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City of Arcata  
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January 15, 2026 (Rvsd. February 12, 2026)

RE: Design Review for Improvements to 725/735 8<sup>th</sup> St. (All Under Heaven Project)

A.P. #: 021-108-1004

DR File # 256-014 DR

Dear Kelsey,

This letter is an introduction to the improvement project proposed for the above parcel which is listed on the City's list of designated historical sites as part of the Plaza (Historical Site #38) and by the address 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. (Historical Site #41, Old Post Office) which was built for housing the Arcata Post Office from 1917 to 1926. The adjacent 725 8<sup>th</sup> Street building has origins in an earlier shoe-shop turned Post Office which was relocated at this address during construction of 735 8<sup>th</sup> St (Historical Site #41, Old Post Office). At completion of the new 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. building (Historical Site #41, Old Post Office), 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. was significantly altered to resemble the 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. building.

The current proposed project has come about because the buildings, now over 100 years old, have deterioration problems that the owners want/need to address: a sagging roof, a partial pier and post foundation at the back perimeter, old electrical, old bathrooms and difficult public access to the interior. In confronting these issues, the owners have decided that it makes sense at the interior to open between the two buildings and let the two buildings house their business, *All Under Heaven*, currently located in 735 8th Street (Old Post Office).

This makes sense as each building is only about 1,200 square feet. They can spread out the *All Under Heaven* merchandise, reintroduce changing art displays, as they have in the past but no longer have room for, and provide a more spacious and A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant entry at the Plaza that will provide a safe access to both spaces. This new entry with new storefront windows will replace a façade renovation project not considered valuable in the historical research for the landmark status of 735 8<sup>th</sup> Street and leaves intact this 1917 historic façade, as well as all the remaining 1917 façade details at 725 8th Street. Additionally, the original storefront transom windows concealed under a "slipcover" will be uncovered, restored and incorporated into the storefront. It is the goal to honor the 1917 twin relationships of the buildings by linking them and by protecting the Classical Revival details of both facades. The

new entry, windows and finishes will relate to the scale, proportion and detail of the Plaza and the historic architecture of their particular facades.

The interior space at 735 8<sup>th</sup> (Old Post Office), which still has plaster, wood pilasters at the walls and a coffered ceiling, will be protected and a warren-like area at the back of storage rooms and a small restroom will be removed. Remaining will be a large, open space with the historical Post Office concrete vault preserved. At the south end of this space, two new large custom windows will replace plywood and modern windows of varying sizes that had infilled the 1917 historical openings for two double hung windows.

Additional work will also include better lighting at the interior and improvements to the alley side appearance of the building by restoring deteriorating windows and removing the accumulated clutter of conduits and plumbing vents.

The entire exterior will be repainted and a new sign added at the 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. façade for All Under Heaven. This work, and final tile selection, will be part of a second Design Review Submittal.

Sincerely,

Martha Jain

Martha Jain, Architect  
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Design Review Permit Application  
Project File Number:256-014 DR  
Address: 735 & 725 8<sup>th</sup> St., Arcata CA

Attn. Kelsey Fletterick, Planner (II)  
Re: Letter received 12-16-25

Date: Jan. 20, 2026  
Revised: Feb. 12, 2026

Dear Kelsey,

This letter supplements the plans submitted November 7, 2025 and provides more information as requested about the *All Under Heaven Project* located at 735 & 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. on the Arcata Plaza.

### **Background for review of Design Review Submittal 256-014 DR**

The buildings at addresses 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. and 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. share a parcel, 021-108-004. They are two small buildings (roughly 1,200 square feet each) with similar facades that date to 1917. The building on the west (right in photos) is 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. and is designated as Historical Site #41, Old Post Office, which it was from 1917 to 1926. 725 8<sup>th</sup> St., an older building relocated here and often modified since its 1884 origins, had its Plaza facade altered to match its neighbor in 1917. Together they are described as, “a fine example of Classical Revival Style that was based on a symmetrical composition of Greek and Roman Architectural orders” in Katie Stanton’s Historical Research and Architectural Analysis for LHP Designation (Nov. 20, 1989), which provides detailed history and description of the buildings.



725 8<sup>th</sup> St. and 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. after 1926

Being on the Plaza, these buildings are also part of an historical site, #38 **Plaza**, which focuses on the European-American historical development of Arcata's town square. The City has come to acknowledge Arcata as unceded ancestral lands of the Wiyot tribe and with this recognition strives to dismantle the legacy narratives of settler colonialism. The place known as the Plaza was established in 1850 to supply the miners but quickly became a hub for timber extraction and later a college. As Arcata's town center for 175 years, the Plaza has remained organized around a green public space surrounding by commercial buildings, some dating to the 1850's, some modified multiple times and others completely replaced where fires have occurred. The Plaza facades have a relating scale based on lot width (generally increments of 25'), tall first floors and buildings of 1 – 3 stories with zero lot lines. Most buildings have traditional storefronts with a recessed entry, large display windows with a bulkhead below and often transom windows or signboards above. At the top of the façade there is usually some elaboration- a cornice, frieze or series of brackets (or all these things).

**Written narrative summarizing all work:**

The owners of this parcel need to address sagging in the 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. (**Old Post Office**) roof, new roofing overall, replacing pier and post foundation with a continuous foundation at 725 8<sup>th</sup>, upgrading electrical service throughout and providing Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A) improvements including making an entry to the buildings accessible. The parcel has two addresses, 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. (currently the business *All Under Heaven* and 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. (formerly *People's Records*).



Because the buildings are small (each about 1,200 s.f.) the owners have decided to add openings at the interior between the two addresses so that they can use both spaces for their business, *All Under Heaven*. To quote them, "In other words, several repair projects have

accumulated to the point where we felt that merging the two buildings made sense. What we are proposing merges the two building (in a historical twin sense), and brings its appearance somewhat closer to what it was. It's also making the buildings a safer space all way round." In this way, a new entry with new display windows will replace a façade renovation project not considered valuable in the historical research for the landmark status of 735 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Additional, original transom windows will be uncovered and become part of this "new" work. It also leaves intact the 1917 historic façade at the **Old Post Office** except at the entry door, as well as the 725 8th St. 1917 façade features that continue the twin relationship of the buildings into the future. The original pilasters, balustrade and cornice will frame the area of new work and the historic transom will return additional historical façade to the public eye. In this way a new accessible entry can serve both spaces and will not alter the Old Post Office façade which has largely been unchanged in the last 109 years. The replacement of the previous alteration with the uncovering of an historic feature (the transom) and a new entry and windows is intended to be harmonious with the scale, proportions and materials of the **Plaza** while preserving all 1917 historic features that remain.

#### **Work proposed by address:**

**735 8<sup>th</sup> St. Exterior:** The exterior of this building will remain unchanged at the **Plaza** Façade except at the recessed entry door. The entry, because of a step up and narrow recessed width, is neither ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant or easy for the public to use. At this recessed location, the design replaces the non-historic door with a display window with craft tile below. Out of respect for central architectural feature, the new display window will be set back 8" from the stucco opening so that the entry alcove and step-up continue to read architecturally as part of the façade. The new tile will indicate a non-historic change. The portion of the entry to be removed (door and stud walls with plywood and gypsum board) does not appear original to 1917. The new work will be installed in such way that it could be removed in the future without causing harm to any historic feature of the existing façade.

At the back of the building and about 65' from the alley, the owners propose restoring the original large double-hung style window seen in the Landmark Historic Preservation file LHP-89-060 photo. Two, new, double-hung windows will replace a hodge-podge of painted plywood and 3 smaller windows that infill two original openings. The Owners prefer not reinstalling the security bars that protected the Post Office because they would like a more open feel at the interior. The 3<sup>rd</sup> opening which Stanton's research describes as a window but is currently a door and plywood-infilled transom window will remain similar to how its look today except a glass transom window will replace the plywood above the door. Since this door will not be in use, the porch and stair replaced in the 90's will be removed.

The entire building will be painted but this will be a separate submittal.

**735 8<sup>th</sup> St. Interior:** Partial height walls of a bathroom and various cramped rooms will be removed from the back of the building. A large space will remain with the original concrete vault, the coffered ceilings and surrounding walls of stucco and wood pilasters from the Post

Office all intact. New openings centered between the historic pilasters will open to the 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. space. The interior will be painted, the floor polished and new lighting will be installed.

**725 8<sup>th</sup> St. Exterior:** At the Plaza facade, work will occur at the area described as “*unfortunately...suffered rather major alterations*” by the Landmark Historic Preservation file LHP-89-060. The surrounding, unchanged façade from 1917 will remain as it is today. The proposed work includes restoring/replacing the “*unfortunate*” alteration to a height of 10’ between the historic stucco pilasters that will remain and the concrete flatwork for a reconfigured entry. This work restores the concealed historic transom windows and creates a new entry that is centered on the façade in keeping with its “Classical Revival” style. A new symmetrical storefront will incorporate display windows, a central door, a tiled bulkhead below and mosaic-tiled flatwork, an approach typical of the Plaza.



Conceptual sketch of New Entry (left side)

The entry/facade work for 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. is important because it addresses the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access for both buildings (since they will be connected at the inside). With the sloping public sidewalk differing by 4-10” with the interior finish floor heights, an accessible entry is somewhat difficult without a deep entry or abrupt ramp immediately inside of the building. This design utilizes the California Historical Building Code which allows use of a “power-assisted door” and modifications to landing sizes and strike-side door clearances. While the first design at this location shifted the entry to the east (left) of the façade where the least

differential between the existing City sidewalk occurs, the recent removal of built-up flooring allows the new entry to be centered under the historic transom windows. A path of travel at the sloped entry to the front door will not exceed 8%. To locate a power-assisted door at 735 8<sup>th</sup>/Old Post Office by removing the step and sloping the entry would be a too steep (12%) approach. In this way alteration for one *accessible* entry can serve both addresses and preserve the historic details of both buildings.

At the rear of the building, wood windows that have deteriorated will be restored or rebuilt. A new continuous foundation will replace the pier and post one. New wood skirting will be installed over new plywood over foundation cripple wall to improve earthquake resistance. The landing and stairs at the back door will be replaced with a larger landing/deck (70 square feet rather than existing 20 square feet) and stairs.

**725 8<sup>th</sup> St. Interior:** The work here includes removal of two, small bathrooms, multiple floor finishes and surface mounted electrical. A new partition wall at the rear of the main space creates a room for storage. At the rear portion of the building, a new accessible (ADA) bathroom and kitchenette will be added. All spaces will be sheetrocked and painted. New lighting and electrical improvements will be added. Floors will be a resilient flooring and sanded wood.

### **Overview of Treatment of Landmark Structure**

**CEQA:** The California Environmental Quality Act requires State and local agencies to identify significant impacts on the environment and to consider mitigations if it does. The goal of CEQA is to maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future. The property owners request a “Class 31” categorical exemption for this work based the intent of the project which is:

1. To preserve 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. and 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. buildings by making needed structural improvements and repairing/replacing deteriorating elements while preserving distinctive ones.
2. To rehabilitate the interior for safer use (improve electrical wiring, provide an entry without a step up in a tight alcove, and make the public-serving area roomier and with better lighting).
3. To provide the public an accessible (A.D.A.) entry from the Plaza without removing any existing historic façade at either address.
4. To restore the transom windows at 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. Plaza façade and to restore wood windows at the alley-side of the building.
5. Preserve the twin relationship of the two addresses by connecting them internally and preserving existing Plaza facade historic features.

Class 31 consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstruction Historic Buildings. Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for

a property through repair, alteration, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

As concerns Historical Resources, CEQA 15300.2(f) reads, "A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource".

This project does not appear to cause a "substantial adverse change" to the resource of the **Plaza**, designated Landmark #38, or the **Old Post Office** (735 8<sup>th</sup> St.), designated landmark #41. It should be noted that while 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. is part of the **Plaza** historical resource, it does not have the individual historic designation of 735 8<sup>th</sup> St. It should also be noted that **minimal changes** are proposed to 735 8<sup>th</sup> St., the **Old Post Office** at the **Plaza**. Where alterations are occurring at 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. at the **Plaza**, proposed changes replace a portion of the facade characterized as "unfortunate" in City documents. It restores concealed historic transom windows, integrates a more compatible storefront while allowing the surrounding existing historical (1917) façade to remain.

Support for consideration of the proposed work as a non-significant adverse change (Plaza view/8<sup>th</sup> St.):

- A.D.A. accessibility will be achieved for the public for both addresses on the **Plaza**. Providing access this way to the **Old Post Office** via its twin will not destroy the existing historic entry. Accessibility is achieved in a way that if this new work were removed in the future, the building would have the same historic façade features it has today.
- The existing significant features of the 1917 architecture of "balustrade, corner pilasters, cornice and basic form at 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. are completely preserved. The "brickfacing and new windows" (Stanton) and reconfigured entry of an earlier alteration will be removed.
- The proposed façade changes are compatible with the scale and proportions of the historical twin façade and with the Plaza in general. The symmetry of the classical 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. façade is respected by dividing into two halves, the new design of entry and display window. The signboard area above is narrowed vertically by 6" to more closely align with adjacent clerestory windows and other Plaza horizontal lines. This improves the building proportions by giving a bit more building base and entry height even as the sloping sidewalk lessens it. The new recessed entry and large display windows are consistent with the storefront pattern found around the **Plaza**.
- Materials will differentiate from the 1917 exterior but not be disharmonious. Stucco, the main exterior finish on the historic facades, will not be used at the altered area. Painted wood doors and trim, craft tile at the bulkhead, glass display window, tiled entry will be harmonious with other **Plaza** building materials and its twin neighbor but will not create a 1917 replica.

Support for consideration of the proposed work as a non-significant adverse change to rear of buildings:

- The owners will stabilize 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. with a better foundation at the south side.
- They will rehabilitate the back of the buildings which are significantly deteriorated., removing exposed conduit, plumbing vents, plywood patches and will repaint.
- They will restore two large double-hung windows (new custom, painted, redwood) which were replaced by plywood and small windows and restore the other wood windows at 725 8<sup>th</sup> St. The windows in the LHP-89-06 describes two existing double-hung windows with embedded wire mesh but which no longer exist when you look at a current photograph. The 1989 historical description of the OLD POST OFFICE listed as significant the bars over the windows. The owners would prefer to remove these bars as they will be visible from the interior when the space opens up and the new windows are in place. It also lists embedded wire mesh in the window glass which is not proposed in the replacement window as it will give a false sense of history (not actually an original window) and is not aesthetically desirable for the space. Since this was only the Post Office for 10 years this seems like a reasonable change (not detrimental to *public health, safety, welfare and environment*).



**Conclusion:**

The work proposed in these plans should not be considered as contributing a substantial, adverse change as defined by CEQA. This work, which will repair deteriorating buildings and provide better access to the public, should be considered a benefit to the viability of both these historic resources, Arcata **Plaza** and the **Old Post Office** building. The intent of this project is to improve the neighborhood for both locals and visitors now and strengthen these buildings into the future.

Sincerely,

Martha Jain, Architect

**Attachments** Historical Research and Architectural Analysis for LHP Designation (Katie Stanton, Nov. 20, 1989)