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5-20-1992

### Ericson House

Susie Van Kirk

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1162 C Street  
Arcata, CA 95521  
May 20, 1992

Lia Sullivan  
Community Development  
City of Arcata  
Arcata, CA 95521

Re: Ericson House

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Enclosed is a completed Historic Resources Inventory form [DPR 523 (Rev. 6/90)] for the Ericson House at 1376 H Street.

As the form indicates, this house was evaluated by Gigi Platt and John Beech in 1979 and determined to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. It should be given LHP designation by the City of Arcata and granted the benefits that status provides.


It is a vernacular representative of the Greek Revival house and is one of only a half dozen or so such houses in Arcata which retain their architectural and historic integrity. It is a good, although small example, of the gable-front house, built during settlement in the Humboldt Bay region between 1850 and about 1880.

In 1985 the house was rehabilitated in a manner which retained architectural features important to the integrity of the house. The major exception is the addition of aluminum windows. If there should ever be occasion to restore the windows, they should be wood and if at all possible, restored to their 6/6 arrangement.

Features that should be maintained to ensure the building's architectural and historic integrity include:

1. front-gable form
2. wood, shiplap siding
3. window and door locations and size in both the main house and the cottage in all walls, except the rear, which has already been altered
4. front door sidelights and transom
5. front porch, split posts, and roof railing
6. cottage stoop and posts
7. no additional construction on the lot

Sincerely yours,

  
Susie Van Kirk

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Ser. No. 12 - 5521 - 107  
National Register status 3S  
Local designation \_\_\_\_\_

1. Historic name Ericson House
- \* 2. Common or current name same
- \* 3. Number & street 1376 H Street Cross-corridor \_\_\_\_\_  
City Arcata Vicinity only \_\_\_\_\_ Zip 95521 County Humboldt
4. UTM zone A B C D
5. Quad map No. 6724 Parcel No. 21-096-03 Other \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION

6. Property category building If district, number of documented resources \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 7. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the property, including condition, boundaries, related features, surroundings, and (if appropriate) architectural style.

The Ericson House occupies a large corner lot, 81 by 125 feet, at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, 14th and H Streets. The surrounding neighborhood represents a mix of housing styles, including early settlement, Victorian, turn-of-the-century, and Craftsman architecture. The house is in excellent condition as the result of extensive rehabilitation work in 1985. Well-maintained landscaping, which includes planted shrubs, yew trees at the porch corners, a front-yard holly tree, and a rear-yard cherry tree, enhances the property's appearance.

The house is a vernacular expression of the Greek Revival form and is representative of a settlement period house-type built in the Humboldt Bay region between 1850 and 1880. Somewhat smaller than others of this style, the Ericson House, nonetheless, displays features typical of this form. A one-and-a-half story, gable-front house, it has an off-centered front door with divided sidelights and transom. There are two windows in the south wall, two in the front porch (west) wall, and a

(see continuation sheet 1)



8. Planning agency  
Community Development

9. Owner & address  
John and Judy Bennett  
1369 G Street  
Arcata, CA 95521

10. Type of ownership private  
commercial/

11. Present use residential

12. Zoning R-L

13. Threats none

Send a copy of this form to: State Office of Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

\* Complete these items for historic preservation compliance projects under Section 106 (36 CFR 800). All items must be completed for historical resource survey information.



# HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- \*14. Construction date(s) 1870 F Original location \_\_\_\_\_ Date moved \_\_\_\_\_
15. Alterations & date cottage, c. 1880's; rehabilitation, 1985
16. Architect \_\_\_\_\_ Builder William Thomas
17. Historic attributes (with number from list) 02

# SIGNIFICANCE AND EVALUATION

18. Context for evaluation: Theme residential architecture Area Arcata  
 Period 1850-1880 Property type house Context formally developed? yes
- \*19. Briefly discuss the property's importance within the context. Use historical and architectural analysis as appropriate. Compare with similar properties.

The Ericson House is an important component of Arcata's architectural heritage, expressing the "distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction" (criterion C for National Register evaluation) and is significant for its association with the life of a "person significant in our past" (criterion B). The house possesses a high degree of architectural and historic integrity and has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, it should be given LHP designation by the City of Arcata and granted the benefits of that status.

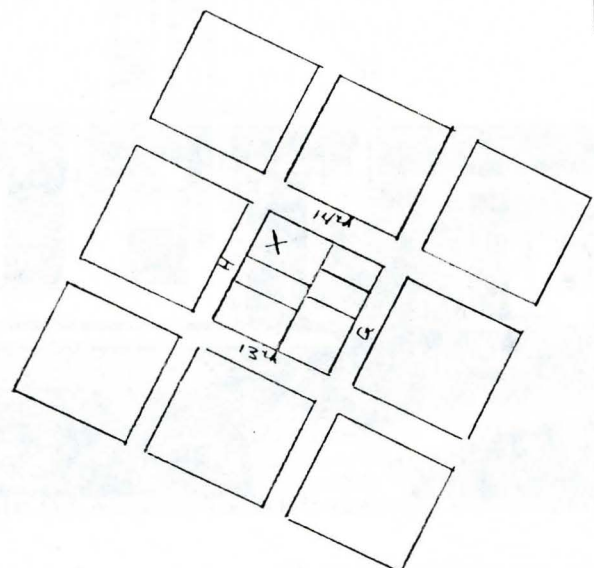
In 1979 the house was evaluated by Gigi Platt of San Francisco and the late John Beech, who was a noted California architectural historian. They agreed that the house was eligible for the National Register under criterion C at the level of State significance. Mr. Beech wrote, at that time, that the house was a "very fine and almost intact example of a very important local early type."

(see continuation sheet 2)

20. Sources  
 (see continuation sheet 4)

21. Applicable National Register criteria B and C
22. Other recognition \_\_\_\_\_  
 State Landmark No. (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
23. Evaluator Gigi Platt & John Beech  
 Date of evaluation 03-17, 18-79
24. Survey type comprehensive  
Reflections of Arcata's History:
25. Survey name eighty years of architecture
- \*26. Year form prepared 1992  
 By (name) Susie Van Kirk  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 1162 C Street  
 City & Zip Arcata, CA 95521  
 Phone (707) 822-6066

\* Sketch map. Show location and boundaries of property in relation to nearby streets, railways, natural landmarks, etc. Name each feature.



continuation sheet 1  
Ericson House  
Item 7-Description

paired set in the front gable. Narrow window shelves and sills indicate these piercings are original; however, the multi-paned, wooden windows of the historic house have been replaced with two-pane, aluminum ones. The front porch has four, split posts and a decorative, open-work railing on the roof, which are restored features of the earlier house.

A north-side cottage, c. 1880's, has a center door, flanked by single windows and sheltered by a flat-roofed stoop with two, split posts, which replace solid posts. There are two windows in the north wall and small windows and a door in the rear wall. The side-gabled roof extends to the rear, covering a porch and enclosed area.

The rear wall of the main house is partially obscured by an addition with two windows in the south wall and a roof which extends beyond the addition to shelter a small porch. A rear door has been added, leading from an uncovered deck into the main house. In the gable are two, small windows, which swing open. This entire rear section is the result of alterations, both historic and modern, and, although not consistent with the style of the house, represents a response to changing needs.

The house is of wood-frame construction with shiplap siding, narrow window shelves and sills, and lattice-work foundation skirting, which recalls the extensive lattice work of the historic house and fence. A concrete foundation and composition roofing are modern alterations. The brick chimney, located at the point of the rear gable, and the old garage on the alley at 14th street have been removed. A large, paved area provides driveway access and parking at the rear of the house. Presently, the house is divided into two units, one being used as a residence, the other for business space.

continuation sheet 2  
Ericson House  
Item 19-Importance

The "local type" to which he referred is the one-and-a-half story, gable-front form with off-centered front door and open porch. Variations on this theme include sidelights and transoms, shiplap or overlapping clapboard siding, cornice returns, and multi-paned windows. These houses are vernacular representatives of the Greek Revival style and are expressions of culture, rather than the products of architects or plan books.

This house-type was built in the Humboldt Bay region during the settlement period, which roughly spanned the three decades between 1850 and 1880. One of several timber frame house-types brought from New England and reflecting English techniques and form, the front-gable house allowed for better display of classical architectural elements. Orienting the gable to the street meant a revolutionary break with tradition, so that doorways had to shift from the side of the house to the gable, which caused a major change in the interior floor plan. Construction techniques employed in these early houses are unique and extremely important to understanding the evolution of housing in this area.

Arcata retains only a small portion of the gable-front housing, built during its settlement years. The Ericson House, constructed in 1870, is one of only a half dozen of these houses whose architectural and historic integrity has been preserved. The value of the Ericson House as part of this priceless heritage demands that it be recognized as an important contributor to this heritage and protected from deterioration and inappropriate alterations.

In addition to its architectural importance, the Ericson House is historically significant because of its association with Humboldt County's revered photographer, A.W. Ericson. Through his photography, Ericson recorded with accuracy and sensitivity the early history of the region, covering a 40-year period from the 1880's into the 1920's. His biographer, Peter Palmquist, wrote in Fine California Views:

During Ericson's active period of photography, opportunities in logging, shipbuilding, mining, and farming drew settlers to Humboldt County in increasing numbers. Towns grew rapidly, and the need for housing and business services expanded to booming proportions. Ericson sought to record each detail. He photographed the felling and milling of giant redwoods, coastal shipping, construction of new homes and businesses, introduction of steam power, groups of school children, and the bustle of everyday life. His pictures of the white deerskin dance and other Indian rituals are ranked among the best examples of such photographs in the nation.

(see continuation sheet 3)

continuation sheet 3  
Ericson House  
Item 19-Importance

The house was constructed by carpenter William Thomas for Charles Booth in 1870. A mechanic's lien (Book A:180) reads in part:

William Thomas versus Charles Booth, January 4, 1871. Know all men by these presents that I, William Thomas, of the County of Humboldt, State of California, have performed labor and work and furnished materials as a journeyman carpenter and joiner for the construction of the building erected and now upon the land more particularly described...that piece or parcel of land situated, lying, and being in the town of Arcata...as portion of block 274 particularly described as follows to wit: commencing at the northwest corner of said block 274 and running thence east 250 feet, thence south 194 feet, thence west 250 feet, thence north 194 feet to place of beginning ...completed on the 8th day of December 1870... 39½ days work at \$3.00 per day and board, \$118.50; 42 feet of plank furnished, \$1.00; 32 feet of flooring boards, .75; roller and lock furnished for folding doors, \$5.00...\$125.25 with credit by A. Brizard for \$40.000...balance now due, \$85.25.

A native of Maine, Charles Booth was a packer, whose mule trains moved goods from the supply centers on Humboldt Bay to the interior mining districts. Day books for the Nixon Ferry on the Mad River indicate that Booth was using the ferry to transport his mules as early as 1855. In February 1861, Booth married Martha Hinkley, also of Maine. He died in 1872 and his widow, who had remarried, sold the house to A.W. Ericson in 1878, at the time of his marriage to Ella Fitzell.

Ella and A.W. had eight children, seven of whom grew to adulthood. The house was the Ericson family home throughout his active photographic life and remained in family ownership for 98 years. It was purchased by the present owners in 1976, underwent rehabilitation in 1985, and is now divided into two rental units, one residential and the other commercial.

continuation sheet 4  
Ericson House  
Item 20-Sources

Fountain, Susie Baker. Notebooks. Humboldt State University Library, Arcata. No date.

Land Records. Humboldt County Recorder's Office, Courthouse, Eureka.

Noble, Allen G. Wood, Brick and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape. Vol. 1: Houses. The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst. 1984.

Palmquist, Peter. Fine California Views: The Photographs of A.W. Ericson. Interface California Corp., Eureka. 1975.

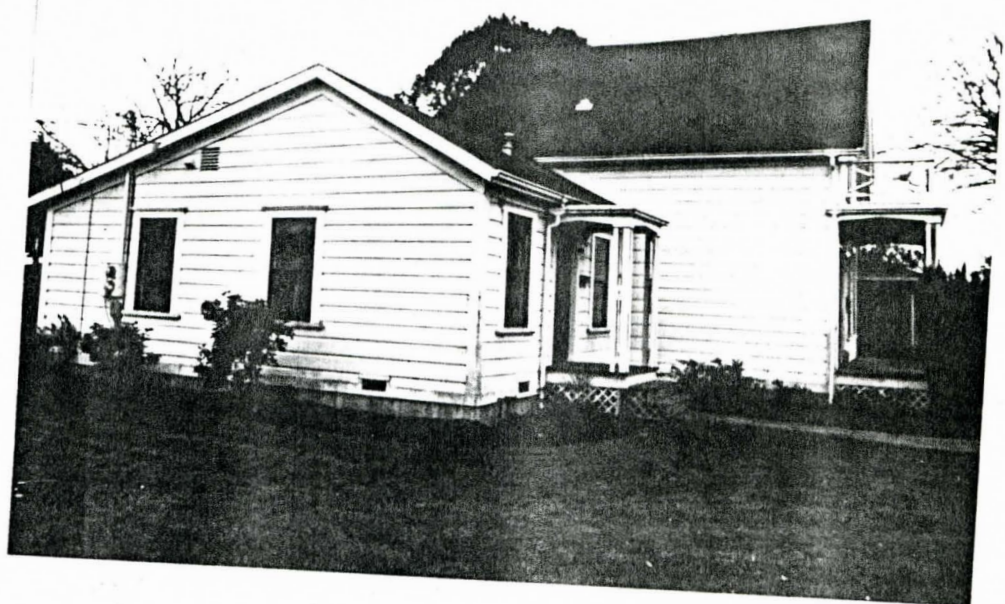
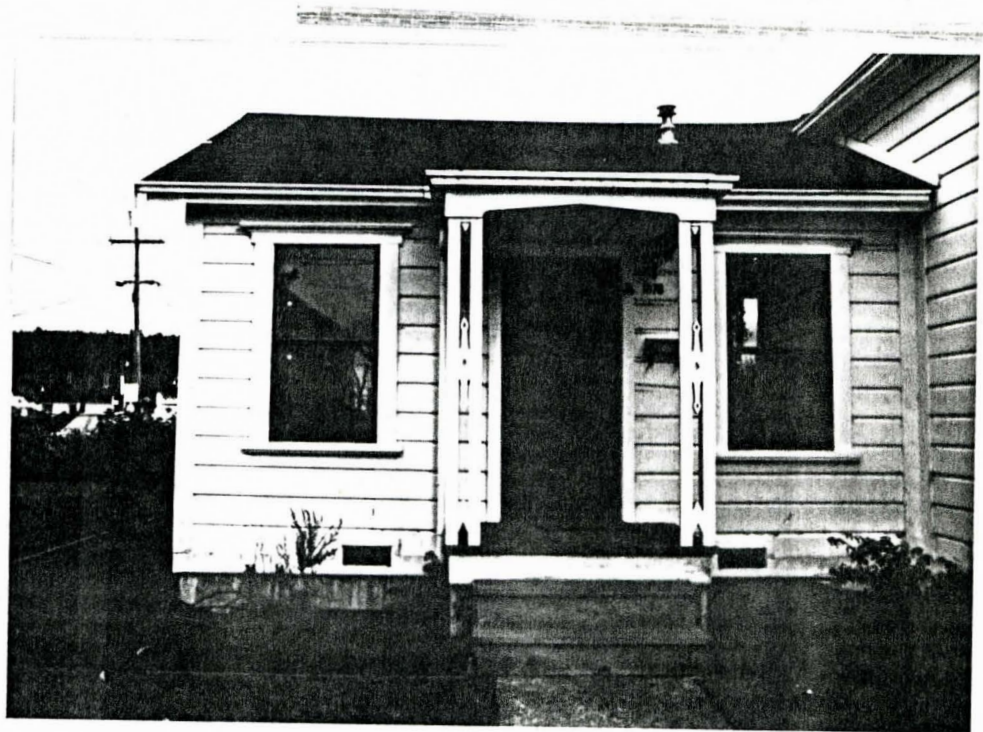
Tax Assessments, Humboldt County. Humboldt State University Library, Arcata.



continuation sheet 5  
Ericson House  
Item-Photographs



continuation sheet 6  
Ericson House  
Item-Photographs





continuation sheet 7  
Ericson House  
Item-Photographs



continuation sheet 8  
Ericson House  
Item-Photographs

