

Survey Report

Reconnaissance Survey

“Old Town 2007”

Anacortes, WA.

Certified Local Government Grant No. FY07-61017-001

Principal Investigator:

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Submitted to:

City of Anacortes
c/o Anacortes Museum
1305 8th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221

Washington State Department of
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1063 S. Capitol Way, Suite 106
Olympia, WA 98504

Background

This report presents the findings of a reconnaissance-level survey of historic residential properties in the Old Town neighborhood of Anacortes, Washington. The project took place between January and September of 2007. Its purpose is to provide comprehensive information required by the City of Anacortes, the Anacortes Historic Preservation Board, the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, property owners, and other interested parties, to make informed decisions about historic resource management. One hundred and two properties were included in the survey; an additional 20 to 30 properties remain to be recorded. The survey effort concentrated on the area west of J Avenue because it was not included in previous surveys. The project did not include industrial, institutional or commercial properties as they were fully recorded in a previous survey effort, nor did it include identification of pre-historic or historic archaeological resources.

Project Area

Old Town lies entirely within the City limits of Anacortes, Washington. Anacortes is a city of approximately 16,300 people located on Fidalgo Island in the northwest part of Skagit County, Washington. The Old Town neighborhood is located at the northern end of the city. It is bounded by 12 Street on the south, R Avenue on the east, A Avenue on the west, and Guemes Channel on the north. The city's historic commercial core bisects the neighborhood, and the waterfront is home to a variety of industries. For a detailed description of the neighborhood see City of Anacortes Historic Property Survey Report 1987 Koler/Morrison Planning Consultants.

Previous Work

This project follows two previous surveys undertaken in Old Town. The first was completed in 1976. Volunteers coordinated by staff at the Anacortes Museum conducted it. Documentation consisted of black and white photographs of each recorded property and some historical information where it was available. The second survey was completed in 1987. It was conducted by Koler/Morrison Planning consultants for the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The survey area included the downtown commercial core, the central and eastern-most portions of Old Town, the waterfront encompassing these two areas, and the Cap Sante neighborhood. One hundred and three properties were documented at that time, of which 80 are located in Old Town.

Project Personnel

Karen Marshall, Chair of the Anacortes Historic Preservation Board, and Steve Oakley, Historic Preservation Board liaison and Director of the Anacortes Museum, coordinated the overall project, providing support materials, and liaison with City staff and elected officials. Julie Koler served as project manager, participating in the field survey,

supervising preparation of inventory forms, and completing this report. Ms. Koler meets the professional qualifications for survey personnel set forth in 36 CFR 61.

Mildred Andrews, historian and cultural resources specialist, assisted with field survey, documentation, and editing of the final forms. Historic Preservation board members Margaret DeLourme, Karen Marshall and Brent Morrison conducted the initial field survey, collected tax assessor information, and entered data into the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation database. Steve Cox and Karen Marshall shot digital photographs of the properties. Lisa Kellogg assisted with entering information into the database. Robert Hoxie, GIS Coordinator for the City of Anacortes, prepared the maps. The City of Anacortes will be provided with this report and all properties will be integrated into the City's GIS.

A database containing information on each of the surveyed properties is available at:

- Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
1063 S. Capitol Way, Suite 106
PO Box 48343
Olympia, WA 98504
- Anacortes Museum
1305 8th Street
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The Survey Process

Objectives

The objectives of this project were to update the City's Historic Property Inventory in the Old Town neighborhood, and to enter this information in to the DAHP's Access database. Because this was a reconnaissance-level survey, additional research and analysis will be required before the majority of properties can be assessed for historic and architectural significance.

Methodology

This project adhered to the standards and procedures identified in NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN No. 24 - *Technical information on comprehensive planning, survey of cultural resources, and registration in the National Register of Historic Places*, and guidelines established by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. It consisted of the following phases: mobilization; field survey, recording, gathering of tax assessor information; data entry; preparation of the survey report and master map; and public outreach.

Mobilization

Data from the 1976 and 1987 inventories was reviewed to guide field examination. Skagit County tax assessor records were consulted to identify properties constructed in 1960 or earlier. All parcels with residential buildings identified in previous survey efforts were keyed to a map.

Field Survey, Recording & Gathering of Tax Assessor Information

Field examination consisted of recording descriptive information on the field forms including construction materials and architectural features; assessing degree of alteration and potential architectural significance; and shooting digital photographs. Assessment of physical integrity was based on degree of alteration within four areas: building form, footprint/plan, fenestration material and pattern, and exterior cladding. Buildings with moderate or extensive alterations in two or more of the categories were not recorded. Each recorded property was assigned a field site number. Concurrent with field recording, tax assessor information for each property was obtained.

Preparation of Written Narratives & Data Entry

An electronic inventory form containing tax assessor, locational, and field data was prepared for each property, and physical descriptions and statements of significance were written. Statements of significance addressed architecture and physical integrity based on available information. One hundred and two properties were entered into the DAHP Access database.

Survey Report, Master Map & Inventory Form Production

The Survey Report and Master Map were prepared. Final electronic and hard copy inventory forms were prepared including: field data, physical description, preliminary statement of significance, and digital photographs. All relevant data was compiled in the Microsoft Access database created by DAHP, which can be sorted by multiple categories (construction date, parcel number, owner, building type, etc).

Public Outreach

A presentation on survey findings was given to the Anacortes City Council on Monday, August 27, 2007. At this meeting, the Historic Preservation Board learned that the City Planning Department will be holding a meeting on September 25, 2007 to discuss potential zoning changes related to historic preservation in the Old Town neighborhood.

At this writing the Board has asked the Planning Department to include in that meeting agenda an update on the subject survey effort. The Planning Department has not yet responded. If a joint meeting is not held, the Board will convene a separate meeting before the end of September with Old Town residents to discuss survey findings and to elicit comments/recommendations for next steps. The meeting will be publicized through a mailing to all Old Town residents, the local newspaper, the Anacortes American and the Historic Preservation Board's website.

Integration with Planning Processes

All of the properties identified in this project, and in previous survey and inventory efforts, have been added to the City's Geographic Information System. The properties will be flagged and the Historic Preservation Board will be given an opportunity to comment on all permits effecting inventoried properties prior to issuance of the permit.

Expectations

Previous surveys did not deal with properties constructed after 1936, nor did they include that portion of Old Town located west of J Avenue. It was anticipated that a number of resources constructed between then and 1960 would be identified. It was also expected that some previously inventoried properties might have been demolished because development pressure has been increasing in Old Town. Further, it was expected that there would be additional modifications and alterations to historic properties beyond what was documented in the 1987 survey.

Findings

Most of the study area is platted and developed to standard city lot home sites. The lots have common design features including street grade in relationship to the lot, set back of the house from the street, lot circulation, and rear alleys where auxiliary buildings are located. There are a relatively high number of these building including carriage houses, garages, woodsheds, and others of unknown use. Most of these buildings are simple, wood frame structures, with gabled or shed roofs, rustic drop siding, and simple fenestration patterns. There are many stone retaining walls found throughout the neighborhood which act as an important unifying element.

Like the Cap Sante neighborhood to the east, a number of housing types have been identified loosely based on period of construction. Old Town has relatively few examples of pure "style." Most of the housing stock reflects working class economics and the aesthetic taste of the period during which it was built.

Dwellings dating to the early decades of the 20th century tend to be one or two-story wood frame buildings with a gabled or hipped roof configuration, vertical proportions, rustic siding, and double-hung windows. Local carpenters who worked from pattern books or other publications probably constructed the majority of these residences. Many of the houses west of J Avenue appear to date from the middle years of the 20th century. There are a number of examples of the Contemporary and Ranch styles.

The majority of residences in Old Town have been altered. The most common changes are to windows, porches and siding. Despite alterations to individual buildings the overall character of much of the area remains relatively intact. In particular, it is possible

that the area south of 8th Street, east of J Avenue and west of O may retain sufficient integrity to warrant designation as a small historic district. There are also small ensembles of buildings to the west and north that may be eligible for listing in the National Register or for designation as local landmarks as ensembles.

Eligible Properties

The City of Anacortes uses criteria modeled after the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60) to determine whether a property qualifies for landmark designation. To be eligible for designation a property must possess historic integrity and significance.

Historic, or physical, integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity based on physical characteristics such as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. "Significance" is defined by association with historic events, important people, distinctive design or physical characteristics, or the potential to provide important information in history or prehistory.

The City of Anacortes Municipal Code does not allow for designation of historic districts; however, historic districts are an eligible category for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommendations for Future Work

- Amend the Municipal Code to allow at least one Board member to reside outside the corporate city limits in order to broaden the pool of available professionals (architects, engineers, etc).
- Amend the Municipal Code to allow for designation of historic districts.
- Enter additional residential properties identified in this survey but not yet recorded into the DAHP database.
- Enter all previously inventoried properties into the City's GIS including commercial, institutional, and industrial properties.
- Flag surveyed properties so that City staff can identify them at the beginning of the permitting process. Develop policies and procedures that provide for review and comment by the Historic Preservation Board of permits (prior to approval) which affect inventoried properties.
- Contact property owners of surveyed properties that clearly meet criteria for local landmark and/or National Register listing (include information on benefits of listing, invite them to nominate properties).
- Identify and apply for grant funding (other than Certified Local Government grant

funding) to support preparation of landmark nominations.

- Develop process and schedule for completing comprehensive survey and inventory of the entire city. At a minimum the next phase should include updating all previously inventoried properties citywide, and completion of comprehensive survey and inventory in Old Town.
- Apply for FY2009 Certified Local Government grant to support further survey and inventory work, and support preparation of National Register nominations (National Register nominations can be easily converted to a local landmark nomination).
- Develop a community outreach program to educate local service groups, schools, individuals, and others in the value/benefits of historic preservation.
- Identify training opportunities for Historic Preservation Board members and encourage members to attend.
- Invite professionals in the field to Board meetings on a regular basis to address various aspects of preservation, Board roles and responsibilities, etc.
- Identify volunteers who are interested in preparing landmark nominations and train them to prepare them.
- Provide additional staff support to Historic Preservation Board, preferably staff from the Planning Department, so that preservation issues are better integrated into City planning.
- Identify and consider implementing additional legal tools and incentive programs to encourage landmark designation including tax incentives, special permit processing, and facade improvement programs.
- Collaborate with other interested parties to sponsor a "Main Street" studio project or storefront design program to assist and encourage property owners with storefront rehabilitation and restoration efforts.