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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

_X_ New Submission ___ Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of Hollister, California

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

Residential Building in Hollister, 1868-1941

## C. Form Prepared by

name/title Donald S. Napoli

organization _____ date December 31, 1992

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city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95816

## D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official — Date: June 11, 1993

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 7/28/93

## E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 1. Settlement and Development Trends

Residential building reflected the development of Hollister from its founding in 1868 until the start of World War II. The town's early growth, social structure, and aesthetic sensibilities can be seen in the number, type, size, and location of its residences.

Residential construction in Hollister actually began before the founding of the town in 1868. The area earlier served as headquarters for the sheep ranch owned by W. W. Hollister, who arrived in the San Juan Valley in 1855. Hollister's ranch house, constructed in 1862, was the fist dwelling constructed on what became the town site. Hollister sold his holdings to the San Justo Homestead Association in 1868. The owners of the association knew that the Southern Pacific Railroad planned to extend its line from San Francisco and Gilroy farther south into the San Juan Valley. They confidently subdivided the ranch lands and laid out the new town.

The arrival of the railroad in 1870 insured the success of the venture. Local boosters hoped that the line would continue south, cross the coast range, and link Hollister to the Central Valley. That plan never went into effect, and Hollister remained on a long spur. Nevertheless, the town quickly became the center of a productive agricultural region. Grain was the main crop. By 1876 Hollister boasted of the world's largest hay warehouses and began calling itself the "Hay City."

With the agricultural boom came other changes. Population grew rapidly in Hollister and throughout the San Juan Valley. Hollister had perhaps 1,000 inhabitants in 1873, making it twice as large as the nearby mission town of San Juan Bautista and over half the size of established farm communities in neighboring counties such as Gilroy, Salinas, and Watsonville. With growing numbers came increasing political power. Local politicians engineered the detachment from San Benito from Santa Cruz County in 1874. Hollister was incorporated in the same year and became the county seat.

The town assumed a variety of social and economic functions. The downtown commercial area, centering on Fourth and San Benito Streets, offered an array of retail shops, over a dozen hotels and boarding houses, and an assortment of service establishments. Also downtown were the headquarters of Hollister's civic and fraternal groups. Directly to the east near the railroad tracks were the grain warehouses, a flour mill and lumber yard, and the Southern Pacific freight depot. The largest residential district grew up to the west along Monterey Street and cross streets from Fourth to South Streets. The town's churches and schools were established in the district. A smaller residential area developed north of the industrial section on the eastern side of the railroad tracks.

The social organization of Hollister was typical of small farm communities. The town was too small for fine gradations of class. Distinctions arose nevertheless, with successful entrepreneurs and land developers at one end of the spectrum and unskilled laborers at the other. In between were

managers, professionals, operators of small businesses, white-collar employees, and skilled craftsmen. Adding to the mix were those who lived and worked on local ranches and came to town for a variety of personal and business reasons. Although the family was the major unit of social organization, as many as a fifth of the population was single. The typical adult resident was born in the eastern United States and had an Anglo-Saxon heritage. But many members of other ethnic groups lived in town, and a few ranchers of Hispanic origin retained land grants from California's Mexican period.

Hollister assumed a character by 1880 that was not essentially altered during the next 60 years. The town did change, however. Hollister's size continued to increase, with growth averaging 16.5 percent for each decade between 1880 and 1940. The biggest boom came in the early years of this century, with the population roughly doubling between the end of the national economic depression of the 1890s and the start of the recession that preceded American entry into World War I.

The town took on a different look. The downtown commercial district responded to population growth by intensifying the use of many parcels and expanding, primarily to the south. The coming of the automobile led to the most dramatic changes in usage, with feed lots and livery stables giving way to gas stations and auto showrooms. The city government expanded operations during the decade before the First World War, constructing a new city hall, paving the streets, taking control of the local hospital, and erecting a new library. The industrial district, meanwhile, reflected changes in local agriculture. In the post-war period the cultivation of fruits and vegetables came to supplement grain production. As a result, the town obtained several canneries, which dramatically increased the number of industrial jobs. Hollister's residential area spread to the west and south, with significant construction, primarily of small houses, undertaken directly south of the industrial section in the 1920s. Economic expansion slowed during the Great Depression and then came pretty much to a halt as Hollister joined the rest of America in the Second World War.

## 2. Residential Building

Residential construction formed an intrinsic part of the growth of Hollister throughout the period. A substantial number of attractive dwellings with accompanying infrastructure was a clearer sign of stable prosperity than commercial or industrial development. That the town contained, in the words of one contemporary account, "some beautiful and well improved homes" was a source of civic pride. The amount of building varied from year to year, but the trend throughout the period was for residential construction to exceed population growth. In 1890 the town had one detached dwelling for each five residents. By 1940 the ratio had dropped nearly to one for every three.

The residential areas of Hollister were laid out on an irregular grid pattern. All the streets met at right angles, although the blocks differed in size. The grid was placed over terrain that is flat on the east and south and has some undulations on the west. Single family houses, each

differing in appearance from its neighbors, dominated residential construction.

The use by single families largely explained the main visual characteristics of all the residential areas. Houses were clearly separated from their neighbors. They had side yards, often with driveways, and back yards. They also had front lawns that put them 10 or 20 feet from the sidewalk. In most cases a grass margin between sidewalk and street added to the setback. The margins often contained one or more street trees. The buildings were individually landscaped with trees, shrubs, and small plants. Alleys intersected some blocks and presented closely packed collections of garages, second units, sheds, and fences. These characteristics prevailed throughout the period, even as neighborhoods expanded to the west and south. After World War II, residential areas took on a more suburban look. Houses displayed less architectural variation, placed large garages in the main facades, and reoriented themselves away from the street.

Most of Hollister's residential areas were alike in two other ways. First, they included houses of all sizes. Small, single-story cottages and substantial two-story houses occupied the same block and were sometimes located on adjacent lots. The town did not develop a distinct district where the well-to-do resided. Second, they contained buildings of different styles and construction dates. Because infill was slow and few multi-parcel lot clearances occurred, adjacent houses often differed dramatically in appearance. The main exceptions to this characterization were the area south of the industrial area and east of San Benito Street and the area north of Fourth and west of Powell Streets. Here almost all of the building took place after World War I and resulted in simple, single-story houses.

Because single family dwellings were the dominant residential building type of the period, they provide the focus of this discussion. Nevertheless, several other kinds of residences deserve note. Hotels and rooming houses downtown began providing lodging for residents and visitors from shortly after the founding of the town. They were supplemented by a few duplexes, bungalow courts, and apartment houses. The construction of second units--detached buildings in the yards of larger houses--provided the most frequent approach to intensifying residential occupancy. Roughly 3 percent of Hollister's residential buildings fell into this category in 1910. By 1941 the figure had risen to approximately 10 percent. On the other hand, although there may have been some bunkhouses at the larger ranches around Hollister, the town itself had no such facilities for its workers.

Residential building in the area began even before the founding of the town. Colonel W. W. Hollister erected the first house in what became the town site in 1862. The two-story wood-frame building displayed elements of the Georgian and Italianate styles. It became the town's first hotel when Hollister sold his holdings. The building was much grander than the other houses in the new town. These tended to be small and functional and to follow standard vernacular forms. The most frequently used pattern had one story, a gable-roofed section facing toward the front, and a similar, slightly recessed intersecting section. The use of wood as the main

structural material was almost universal. Windows had six lights over six. Decoration was minimal.

It was not long before comfort and stylishness came to Hollister. The town had direct railroad access to building materials used elsewhere in northern California. It soon also had a lumber yard. By the early 1870s new houses were up-to-date. They had more space inside to permit rooms differentiated by function and longer, often paired, windows to brighten interiors. Some property owners had the means to build houses with more than one story. In those cases, local builders put up handsome structures that would have been a credit to any small town in California. Hollister's large houses did not overwhelm their neighbors, however. None rose above two-and-a-half stories, and few had more than ten rooms. The use of horizontal board siding provided an important continuity among houses of all sizes.

Houses expressed architectural style in two ways. Some followed popular styles in both form and detail. Others used standard vernacular models and added fashionable classical ornamentation, such as turned posts and balustrades, decorative door and window moldings, and (with the coming of Eastlake ornament) completely non-functional embellishment like finials and sunbursts. Meanwhile, construction continued of functional houses without stylistic pretension, but their appearance became rarer as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

The styles themselves were those seen throughout California. In the 1870s and 1880s Italianate designs were the most popular in Hollister. Standard features included bracketed cornice, hooded windows, and entrance portico. Roofs were gabled or hipped and never hidden behind false fronts.

In the 1890s the Queen Anne style predominated. Both one- and two-story versions displayed multi-planar roofs, combinations of siding material, three-sided bay windows, and a profusion of applied decoration. With the Queen Anne came a porch that extended across most of the front elevation and sometimes wrapped around to the side. Towers, usually rounded, were an important feature in some of the more elaborate examples of the style.

At the turn of the century local builders constructed a number of houses that illustrated the transition to two newer styles. By about 1905 the shift away from the Queen Anne was complete. The first of the new styles, the Neo-Classical Revival, featured shallow hipped roofs, simple shelf molding atop doors and windows, and front porches with Tuscan columns. The second and more popular was the Craftsman style, which was characterized by gable roofs with overhanging eaves, shingle siding supplemented by clinker brick, and unclassical details that gave a hand-made appearance. A Craftsman house often emphasized its horizontality with a front porch that stretched across the entire elevation.

Other styles appeared in the period between the world wars. The most popular was a simplified version of the Craftsman style which used stucco or horizontal board siding, standard bricks, and much less detailing. Period revivals--Tudor, Pueblo, Mediterranean, and Spanish Colonial--gained popularity during the 1920s. They gave opportunities for larger scale buildings than did the Craftsman descendants, although many small examples

were constructed. The styles differed from one another in roof shape and ornamentation. All, however, had stucco siding, lacked a front porch, and often used casement instead of double-hung windows. Those elements also characterized the houses of the 1930s that made no historical references. One version, which took inspiration from the International style, had a flat or shallow pitched roof and used no decoration beyond horizontal bands. Another, the California ranch house, usually had shingle siding and a sprawling appearance.

Not all houses were built in these styles. Hollister had a few examples of the Greek Revival, Stick Style, Prairie School, and perhaps other styles. Even more houses defied description because they mixed stylistic elements. Combinations of Neo-Classical and Craftsman were especially common. Finally, vernacular forms, broadly envisioned, continued into the twentieth century. These buildings often used detailing from popular styles without adopting other elements.

The level of design sophistication paralleled that of other small California cities. Most of the houses, especially the smaller ones, apparently followed published patterns with little modification. Local builders had more discretion on larger residences and were able to include features to satisfy their first owners. No architect had an office in Hollister, but out-of-town architects, notably William H. Weeks of Watsonville, occasionally won local commissions. With a few exceptions, careful craftsmanship rather than original design marked Hollister's most architecturally distinguished residences.

In 1941 Hollister contained approximately 1,250 separate residential structures. Of these, about 1,100 were houses designed originally for single families. Maybe 200 houses survived from the town's first decade, with a similar number dating from 1900 to 1910 and perhaps twice as many from 1919 to 1929. Virtually all were constructed of wood, surrounded by yard, and oriented toward the street. Many had auxiliary structures. One-story dwellings predominated. Most of the houses made reference to architectural styles popular when they were built, though less than half were clear stylistic examples.

## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPE: HOUSES

### 1. Description

Most of the houses in Hollister share several characteristics. They are of wood-frame construction and rise no more than two- and-a-half stories. They are the main buildings on their lots, which are likely to contain auxiliary structures. They are separated from their parcel lines by yards in front, rear, and both sides. Houses face the street and, because of the grid pattern, stand side by side.

Other features depend on the design. Hollister has a number of houses that are clear examples of architectural styles. The most frequent are the Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, Craftsman, and period revivals of various kinds. Buildings conform to the styles in overall shape, roof type, siding, fenestration, porch size, and ornamentation. No style shows a typical local variation in either design or materials.

Many houses have detailing of a style without the other characteristics. This occurs in two instances. First, a house may follow a standard vernacular building type and append ornamentation from its era of construction. A front-gable-and- wing house from 1880, for example, might have Italianate window moldings and porch columns. Second, a house may combine elements of two or more styles. A 1905 cottage, for instance, might have a front-facing bay window typical of the Queen Anne, Tuscan porch columns of the Neo-Classical Revival, and clinker brick of the Craftsman movement.

Finally, some houses are completely functional and lack ornamentation of any type. With a few exceptions, these buildings have one story and no more than five rooms. In their nineteenth-century manifestation they are fairly rare. Some simple houses from the 1920s, however, might be considered more recent examples.

Houses in Hollister retain a high level of architectural integrity. Many remain virtually unaltered. Others have rear additions that have little effect on the overall historic appearances of the buildings. Several houses that appear unaltered actually have porches that were redesigned at the turn of the century. More serious alterations also appear in a number of houses, the most frequent of which include: enclosure of front porches, application of new (usually stucco) siding, and replacement of original windows with aluminum sliders.

### 2. Significance

Houses provided the main architectural expression in Hollister from 1868 to 1941. They were built more frequently and exhibited more variation in design than any other property type.

Houses in the town's first dozen years ranged from two-room houses built merely as shelter to large, carefully constructed residences with elaborate

ornamentation. Today they provide evidence of the development of the town. In particular, they show how quickly Hollister became a settled community. Because of the skill of local builders, houses linked a standard mid-Victorian aesthetic sense with a newly formed hierarchy of social gradations. No other property type reveals this connection, nor indeed gives much of a reminder of the early years of Hollister. The town's pre-1880 commercial buildings, for example, have largely been destroyed or altered. Nineteenth-century civic buildings have all been replaced. Early industrial buildings, with several notable exceptions, have also disappeared. Two churches are the only other representatives of Hollister's early years.

Houses are also the major architectural links to the later periods of the town's development. They show changes in aesthetic sensibility through a progression of architectural styles. In residences from 1880 to 1905, for example, the formality of the Italianate precedes the picturesqueness of the Queen Anne, which in turn gives way to the rustic casualness of the Craftsman movement. The stylistic sequence typifies towns all across California and shows that Hollister stayed up to date even when changes came quickly. Houses also demonstrate the skills of local designers and craftsman over the years. They were able to produce well-executed examples of many architectural styles as well as pleasant and comfortable residences of a more eclectic nature. Hollister retains many of non-residential buildings constructed after 1880. Yet single-family residences are seen more frequently and are more likely to be unaltered than any other type of structure.

3. Registration Requirements

Houses in Hollister may be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C if they "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction." Houses can he grouped into three categories: examples of vernacular building types, houses designed in architectural styles, and residences displaying some stylistic elements without representing a style. To be eligible for the National Register, a house should meet the requirements in one of the categories.

A house that exemplifies a vernacular building type should date from the period before 1890. It should fall into one of the gable-roofed family of buildings, which include: gable-front with or without wing, hall-and-parlor, and I-house. Its original form should be clearly visible. A rear or side addition is acceptable, but a new second story on the original section is not. Generally, the house should retain most of its original construction elements, including roof pitch and shape. Not more than one or two of the following should be substantially changed: fenestration pattern, front porch or portico, siding, windows on elevations easily seen from the street, chimney location and materials, and type and amount of ornamentation. Replacements in kind are acceptable, as are minor alterations that do not impinge upon the historic character of the building. The house should be in its original location and setting, although a building could be moved if its new location and setting were similar to the original.

A house constructed in an architectural style should be a clear example of the style. It should convey the aesthetic and functional qualities associated with the style. The house should possess essential stylistic elements--including massing, roof shape, fenestration, and detailing--and retain most original materials. A slightly modernized front porch or an unobtrusive rear addition might be acceptable, for example, while new dormers probably would not be. Special care should be taken in judging a porch modification, especially an expansion, that is old enough to add to the historic character of the house. Replacement of materials in kind is acceptable, as are minor alterations that do not impinge upon the historic character of the building. But widespread use of new materials, such as stucco siding or aluminum windows, would render the building ineligible. The house should be in its original location and setting, although a building could be moved if its new location and setting were similar to the original.

A house that displays only ornamental elements of one or more styles can be seen in either of two ways. It may be considered as an example of one of the more complex vernacular forms or as a combination of different architectural styles. In either case the house should reflect its era of construction through siding, window treatment, detailing, and perhaps other elements. The original design should be clear, as should the intent to use ornamentation to enhance the design. The house should display a high level of craftsmanship. In addition, the house should meet the integrity standards (above) for residences designed in specific styles.

These requirements can be applied to most of the houses in Hollister that receive an evaluation for National Register eligibility. Some houses, however, might be significant for their associations with important people. In those cases Criterion B would apply, and an evaluation made of the closeness of the association and the importance of the person. The design and craftsmanship requirements outlined above would not apply, and lower integrity standards might be appropriate. In addition, some houses might be eligible as parts of historic districts. In those cases, the districts themselves would need evaluation within the context. Requirements for the inclusion as a contributor to an eligible district would be less stringent than those outlined above for individual buildings. Finally, because little information is currently available on individual builders in Hollister, it would be difficult to judge a house significant under Criterion C as a "work of a master." Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a house would be eligible under this standard without also meeting one of the sets of registration requirements above.

## G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The geographical area encompasses the corporate limits of the City of Hollister, San Benito County, California, and immediately adjacent areas.

## H. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION METHODS

Several sources provided information for the context. The most important were the research and field work completed for a National Register nomination of largest residential district, the Monterey Street Historic District. The area contains about 140 houses, as well as 80 garages, 25 detached dwelling units, and many sheds. The district contains roughly 15 percent of Hollister's pre-World War II housing stock and provided a large sample against which other residences could be judged.

Supplementing the nomination was a walking tour compiled by the San Benito Historical Society. The tour focused on an area to the west of the Monterey Street district and included descriptions of 40 houses. An extensive reconnaissance survey gave a sense of the resources elsewhere in town. Every house in Hollister, with the exception of those in new subdivisions, was viewed by the preparer of the district nomination.

The most useful documentary source was the set of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps published during the period. They showed the development of residential areas and helped to set construction dates for specific buildings.

The context was chosen because it focused on one of the most important activities, residential building, in a well-defined geographical area, the City of Hollister. The period encompassed residential development from the founding of the town to the hiatus that accompanied the Second World War. Briefer periods had no apparent rationale.

Houses were chosen as the property type because they had such a clear connection to the context and provided a wide range of examples. Houses represented Hollister's most numerous property type and the one containing the most significant resources. Defining the property type by period or style appeared less useful because of the relatively small number of resources likely to be nominated.

Registration requirements arose from comparisons made among resources in the Monterey Street Historic District. In particular, houses in the district included well-executed examples of architectural styles, many of which were virtually unaltered, as well as several residences in vernacular designs. The supplementary survey work discussed above indicated that standards used to compare resources within the district would apply to those elsewhere in Hollister.

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