

# City of Eureka

## Downtown Core Area Reconnaissance Survey for the Recent Past

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The project could not have been completed without the generous help and contributions of volunteers such as Ron Kuhnel and Chuck Petty

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## Downtown Core Area Reconnaissance Survey for the Recent Past

This report establishes a foundation for formulating planning efforts with a focus towards historic preservation within the City of Eureka's Downtown Core Area; it also forms the basis for additional review, research and documentation of historic resources in the downtown core area.

Because of geographic and physical constraints, the availability of vacant developable land within the City is very limited, particularly commercial and industrial lands. As such, when it comes to commercial and industrial development, the focus is primarily on redevelopment and in-fill development. Clearly, one of the prime areas for redevelopment/in-fill development is the downtown commercial core area – the subject of this report.

Although the City does not require off-street parking for core area commercial uses, because of the heavy reliance on the private automobile many developers who are expending great dollar amounts on redevelopment insist that off-street parking be constructed to support their development. At present, the method for obtaining vacant land for surface parking is to demolish nearby buildings. This, of course, poses a substantial risk to historic resources in the downtown core area. Although the City remains committed to preservation of our historic resources, we also are very cognizant of the necessity for economic development. It is this pressure for redevelopment and the need to balance redevelopment efforts with historic preservation that resulted in the City's grant proposal for the preparation of this report. The City's desire is to gain a framework in which to formulate a plan that fairly balances these often competing pressures (i.e., redevelopment and historic preservation).



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### 1.3. Survey Objectives

This Downtown Core Area Reconnaissance Survey identifies previously unrecognized properties constructed during the period of approximately 1935 to 1965. The survey area also includes properties that were constructed prior to 1935 and after 1965. The goal of the survey is to identify buildings that are important specifically to Eureka's history and development patterns. It is assumed that these buildings will be evaluated for significance at a later date.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1. Survey Methodology

A Reconnaissance Survey is an investigative field survey of structures located within an identified area. The *Primary Record* (State of California Department of Parks and Recreation 523a form) is the minimum level of information needed to be included in the Office of Historic Preservation filing system. The *Primary Record* gives an overview of each property from which a preliminary evaluation based on intact character defining features may be developed.

Eureka's Historic Preservation Commission volunteers determined boundaries for the Downtown Core Area Reconnaissance Survey. Each property within the district was listed on a master list with address, assessor parcel number, construction date if known, and any additional notes. Approximately 210 addresses and parcels were identified (see Appendix A).

In addition to identifying the property and clear physical description of the property is given. The description includes character-defining features such as construction details, materials, massing, floor plan roofline, etc. that convey the physical attributes of the property. Each property was assessed for integrity. Integrity is the measure by which properties are evaluated. To retain integrity a property must have most of the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The seven aspects of integrity are quoted as follows:

- Location = Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design = Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting = Setting is the physical environment of the historic property.
- Materials = Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration form a historic property.
- Workmanship = Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

- Feeling = Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association = "...is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property"

Upon returning from the survey work, all of the field information was entered onto electronic DPR 523a forms. Properties considered potentially historic were keyed using the "other identifier" section of the Primary Survey form to record the designated building number to correspond to the master list. Of the original 240 addresses and sites (includes multiple address in single buildings), 55 buildings were surveyed. The project area was surveyed on July 22 and 23, 2004. Sheila McElroy (Consultant) was assisted in the field by volunteers Ron Kuhnel and Chuck Petty. Building permits and period Sanborn Maps were used to confirm alterations or changes to the properties, and Assessor records were used to confirm construction dates.

Of the 55 buildings surveyed, 36 buildings were within the 1935-1965 study period and retained enough integrity to be considered potentially historic. Completed survey forms are contained in Appendix B.

### **3.0 Findings**

#### **3.1. Survey Findings**

Due to budget constraints in-depth research and evaluation was not in the scope of work for the Eureka survey, however, material was made available through limited research and volunteer efforts. Several properties were identified in the historic photographs (Appendix C) from the Lloyd Stine collection housed at the Humboldt County Historical Society. In some cases these images confirmed construction dates or alterations for properties. Properties where historic photos were confidently matched are as follows: 1039 4<sup>th</sup>, 605 4<sup>th</sup> St, 523 5<sup>th</sup>, 402 F St, 723-734 5<sup>th</sup> St, 324 F St, 520-528 5<sup>th</sup> St, 442 5<sup>th</sup> St, 215 C St, 108 4<sup>th</sup> St, 302 4<sup>th</sup> St, 203 5<sup>th</sup> St, and 306 F / 412 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Other property and photograph matches could not be confirmed. Building permit records and County Assessor files were utilized to confirm information as well. Several buildings within survey area were constructed prior to 1935 and therefore fell out of the period of 1935-1965. Others were significantly altered and no longer retained enough integrity to be considered for the survey.

Comparing Sanborn Maps for the years 1949-1958 (years 1930-1948 were not available) and period photos (1935-1960) it was observed that the north east corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and J street, south west corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and H streets (half a block), south west corner 4<sup>th</sup> and H streets, north west corner 5<sup>th</sup> and D streets, south west corner 5<sup>th</sup> and E streets, south side of 3<sup>rd</sup> between G and H streets, south east corner 3<sup>rd</sup> and G streets (half block), south east corner 3<sup>rd</sup> and C streets, north west

corner 3<sup>rd</sup> and D streets, and the south west corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and D streets and the entire civic center site were demolished.

Overall, the existing building stock within the study area has been compromised due to demolitions, new construction, inappropriate renovations and surface parking lots that create radical incongruities in development patterns for the entire downtown core. The surveyed properties were generally in good condition but many exhibited deferred maintenance that could threaten the integrity of the property. The area most intact is the mixed use cluster that also includes properties earlier than 1935 on the 400 block of 3<sup>rd</sup>, going south on F to 4<sup>th</sup> Street and is better understood as an extension of the existing Old Town Historic District to the north as opposed to a standalone district. Other smaller groupings do appear. The 400 block of 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 500 block of 5<sup>th</sup> Streets have almost continuous examples of Moderne Style storefront on older buildings. The pairing of 723-734 5<sup>th</sup> and 730 5<sup>th</sup> has a shared plaza that sets-off the modern, mid-century styling of the two properties. The pair of Minimal/Traditional Style dwellings (now used for offices) at 504 and 510 K Street also represents a residential building trend at the upper (east) section of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Individual properties in the 1100 block of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> reflect the government or civic use in that area including a large motel property that was named "City Center Motel" in 1955.

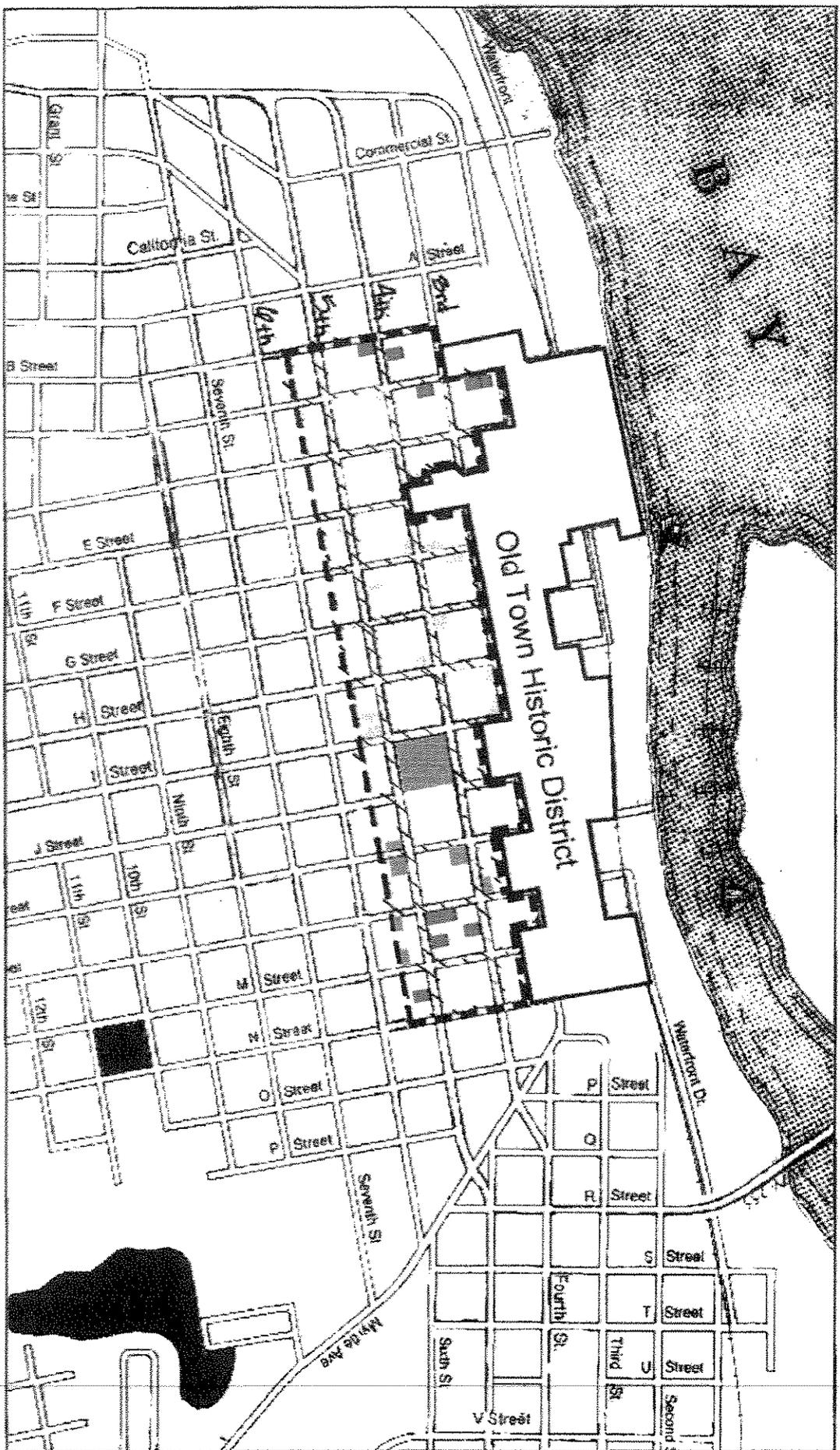
#### 4.0 Recommendations

The Downtown Core Area Reconnaissance Survey is intended to identify historic resources constructed between c. 1935-1965 in the Core Area of downtown Eureka. Historic Context for the Recent Past recommendations are discussed in a separate document. The following Survey recommendations are offered to help move preservation efforts in the City of Eureka to the next appropriate phase and to provide suggestions for a more efficient approach.

1. Construction dates from Assessor files should be identified in addition to the Assessor Parcel Number and address for each property prior to or immediately following survey work.
2. Provide background data such as legible copies of Sanborn maps, previous survey forms (if any) or reports, photographs, biographical information, newspaper articles and any other available information relevant to the period of significance.
3. Properties surveyed should be recorded utilizing the most recent State of California Status Codes and by completing the State of California *Building, Structure and Object Record* form.
4. Properties surveyed should be evaluated utilizing National Park Service publications *How to Apply National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin 15, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms*, National Register Bulletin 16 A, and *Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within The Past Fifty Years*. National Register Bulletin 22.
5. Consider conducting a survey and evaluation of all properties on the south side of the of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between C and G, and F Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Street to identify the potential of being included in the Old Town Historic District.
6. Construction projects that require a building permit should be reviewed for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior Standards before the issuance of building permits (for those properties surveyed)
7. Careful and selective demolition or removal of inappropriate treatments may uncover important character defining features for some properties and should be monitored.
8. Actively promote the Local Incentive Programs such as the Revolving Loan Fund and the Facade Improvement Program to protect and retain integrity of properties surveyed
9. Implement and monitor the policies outlined in the draft Historic Preservation Plan to protect and preserve properties surveyed.

These recommendations are respectfully submitted.

# Downtown Eureka Reconnaissance Survey



(from Eureka Visitors Map, North Coast Advertising Agency, 1986)

Note: This map is prepared as an approximate representation of the surveyed properties. Do not scale off this map.

Survey Boundary



-  Older Property with Storefront from Period of Significance
-  Civic, Government, Social Institution
-  Commercial Retail, Office Property
-  Auto/Transportation Related Property
-  Residential Converted to Commercial Properties

This map prepared by *Civic Historic Property Development*