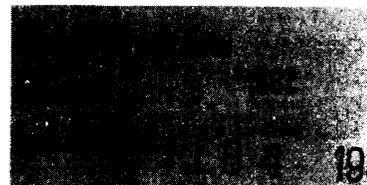


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1982

1. Name

historic FOX COURT

and/or common Same

2. Location

1472--1478 University Ave.

street & number 1472, 1474, 1476, 1478 University Avenue not for publication

city, town Berkeley vicinity of congressional district 8th

state California code 06 county Alameda code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name John Overgaard and Associates

street & number 701 Via Hermosa

city, town Danville vicinity of n/a state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alameda County Courthouse

street & number 1225 Fallon Street

city, town Oakland state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Landmark # 23, City of Berkeley has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date September, 1978 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association

city, town Berkeley state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Fox Court is situated on University Avenue, the principal east-west thoroughfare in Berkeley, California. Eighteen apartments are arranged in a series of one- and two-story wood frame, brick and concrete structures. The complex, constructed in stages between 1927 and 1930, is U-shaped, wrapping around a lushly planted interior courtyard.

Three small shops are located on the ground floor of the two-story unit fronting on University Avenue. These are cobblestone faced with large windows covering most of the facade. An arched passageway with wrought iron gate separates them from the neighboring bank building to the east. Adjacent to the stores is a small parking area (36' x 32') within which is a random brick building housing a small heating plant. In the original plans (copied herein) this parking area was intended for an additional two-story unit. A grocery store parking lot borders the complex to the west.

A spiraling random brick outer staircase leads to the apartments (measuring 39' x 31') above the shops. A large (5' x 8') arched window lights the apartment facing the inner courtyard. Hanging from the balcony is a painted sign announcing the entrance to Fox Court. The effect throughout the inner court is consciously "Old World," reflecting the builder's interest in various historical modes of construction. Arched wooden doors are on either side of the entry. The irregular cylindrical brick chimneys, the steeply-pitched roofs, the asbestos shingles made to look like slate, and the ivy-covered brick walls all combine to emphasize the medieval effect. Design devices, materials, and craftsmanship combine to create an atmosphere of storied antiquity.

Through a wrought iron gate, one enters the central path, measuring 108' in length and 16' width. Azelea, camellia, fuschia, rhododendron, jade, and other exotic plants combine in this formally landscaped area to create a garden setting of remarkable quietude in the highly commercial setting of University Avenue. Ten brightly painted doors, protected by roof overhangs, open into the one-story apartment units located on either side of the pathway. Each unit measures 31' x 36'. The cobblestone facade of each is dominated by a large casement window, its wood trim painted red. The interior of each unit includes a large brick fireplace and red tiled floor.

At the south end of the court, the path broadens into a 13'8" x 11' paved terrace, complementing the architectural features of the rear two-story unit. The facade of this unit relates to the others in its use of clinker bricks which are acid-treated or high-fired to produce a handcrafted look on the first story, and roughly-plastered beige stucco on the second story. Decorative features include a weathered brass lantern, two stained glass windows, and a ceramic plaque imbedded in the upper wall. Two large chimneys add balance to the unit. Four doors with cobblestone archways open to the patio area providing access to first-story apartments. Access to upper-story apartments is gained through a spiraling brick staircase with painted wood railings. The lower apartments measure 39' by 15'3", smaller than the upper units.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

From the paved terrace a wrought iron gate leads to the back of the building. A wooden fence, defined by plants and hushes, screens the property from a private residence at the rear and marks the end of this property. On either side of the complex is a cement path, along which the groundfloor apartments have rear access. From the rear, two additional wooden staircases lead to the second story apartments. The rear elevation of each structure is finished in brick and stucco.

2.0

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1927-30 **Builder/Architect** Carl Fox (Architect)/Fox Bros. Construction (Builder)

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Fox Court embodies the distinctive characteristics of a regional Northern California mode of construction of the 1920s sometimes referred to as "Hansel and Gretel," or "Medieval Dollhouse." Fox Court typifies such structures in its eclectic use of Medieval images, its diminutive scale, as well as its careful integration of structures and formal landscaping. The romanticized historicism of this complex creates a fragile, almost stage-set quality. Functionally, however, the complex makes economical use of its University Avenue siting, providing usable commercial space on its street exposure and a quiet residential courtyard behind.

David Gebhard, in his book, A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California, writes:

A high point of sorts in Northern California domestic architecture during the twenties was the Hansel and Gretel, Fairyland houses, stores and cottages built in and around Berkeley... That these charming excursions into a conscious stage-set did indeed make a real contribution to architecture via their space, scale, mystery and surprise is only beginning to be realized.

Architects of such structures borrowed freely from European and early American historical images, such as medieval castles, cottages, and farmhouses. Fox Court, while typical of such structures in its use of historical imagery, is the only such structure to encompass both commercial and residential units. The well-known Bay Area architect, W.R. Yelland, has envisioned a similar composition for his Normandy Village development, but never completed the commercial component. Although there are numerous examples of "Hansel and Gretel" structures in the Berkeley hills, Fox Court is the only such structure in the commercial sector of town.

Fox Court is distinctive, not only for its Fairy Tale imagery, but also for its sophisticated multiple-use arrangement of apartments, shops, and related parking. Carl Fox saw potential for University Avenue, then predominantly residential, to emerge as a major thoroughfare, exploiting its commercial potential without sacrificing its residential value. He proposed that development on the Avenue be based on sound urban design and planning principles, as well as architectural creativity and cohesion, utilizing a plan of settlement avoiding the monotony of American inner cities. Fox Court was a first step in that direction. Unfortunately, the economic debacle of the 1930s, combined with other factors, precluded realization of Fox's vision of this street's future development.

Carl Fox was an engineering graduate of the University of California in Berkeley. He spent his early adult years travelling in Asiatic countries, carrying on a pioneer tradition of his German-born family, that crossed the United States in a

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .32

Quadrangle name Oakland West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	6	3	2	0	0	4	1	9	1	4	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is a rectangular lot 95'x 150' fronting on University Avenue.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marjorie Vandersloot

organization John Overgaard and Associates

date April 30, 1980

street & number 701 Via Hermosa

telephone (415) 837-4570

city or town Danville

state California

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kenneth M. [Signature]

title

date 12/8/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

William H. [Signature]

date 2.4.82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

[Signature]

Chief of [unclear]

date 2/4/82

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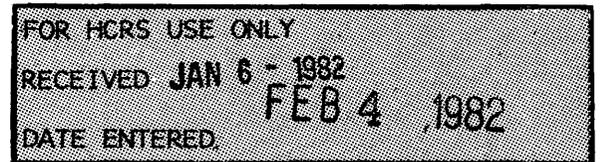
ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

covered wagon to settle in the gold country of Northern California.

Carl's wanderings convinced him Berkeley was the "heart of God's country." He returned there to form the Fox Brothers Construction Firm in the 1920s. Fox was an energetic man of many talents and interests, including photography, film-making, travel, gardening, and the fine arts, as well as membership in the Sierra Club.

As a builder, Fox was known for the ability to incorporate his structures into carefully-landscaped settings. He was one of a group of Berkeley builders and architects devoted to fitting their homes into the natural setting of the Berkeley natural environment. He was a pioneer in the founding of the Berkeley Builders' Exchange. Like many architects nationally, Fox was forced to discontinue his work in the uncertain economic situation of the 1930s. It can be hoped that further research will uncover the full significance of Fox's contribution to the architecture of Berkeley and the Bay Area.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET Fox Court **ITEM NUMBER** 9 **PAGE** 2

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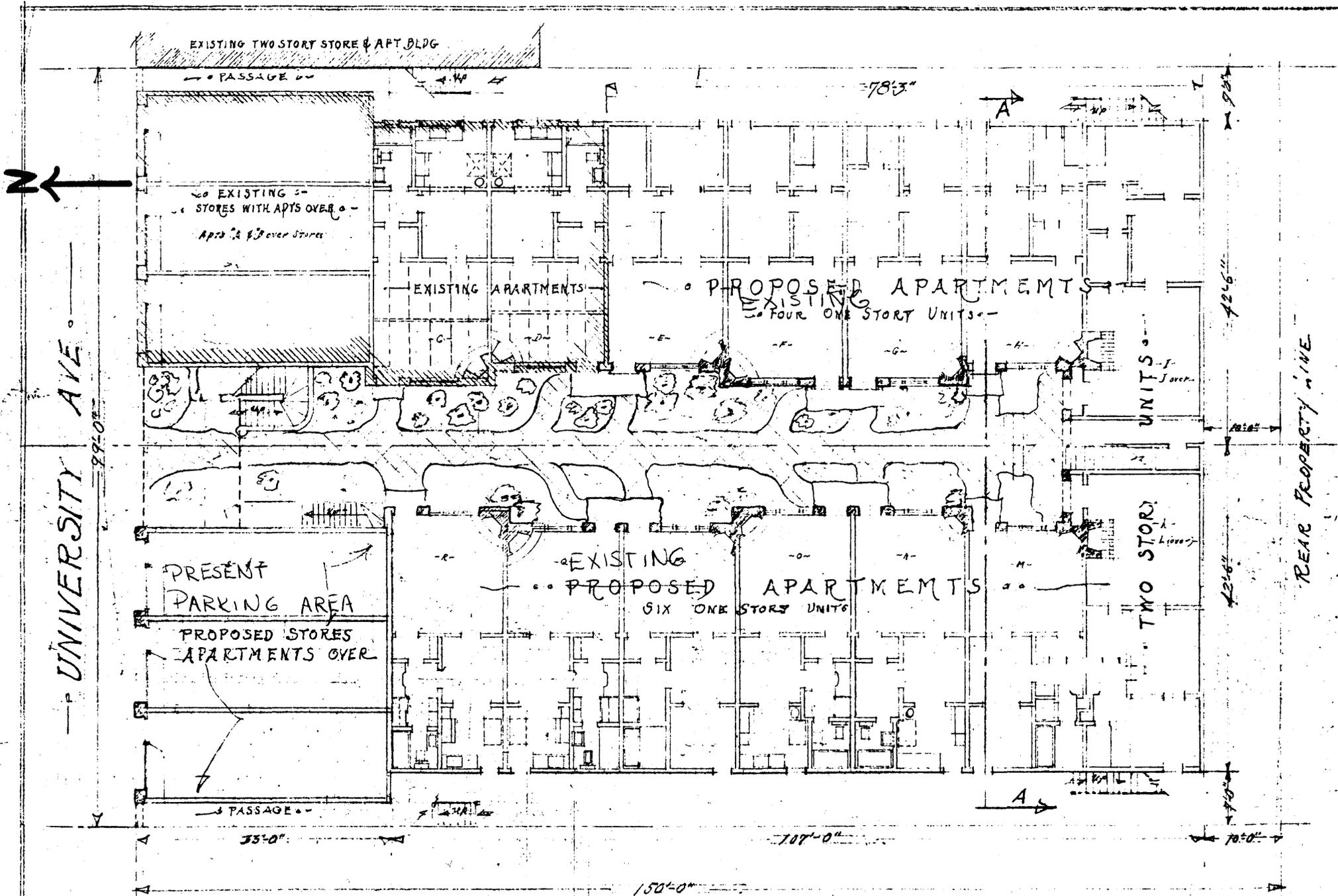
Information from Edward Staniford, local author, interviewed by Margie Vandersloot, Danville, April, 1980.

Information from Leslie Emmington, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, interviewed by Margie Vandersloot, Berkeley, April, 1980.

Information from Ormsby Donogh, local real estate expert, interviewed by Margie Vandersloot, Danville, April, 1980.

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Plot Plan of Proposed Studio Apt. Bldg.
-D.Y.-

SHEET # 1
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

FOX BRAS BUILDERS.
1484. UNIV. AVE. BERKELEY.

Fox Court Berkeley, Alameda Co., California

FEB 4 1982

Original Plans for Fox Court - by Carl Fox

Berkeley, Alameda County

