

# PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Resource Name or #: Merritt House

P1. Other Identifier: none

\*P2. .Location: \*a. County Solano

b. Address: 123 West D Street

\*c. City: Benicia Zip 94510

d. UTM: N/A

e. USGS Quad: Benicia

\*f. Other Locational Data (APN #): 89-174-08

\*P3a. Description: One of Benicia's oldest surviving houses, the Merritt house is constructed with mortise and tenon joining. Rectangular in plan and only one room deep, this Vernacular Style residence has the form of a traditional I-house. The I-house is a British folk form that was common throughout the U.S., migrating from the Tidewater South, through the Midwest to the western states. Simple and restrained, the house exhibits planar surfaces devoid of embellishment. The principal house is two-story and is surmounted by a low hip roof with slight boxed eaves and a plain cornice. A one-story/two-story addition extends at the rear of the building and has a combination hip, shed and gabled roof. Openings on the front and side facades are symmetrically arranged. On the first floor a central entry is flanked by two-over-two double hung windows. On the upper story four-over-four double hung windows are symmetrically arranged. Single double hung windows are located in the center of the side walls on each floor. A wooden stoop with a wooden stair provides access to the front door which is a paneled replacement with an original transom. Typical of the style of house, the entry and the fenestration are vertically emphasized. A hipped porch roof is supported on decoratively incised molded brackets. There is a raised shed roofed porch on the west side of the house. This porch opens onto the side yard. Cladding is clapboard with wooden quoins.

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP2

P5. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  
 Element of District

P5b. Description of Photo:

South façade, view northeast

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age:  
 Prehistoric  Historic  Both

\*P7. Owner and Address:  
Gregory/Nechama Davis  
123 West D Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

\*P8. Recorded by:  
Carol Roland  
Roland-Nawi Associates  
4829 Crestwood Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

\*P9. Date Recorded: 11-21-04

\*P10. Type of Survey:  Intensive  
 Reconnaissance  Other

Describe Eligibility Evaluation

\*P11. Report Citation: none

\*Attachments:  NONE  Map Sheet  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Linear Resource Record  Archaeological Record  District Record

Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

## BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

\*Resource Identifier: 123 West D Street

\*NRHP Status Code: 3S/3D

**B1. Historic Name:** Merritt House

**B2. Common Name:** same

**B3. Original Use:** Residential

**B4. Present Use:** Residential

\***B5. Architectural Style:** Vernacular I-house

\***B6. Construction History:**

The house was constructed circa 1869. It appears relatively unaltered. At one point it was used as a shop, but has since been reconverted to residential use. It is not known when the rear one-story addition was added, but probably within the period of significance of the Downtown District. A second-story addition is tucked behind the original building and appears to be of recent origin.

\***B7. Moved?**  No  Yes  Unknown

**Date:** N/A

**Original Location:** same

\***B8. Related Features:**

There is a one car garage on the east rear of the house lot.

**B9a. Architect:** unknown

**B9b. Builder:** unknown

\***B10. Significance: Theme:** Benicia Downtown District

**Period of Significance:** -1847-1940

**Property Type:**

Single Family **Applicable Criteria:** A / C

The building is significant under Criterion A for its association with the founding and early development of Benicia. It is eligible for listing under Criterion C as an excellent example of a Vernacular I-House which has been very well preserved. It exhibits the major characteristics of this common folk style, including a form and massing that is two rooms wide and one room deep, planar exterior walls, symmetrically arranged and vertically emphasized fenestration, rear shed addition, and minimal embellishment. It also is a rare example of 19<sup>th</sup> century mortise and tenon construction which was employed very little in California, where the light and inexpensive balloon frame became the predominant structural form shortly after the gold rush. The integrity of the principal house is good. The one-story rear shed additions appear to represent a series of additions accomplished over time. This additive quality is consistent with this type of folk house. The newer second story rear addition is smaller and lower than the original front house and is not visible from the front, although it can be seen from the side yard. The building is delineated on the 1991 Historic District Conservation Plan map and is listed as a potential Landmark in the city's historic resources database. It has been signed by the city as a Landmark indicating that at some point it was formally designated, but this is not reflected in city records. It contributes to the local Downtown Benicia Historic District. It is individually eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and as a contributor to an eligible district.

**B11. Additional Resource Attributes:** N/A

**B12. References:** McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred Knopf (1986);

Bruegmann, Robert. *Benicia Portrait of an Early California Town: An Architectural History* (San Francisco: 101 Productions (1980); Woodbridge, Sally and Cannon Design Group. *Benicia, California: Downtown Historic Conservation Plan*. City of Benicia, 1990.

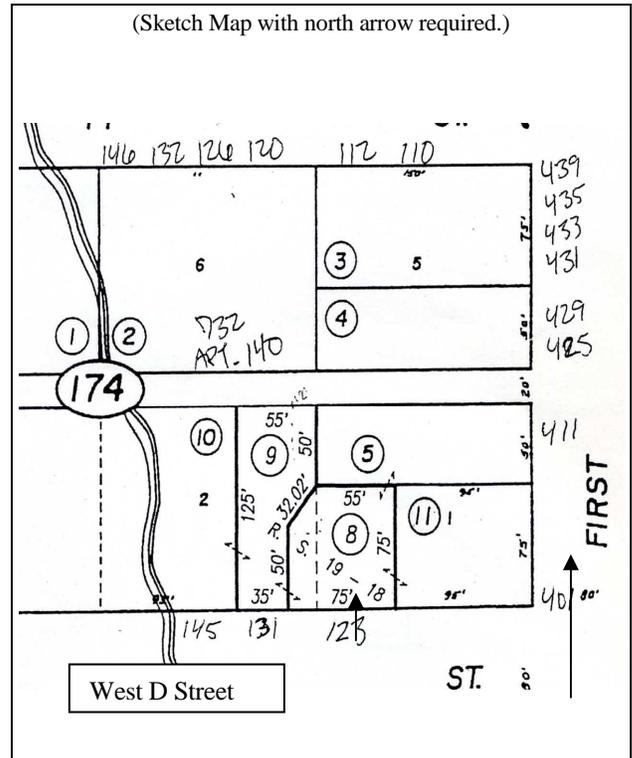
# BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Remarks: N/A

**B14. Evaluator:** Carol Roland, Ph.D.

Roland-Nawi Associates: Preservation Consultants  
4829 Crestwood Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

**B 15. Date of Evaluation:** 11-22-04



(This space reserved for official comments.)