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1086 I Street Report

Susie Van Kirk

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November 1988

1086 I Street
Arcata

The house at 1086 I Street was built for Isaac Minor by local contractor Theodore Dean in 1884 (Humboldt Standard, 2 Oct. 1884). During that same year, Dean oversaw the construction of two other houses and a store on the Minor Block. The milliner's shop at 1057 H Street was the first to be built (Humboldt Standard, 11 Feb. 1884), followed by Minor's own residence at the southwest corner of 11th and H Streets (Humboldt Standard, 18 July, 31 July, 2 Oct. 1884). The Minor Cottages at 1086 and 1068 I Street were built that fall (Humboldt Standard, 2 Oct. 1884.) George F. Costerisan of Eureka was the architect for the milliner's shop and Minor's house, Dean was the builder, and Foster and Mowry of Eureka did the mill work. It is reasonable to assume that the same group was responsible for the Minor Cottages as well.

Built as mirror images of each other, the I Street houses were stylish Victorian cottages with hipped rooflines, a single four-window square bay on the front beside a stoop-covered front entrance, a slant bay on one side, roof cresting, applied ornamentation on the bays, frieze, and stoop, and 2/2 narrow windows. Identical solid-board fences with cutouts in the gates extended across the fronts of the houses. At a time when Arcata builders were still constructing settlement-period house-types, the Minor Cottages were innovative and urbane.

Unfortunately, both cottages have been altered. The one at 1068 I retains some semblance of its Victorian architecture as expressed in the frieze ornamentation, south-side slant bay, shiplap siding, hipped roofline, and stoop-covered entrance; however, the front bay is gone and the entrance has been moved to the center of the facade. The cottage at 1086 has been drastically altered, retaining only the north-side slant bay, shiplap siding, and hipped roofline. In 1920 the Sam Cereni family remodeled the corner house, adding several notable bungalow features -- west-side sunporch, rafter ends under the eaves, an exterior stucco chimney on the north side, and divided window shashes. A recent remodeling at the rear converted the garage to living space. The result is a house that neither exhibits its original Victorian heritage nor serves as a good representative of bungalow architecture. This situation precludes a recommendation for historic designation; however, this does not mean that the house is without historic/architectural value to the neighborhood/^{and} the community. Other nearby buildings which are good representatives of Victorian, turn-of-the-century, and bungalow periods need the support that this house provides in maintaining the neighborhood's character. Major alteration or removal of this house could affect the historic integrity of the

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block, which includes three, 1914 Minor buildings, all architecturally intact, and the Kirk House at 10th and I Streets. Other important buildings in the neighborhood include the Pythian Castle, Dr. Ray's House at 886 11th, and the turn-of-the-century house at 860 11th.

This house raises an issue which needs to be addressed in the City's planning process, and that is, how to retain components of the community's built environment which in themselves do not justify historic designation but whose alteration or removal could affect nearby structures, a neighborhood's character, and cumulatively cause significant changes in the historic/architectural fabric of the City. It is recommended that such buildings be identified and a mechanism instituted to ensure their protection. Possibly, a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach would best serve this objective in order to determine the context and ultimately, the significance of a structure.

Prepared by Susie Van Kirk
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