his property into lots the "width of three prune trees" and went into the real estate business. He advertised his subdivision in March 1889 for the first time.*

*Only the second subdivision to be located on the east side of State Street, the Wagonseller Addition remains a virtually intact example of a working-class neighborhood from this period.*

- **Albertinum School Historic District**

*This district consists of five buildings and a courtyard which fill a city block and part of two adjacent blocks. Stephenson Street has been blocked between Hope and Barnes, to create a double block between Clay and Church Streets. The buildings include a school building on the east side of Hope (225 Hope), two dormitory buildings on the west side of Hope, a chapel on the east side of Barnes and a reception/office building at 915 W. Church. The dormitory on Hope between Stephenson and Church, the reception building, and the chapel are arranged at the edges of the block forming a courtyard in the center.*

*The boundary of this district follows the property line along W. Church St. from the corner of Barnes east across S. Hope to the property line behind the school building, then south along the property*

*line to W. Stephenson, then west along Stephenson to S Hope then south along S. Hope to the property line behind the dormitory on the south side of the complex, then along the property line to Barnes St., then north along Barnes to W. Church.*

*The boundaries of the district take in all the contiguous buildings in the complex with the exception of the now mostly vacant girl's dorm on the west side of Bares, which is partially demolished.*

*Significance: Theme Education and social welfare, architecture. Period of Significance 1940-1959. The Sisters of Mercy operated the Albertinum School as an orphanage and school in Ukiah for 65 years. The Albertinum played the most important role in this aspect of local social history, initially serving as a private Catholic school for local families, in 1903 it became an orphanage for boys. The Albertinum began to care for orphan girls as well in 1929. The complex grew rapidly between 1929 and 1940 as its role grew in the community. Its contributive buildings are of varying styles representing the developmental flow of school architecture.*

- **Todd Grove Park Historic District**

*The park consists of 9 acres in the northwestern quadrant of the city, between Live Oak Avenue, Walnut Avenue, and Park Boulevard. It is characterized by mature trees and expansive lawn. Structures on the property include a gate, walls, pool, service building for pool equipment, recreation office, restrooms, bathhouse, bandstand, modular building, solar panels, and playground equipment. The older structures: the gate, walls, service building for pool equipment, and recreation office are in the Craftsman style. The newer structures are of modern design.*

*Boundary Description: The boundary of the resource is the boundary of the park. The park is bounded by Live Oak Avenue, Walnut Avenue, Park Boulevard, and an unnamed road that runs between the park's western edge and the Ukiah Municipal Golf Course.*

*Significance: Theme Transportation, tourism, architecture. Period of Significance 1918-1936. This park is important under criterion A for several reasons: for its association with the transportation theme, as the city's earliest auto park in connection with increasing tourism; as the site of the city's earliest municipal efforts to establish public parkland (1893 1918-19); and as the site of the city's earliest environmental/preservation effort as local citizens rallied to save Todd Grove from destruction for firewood (1918-19).*

*The 1920's construction of the Redwood Highway (later Highway 101) brought transportation improvements and growth to Ukiah, stimulating increased tourism and traffic. Through Ukiah, the route ran down State Street. In 1919 the city acquired about 14 acres of Todd's Grove, long used by residents for picnics and outings, and developed part of it into an auto park for tourists. By the following year, the Dispatch Democrat reported that the auto camp, called the "City Auto Tourists Free Camp," was very popular with the touring public.*

*T.M. Cleland, who managed the grounds, told the paper that the campers found the park "second to none in the state." The "autoists," as they were called, spent an estimated \$2,000 in Ukiah each touring season for gasoline, tires, accessories, and food. At about the same time, completion of the Ukiah to Lake Tahoe highway (Highway 20) as part of the state's lateral highway system also facilitated transportation and tourism.*

*The contributors to the district are: Gate, walls, pool, service building for pool equipment, recreation office, all landscaping within the walls. Non-contributors: Restrooms, bathhouse, bandstand (1976), modular building, solar panels, playground equipment. Although the list of contributors versus non-contributors appears disproportionate, given the size of the grounds, the height of the trees, and the visual prominence of the Craftsman period architecture, the park still conveys the sense of time and place of the 1930s, from most fields of view.*

- **Ukiah Cemetery Historic District**

*This is still an active cemetery with modern graves mixed in with historic ones. The cemetery is divided into plots curbed in granite or in concrete, and criss-crossed with roads. Many of the plots are also surrounded with fences, the most distinctive of which are metal fences resembling rope swags, and elaborate cast-iron fences, tall trees--Douglas firs, oaks, madrones, etc.--create a park-like setting. The headstones vary from modern granite to plain wooden markers, and white marble headstones with Christian and secular funerary symbolism such as clasped hands, willow trees, and lilies. Of particular note is the densely tree-covered plots belonging to the Hudson family, in which the headstones, fountain, and benches are hewn from basalt in a naturalistic style. In addition to the headstones, many plots contain marble obelisks and columns on plinths.*

*The principal structures include: a one-story, wood and brick building used as a chapel and an office; a complex of three small service buildings; and a small, one-story mausoleum with banks of niches recessed in the walls.*

*When the block between Clay and Stephenson, and Bush and Pine was donated to the city by Robert McGarvey as a park, there had been a cemetery on the site. Those graves were moved to this cemetery in 1879.*

*The funerary architecture, gravestones, and fences of high artistic merit distinguish the cemetery architecturally and reflect the community's attitudes and practices regarding the burial and honoring of its dead. The cemetery also illustrates the 19th-century romantic appreciation of nature and attitudes about death in its location at the outskirts of town, and its landscaped grounds. The curbed plots are often surrounded with elegant fencing and distinguished by an obelisk or column. The early headstones are largely white marble and characterized by symbolic carving and elegiac inscriptions. Also illustrative of traditional and local practices is the existence of a potters' field where burials remain unmarked.*

*The contributors to the district are: Cast iron fences; Metal swag fences; Obelisks and columns on plinths; Granite curbs; Wood, marble and granite headstones dating prior to 1940; Other funerary architecture dating prior to 1940.*

*Von-contributors are: Monuments, headstones and other funerary architecture dating after 1941; the chapel/office and three service buildings; sections of block U-1 in the northeast section of the cemetery where all of the graves date after 1941.*