

PRIMARY RECORD

NRHP Status Code: 7



Other Listings None
Review Code _____ Date _____

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*Resource Name or #:(Assigned by recorder) Arcata Branch Chapel, LDS Church

P1. Other Identifier: Arcata Mormon Meetinghouse :

*P2. Location: Unrestricted

*a. County Humboldt and

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Arcata South, California Date 1959/1972 T 6N ;

R 1E ; NW 4 of SW 4 of Sec 28 ; _____ B.M.

Address 1000 A Street City Arcata Zip 95521

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel # 502-142-013

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Arcata Branch LDS Church is the only modern Colonial Revival brick building in Arcata and includes a 1955 chapel designed by the prolific LDS architect Ted Pope and two wing additions built in 1967 and 1984. The building is over 12,000 square feet and includes classrooms, offices, chapel, kitchen, recreation hall and gymnasium. Vacant for a decade without heat or ventilation, the building shows evidence of that neglect, including interior mold and water damage and exterior peeling paint and a deteriorating roof. The brick exterior, however, steel windows and glass doors are all in good condition and landscaping is well-maintained. Located in East Arcata's Bayview Conservation Area, the Church is part of an historic neighborhood associated with the Pleasant Hill Addition that retains its historic setting and includes a number of locally listed landmarks. The property is bounded by Union St. to the east, Center St. to the south, 11th St. to the north and Campbell Creek to the west.

The church is nominated to the California Register under Criteria 1 due to its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history.



P. 3b. Resource Attributes:(List attributes and code) (HP 16) Religious Building

*P4. Resources Present: Building

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) Front Facade view looking SE, 9/2010, Photo #1;
Front Facade view looking NE, 9/2010, Photo #2

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic; 1955,1967,1985.
Arcata Union Newspaper 2/23/1956. LDS Church Representative. Factual

*P7. Owner and Address: Latter Day Saints Church 502-2088 Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

*P8. Recorded by: Marc Delany, Resident, 945 Shirley Blvd., Arcata, CA 95521

*P9. Date Recorded: April 2011

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
California Register Nomination

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")
Susie Van Kirk, 2004. Historic Evaluation for Demolition Permit, Mormon Church 1000 A St.,
Arcata. Prepared for Figas Construction.
Roland-Nawi Associates, 2006. Report: Historic Evaluation of LDS Church Building 1000 A St.
City of Arcata. Prepared for Klemetson Engineering.

*Attachments: Continuation Sheets



BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*NRHP Status Code 7
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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) _____

B1. Historic Name: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Arcata Ward Chapel

B2. Common Name: Arcata Mormon Meetinghouse

B3. Original Use: Church

B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style Colonial Revival

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Arcata's Mormon Meetinghouse was first built in 1955 in the Colonial Revival style and dedicated in February 1956. The south "office" wing and gymnasium were added to the front and south side in 1967/68. The north "classroom" wing with seminary was constructed in 1984 along the front and north sides. Despite the differences in building dates, the additions are identical in design and actually "build" on the original chapel to create a single, seamless structure.

This phased plan development with later additions is typical of Mormon Church design and accommodated smaller, but growing congregations like the Arcata Ward. "Classrooms and other meeting areas were attached to or extended around the chapel and cultural hall areas. This concept remains in effect today, though there are differences in outward appearances, interior spatial flow and room arrangements." (Hamilton, Encyclopedia of Mormonism)

The sympathetic additions in 1967 and 1984 to the original chapel reflect the development and evolution of the Arcata Ward and are typical expressions of the growth and vitality of Mormon congregations. The wings minimalist design with flat roof and evenly spaced narrow windows are visually congruent with the original Colonial design and contributes to its integrity. The original central gable entry with steeple and spire still remain the prominent character defining features of the property.

*B7. Moved? No Date: NA Original Location: NA *

B8. Related Features: Concrete Stairway (front); Rock Retaining Wall (rear); Parking Lot (north side) & Landsc

B9a. Architect: Theodore "Ted" R. Pope

b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme First Mormon Church in Humboldt County, Northern California Mission.

Area Arcata, Humboldt County, California . North Coast Region

Period of Significance 1955 - 1985 Property Type Church

Applicable Criteria 1 & 3 (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Criterion 1: Association with Events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history.

Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

See Continuation Sheets

B11. Additional Resource Attributes (List attributes and codes) (HP 16) Religious Building

*B12. References: See Continuation Sheet

B13. Remarks:

The LDS Church is requesting a demolition permit from the City of Arcata. The building was determined eligible for local Landmark status by the City's Historic Landmark Committee and supported by the Historic Design Review Commission. Additionally, the Landmarks Committee found the Church eligible for listing on the California Register. The applicant contends the demolition is exempt from City preservation regulations by the Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act.

*B14.Evaluator: _____

*Date of Evaluation: _____

Summary Statement

The Arcata Mormon Meetinghouse, built in 1955 with two wing additions constructed in 1968 and 1985, qualifies for the California Register of Historical Resources for its contribution to the post-war development of Arcata and its association with a noted architect, Ted R. Pope, who designed more Colonial style churches than any other architect who worked for the Mormon Church. Preservation efforts to protect Arcata's LDS Meetinghouse exemplify a new appreciation for mid century Colonials and their place in the evolution of 20th century design.

The Meetinghouse contributes to the historic integrity of Arcata's Bayview Conservation Area. The Colonial Revival style, distinctive steeple and hillside location have no duplicate in the city. The property represents the first Mormon congregation and church in Humboldt County, forty years of congregational growth in Arcata and the success of the church's Northern California mission. It was the first and only Mormon church constructed in the 1950s north of Santa Rosa and remains the only one of its kind in North Coast California.

Integrity

The appearance of Arcata's Meetinghouse with its original front entry and steeple clearly conveys the historic identity of this property as a church and its distinctive design is a "recognized look" strongly associated with the LDS Church. The building also imparts a feeling and specific sense of place associated with Arcata's Mormon community. The building's large gabled entry with steeple, its solid brick construction, historic residential setting, hillside location, mature landscaping and concrete and rock retaining walls are all original features that contribute to its classical design, understated formality and architectural integrity.

The period of significance for the Meetinghouse extends from 1955 - 1985 to include the wing additions which are an integral part of the design for small Mormon churches like Arcata's. The wings represent the growth and viability of the religious community over time and were common and customary practices for Mormon churches. "Classrooms and other meeting areas were attached to or extended around the chapel and cultural hall areas. This concept remains in effect today, though there are differences in outward appearances, interior spatial flow, and room arrangements." (Hamilton) Additions were recognized as appropriate by the church hierarchy and commonly applied to their properties. Although the additions obscure the front and sides of the original chapel, they do not detract from the overall historic character of the property because they were designed to be inobtrusive in scale, mass, and proportion and are clearly differentiated from the historic building in a complimentary brick form. Most of the rear facade remains as it

did in 1955 when it was constructed and has a combination of gabled roofs, brick walls and piercings for metal windows and doors.

Historic photographs from 1956 show the completion of the first phase of church construction that included the chapel and multi-purpose room. From these records, it is clear that the building's most prominent feature, the projecting entry with steeple, remains mostly original. The original doors that had three square glass openings were replaced with full glass doors when the church was remodeled in 1968.

Neighborhood Setting

The Arcata LDS Church is located in the Bayview Neighborhood Conservation Area in East Arcata which was historically known as "Stump Town" due to the logging operations beginning in the 1850s. By the turn of the 20th century, the densely forested hills had become a barren landscape with huge Redwood stumps that were eventually removed to make way for the Pleasant Hill Addition.

The turn-of-the-20th century ushered in a new period of building in East Arcata and in 1903 George Burchard developed 46 lots in Blocks A, B, and C known as the Pleasant Hill Addition. Homes here remain remarkably intact and most are modest one-story buildings with some one-and-a-half story houses representing the Craftsman and Minimal Traditional styles. The integrity of the neighborhood has been maintained by the compatibility of its historic houses in mass, scale, and size which prompted the creation of the Bayview Neighborhood Conservation Area in the city's General Plan 2020.

The building site itself is significant and highly symbolic. The hillside location reflects the fulfillment of Brigham Young's dream that in the "process of time the shores of the Pacific may be overlooked from the temple of the Lord." (Cowan & Homer) The site with its panoramic view is nearly the highest point in elevation between the church, the community below and the Pacific Ocean. Similar elevated sites in California include the Oakland and Los Angeles Temples.

Church Description

From the street level, 24 concrete steps with retaining wall lead upward to the church's central entry which is an imposing, but inviting, two-story structure that projects outward towards the street and the town. Sixteen, square, fixed windows positioned in four vertical columns (or three horizontal rows depending on one's perspective) pierce the second story emphasizing both the

width and height of the entry and its grand scale. Below this wall of windows are double glass and aluminum doors flanked by a column of smaller fixed windows that appear as oversized sidelights.

Behind this impressive front-facing gable is another wider, but shorter gable that repeats the play of vertical and horizontal design found throughout the structure. Attached to either side of the original entry are two single-story wing additions also constructed of brick. Although the wings were built at different times, (1968 and 1985) their minimalist design with flat roofs and evenly spaced windows are identical. The additions were designed by Matsen and Nielsen Architects of Eureka who took over the offices of noted architect, Franklin Georgeson.

The wing to the south of the central entry was constructed in 1968 and measures approximately 66 feet across the front facade and is 23 feet deep. It provided two offices for the Bishops and a Materials Center. Attached to this wing and the south side of the original church is the Cultural Hall. It measures 40 feet across the front and is 80 feet deep. The south side is pierced by double glass doors and four sets of oversized aluminum windows. Each fixed window has several square panes of opaque glass divided into columns.

The second wing addition, built in 1985, was designed to match the south wing. It measures 54 feet across the front facade and is approximately 23 feet deep. The structure continues around the north side of the church for an additional 66 feet and is 20 feet wide. This addition provided eight classrooms, a seminary and two restrooms.

Although the original church windows were removed during the remodeling for the additions, the openings were kept and became either interior windows or doorways. The replacement windows on the wing additions are tall and narrow and have rippled amber glass with an exterior stainless steel ledge. The copper downspouts also attest to the use of high quality materials in the construction of the additions and the brickwork reflects the workmanship of master masons who carefully matched the brick with the original construction to create a seamless structure.

Historic Context: Post-War Arcata, Humboldt County, California

Arcata's post-war period may be recognized as the most significant in the city's history. Humboldt County experienced spectacular growth after World War II as the timber industry boomed with the development and shipment of forest products. Worker were needed and people came from all parts of the country to settle in Arcata and work in the mills. At the close of World War II, there were fourteen mills operating in Arcata and within five years, by 1951, there were seventy! On of these mills was the first plywood plant in California.

Arcata was strategically located at the northern head of railway transportation for all shipments of logs and lumber within a five-county region. The city had become the industrial and commercial center for an area that included northern Humboldt, Trinity, Siskiyou and Del Norte Counties and Curry County in southern Oregon. Between 1944 and 1947 Arcata grew dramatically. The tiny town of 1800 people suddenly had a population of 3400 residents. By 1950, Arcata had the largest increase in growth for the five northern coastal counties combined.

Arcata's citizens made a tremendous contribution to the country and to the American Dream by supplying the wood needed to fuel the nation-wide housing boom. Many of the young people who returned home or moved to Humboldt after the war attended Humboldt State College in Arcata. Others went to work in the timber industry or engaged in dairying on the Arcata bottom. They became part of what is now called the "greatest generation" and helped solve the problems associated with the demands of Arcata's growing community. Within twenty years, from 1946-1966, they addressed severe housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient local government and worked to transform Arcata into a modern 20th century city.

California Register Criterion 1: Association with Events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history.

The LDS church facility is an important and tangible link to California's post-war period. From 1950 to 1964, thousands of Mormons migrated to California to build "the kingdom of God" in the Golden State. As California prospered, so did the Mormon missions. "Church membership nearly tripled, from just over one hundred thousand in 1950 to almost three hundred thousand in 1965. The number of stakes more than tripled, from eighteen to fifty-nine." (Cowan & Homer) More than a hundred meetinghouses and other church buildings were constructed in California during this time.

The Mormon community was also a vital component of Arcata's post-war society and participated in its progressive development to provide the schools, churches, civic organizations, utilities, hospitals, highways, housing subdivisions and expanded government that were so desperately needed. This was also the home of the Relief Society that provided aid to many of Arcata's residents at a time when social services were not well established in the community.

New churches like schools, subdivisions and neighborhood shopping centers were an essential part of modern American life where worship, cultural activities and education helped create cohesive communities. When the Mormons came to Humboldt County in 1946 they organized

first in Arcata as part of their Northern California mission. They chose Arcata in part because of Humboldt State University where they could expand their influence and contribute to the higher education of their members. The church building program in the 1950s actively sought sites adjacent to existing universities and colleges.

Originally, the congregation only had 64 members and by 1954, as they broke ground to construct their Meeting House, the membership had grown to about 240 persons. The church reflects the labor and goodwill of countless volunteers who worked to help construct their meetinghouse as a church and multipurpose center to expand the cultural and religious life of their community. The entire cost of construction was raised in advance and thirty-three percent of the cost to build the Arcata meetinghouse was paid for by the local congregation. Oftentimes, members donated fifteen percent or more of their incomes and volunteered substantial time to work on building and welfare projects such as farming to supply local milk, meat, poultry, eggs, grains, fruits and vegetables for the community. The Relief Society, youth service projects, choirs, clubs, athletics and fraternal organizations including the Sons and Daughters of Utah Pioneers all had a powerful unifying effect that helped contribute to the cultural and professional life of Arcata and other California communities.

Church members also became involved in politics at the state and local level. Goodwin J. Knight became California Lieutenant Governor in 1953 and was elected Governor in 1954. He was the second Mormon in the state to hold such a position. At the local level, many Mormons became politicians and leading citizens of Arcata. One such person was George "Buzz" Cooper who actively worked for the completion of the Mormon Church in Arcata while serving as the congregation's Branch President for six years. His commitment to Arcata's civic development and his political career paralleled the community's post-war period of modernization.

Cooper had served as city councilman in Shelton, Washington before he came to Arcata with his family in 1948. He opened an auto parts store at 18th and H Streets which he expanded with the construction of a new building at the corner of Samoa and I Streets. Cooper's Auto Parts included a full service station and machine shop that employed nine people. Buzz ran for Arcata city council in 1952, and though he was not elected, he was appointed in 1960 to fill a vacated seat. After this he was formally elected in 1962 and served as Mayor in 1964-65. In addition to his service to the Church and City Government, Buzz was an active member of the Arcata Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Humboldt Yacht Club and Baywood Golf and Country Club.

Buzz had attained the American Dream and contributed significantly to the progressive development of Arcata during its post-war period. He believed in the future of Arcata and helped plan for the City we have today. His words speak for the times and remind us of the energy and dedication it took to transform Arcata into a modern city. “Now, more than ever before, each individual should realize his responsibility to his community. We in Arcata have a great deal to be thankful for and should do more than sit back and say what should be done - we should actively assist. Our community is growing, business is extending and industry is stretching our capacity to handle it... I am very optimistic about the future of Arcata. We have much to be proud of.”

California Register Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

The LDS Church, first built in 1954-55, is a modern adaptation of the Colonial Revival style and has a prominent gable front entry with steeple that is reminiscent of a New England Colonial Meeting House. After World War II, the wide popularity and application of the Colonial Revival Style reflected the need for tradition and stability in a post-war society. Nation building was the focus of communities throughout the country and the Colonial remained the iconic style symbolizing the American Dream for suburbanites and their families. A local example is Arcata’s first housing subdivision, Bloomfield Acres, which was constructed in 1947 in a similar, but less elaborate Minimal Traditional form.

The architectural design of Mormon churches during the early 1950s involved noted architects who were hired by the church to design buildings that would symbolize success and contribute to the cultural improvement of communities. One such architect was Theodore Rutishauser Pope who designed the original church in Arcata.

Pope was a modern master of Colonial Revival church architecture who began his career in 1925 with Pope & Burton in Salt Lake City, Utah. The partnership lasted 15 years and in 1940, he joined with Louis Thomas who designed the notable 1954 Tudor style Ward in La Canada, California. From 1949 - 1955 Pope designed an estimated 250-300 buildings for the Mormons, “more than any other single architect working for the church.” (Bradley, 1980)

It's estimated that he designed an average of three churches per month during the seven years he worked for the church! His prolific career spanned several decades, he was licensed in 17 states from Florida to California and certified with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

Pope's designs were well known for their popularity, functionality and affordability. With his interpretation of the Colonial Style he blended the traditional and the modern to produce a pleasing and cohesive design. The character defining features of the Arcata Meeting House, notably its gable entry with steeple and spire, are visually dominant and like many Colonials of the period appear exaggerated with the oversized windows and side lights. By contrast, the distinctive steeple with delicate spire is perfectly proportioned and has a decorative quality of high artistic value.

Pope designed his churches to function as a multipurpose center for worship and cultural activities. He "had an intuitive sense of the functional limits of his designs and their response to the needs of church programs. Many of his innovations are still visible in the modern standard plan program." (Bradley, 1992) His floorplans connected the cultural hall to the back of the chapel for a more flexible expansion of the main assembly space. The Arcata Meetinghouse is an excellent example of this innovation and is part of the last body of work Pope designed for the Mormon Church. In 1954, the Church centralized its Building Division, took control of all artistic decisions and abandoned Pope's classical styles for more modern, less "pretentious" architecture.

Although records of Pope's work are archived with the LDS Church, his architecture has not received wide scholarly study or recognition. Pope's innovative plans were multi-use structures that combined worship with community. The popularity of his designs allowed additions as congregations grew and could afford to pay for construction *before* building began. "Small buildings that could be expanded easily one phase at a time were built in places where congregations were not large." (Cowan & Homer)

In 1995, only a decade after the last addition was completed, Arcata's Mormon congregation had outgrown its facility and they abandoned their Meetinghouse. (Northcoast Journal) They merged with the McKinleyville Ward and relocated there to a larger, newly-constructed church that provided much more parking.

B12. References

1. American Architects Directory, Pope, T(heodore) R(utishauser) AIA 42. Utah Chapter pg. 558
2. Arcata Union Newspaper (various dates 1940s -1960s) microfilm.
3. Bradley, Martha Sonntag. "The Cloning of Mormon Architecture," paper presented at the Mosaic of Mormon Culture Sesquicentennial at Brigham Young University, 1980.
4. Ibid. "The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of What?" Sunstone Magazine, September 1992.
5. Cowan, Richard O. and William E. Homer. California Saints: A 150-Year Legacy in the Golden State. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1996. pgs. 337-364.
6. Eidsness, Janet. Tribal Preservation Officer, Blue Lake Rancheria, Humboldt County, California. Telephone Interview. 4/18/2011
7. Givens, Terry. People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture. 2007
8. Hamilton, Mark. "Meetinghouse," in Daniel H. Ludlow, The Encyclopedia of Mormonism (NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992).
9. Humboldt Standard Newspaper. 25 February 1956, microfilm.
10. J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections, University of Utah, Arnold H. Ehlers Papers, Oral History Transcript (1987 - 1988). Information provided by LDS Church History Library.
11. Jackson, Richard. n.d. Places of Worship 150 Years of Latter-Day Saint Architecture. Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University. pgs. 239 - 243.
12. LDS Website. Wards and Branches: Mendocino, Humboldt & Del Norte Counties.
13. LDS Church History Library. Queries regarding historical information about Arcata Ward.
14. Northcoast Journal. September 1996.
15. Starrs, Paul. "Meetinghouses in the Mormon mind: ideology, architecture, and turbulent streams of an expanding church." *The Geographical Review*. 1 July 2009.
16. Times Standard Newspaper, 24 May 1969.