

## MEMORANDUM

**PROJECT:** Luther Burbank Home and Gardens Re-Roofing Project  
TreanorHL Project #: HP0883.2001.00

**TO:** Jen Santos, Deputy Director - Parks, City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks  
Scott Wilkinson, Park Planner, City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks

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**DISTRIBUTION:** All Present, and Kimberly Butt, TreanorHL

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### Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this Memorandum is to outline the research undertaken to date on the roofs of the Main House and Carriage House and to provide recommendations for the re-roofing project.

TreanorHL completed onsite review of the roofs in June 2020 and February 2022. Online research was undertaken to review historic photographs of the property. Historic photographs were located at the Western Sonoma County Historical Society Collection, Calisphere (the online repository for the University of California) and Sonoma State University. TreanorHL also reviewed permits held at the City of Santa Rosa for the Main House and Carriage House. The Luther Burbank Home and Gardens also shared photographs they had in their collection. All the historic photographs gathered as part of the research were used to determine how the roofs have changed over time and how the buildings looked during the site's period of significance.

### Background

The Luther Burbank Home and Gardens is located at 204 Santa Rosa Avenue (APN 009-265-028). The 0.43 acre property currently includes extensive landscaping; a Greek Revival style house (built pre-1884); a Greek Revival style barn known as the Carriage House (built c.1889); a Greenhouse (built c.1889); and a shed known as the Seed House (built c.1931). The property is an historic resource individually listed as a National Historic Landmark, a State Historic Landmark (No. 234) and a Local Landmark (No. 7) as well as being part of the Burbank Gardens Preservation District. The period of significance for the site is from 1884 when Luther Burbank purchased the property, until his death in 1926. Any project on the subject property will be reviewed for its adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and to locally adopted historic preservation guidelines.

### Scope of Work

The proposed scope of work includes re-roofing the Main House and Carriage House only.

- Existing asphalt shingles will be carefully removed from both buildings.
- If wood shingles are found beneath the asphalt shingles, they are to be measured and documented prior to removal.
- Once the roof sheathing is revealed it will be assessed for damage and for areas that may need to be repaired or replaced.



- Review of existing wood gutters on the Main House, currently shingled over, will occur to determine any required repairs. The project proposes to reactivate these wood gutters, integral with the simple wood cornice band, which are only present in three locations.
- The existing metal flashings will be replaced with new and additional flashing (drip edges) will be installed. As part of replacing the flashing, some of the existing wood siding will need to be salvaged, cataloged and stored until it is reinstalled once the new flashing system is complete. This only impacts some of the wood that is directly adjacent to the roof.
- New waterproof membrane will be installed prior to the installation of the new roof.
- Gutters and downspouts will be replaced or added as necessary.

### Main House Roof and Drainage

Luther Burbank bought the subject property in 1884. According to the *Historic American Building Survey Written Historical and Descriptive Data* (HABS) document there was an extant house which can be assumed to be the current structure. Also noted in the HABS document is that Luther Burbank “moved” the house but there is no description of a previous location.

Scrutiny of early photographs suggest that the original roof material for the Main House was wood shingle. No gutters or drainage systems were evident.

By 1906, Luther Burbank had built a new residence across the street and the “old” House (Main House on the site) was used as an office and for storage. The roof appears to have remained unaltered while Luther Burbank resided in the Main House (1884-1906) and while the Main House was being used as an office (1906-1926).



Image courtesy of the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1890. Only part of the original photograph is shown.  
Note wood shingle roof and lack of gutters or downspouts.



Image courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa and the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association c.1916 Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note unchanged wood shingle<sup>1</sup> roof.

After Luther Burbank's death in 1926, his widow (Elizabeth) moved from the residence across the street into the "old" House. According to the HABS document "during the three years following her move, Elizabeth Burbank remodeled the Main House and the garden. Her changes included extension of the second floor to the east and opening the south wall with doors and windows." The addition altered the roof, and it is likely that it was re-shingled with wood at that time since the roof appears very uniform in photographs after the construction.

Also included in the remodel was the alteration of the porch roof and the installation of box-shaped wood gutters and round metal downspouts. The rear of the building also received similar gutters and downspouts in select locations. These are all still extant.

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to confirm if the roofing is wood shingle or wood shakes from the photographic evidence. The difference between the two products is as follows: shingles have a smooth and uniform look, while shakes are thicker, and have a more rugged appearance. Traditionally, these were split with an axe, while shingles are sawn smooth on both sides. While "synthetic-shake" cladding is commercially available, it typically has an exaggeratedly-rugged appearance and does not look authentic.





Image courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa and the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association c.1930. Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note wood shingle roof and new gutter and down spout at the porch (identified with the red arrow).

About ten years later, a photo from c.1940 shows the roof of the Main House with asphalt roll roofing. It is possible that the roofing was put directly on top of the wood shingles. A similar color photograph from c.1950 shows that the color of the new asphalt shingle roofing was grey. This is the first time asphalt shingles were installed on the Main House. New dark-colored, u-shaped copper gutters and rectangular copper downspouts were also installed at this time at the south and east elevations. These are still extant. Sometime between 1930 and 1940 the separation between the porch and the main roof was infilled.



Image courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa and the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association c.1935. Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note roofing material is indistinguishable in the image.



Image courtesy of the Western Sonoma County Historical Society Collection c.1940. Rolled asphalt roofing has been applied to the roof of the Main House. Note connection between the main roof and the porch roof (red arrow).



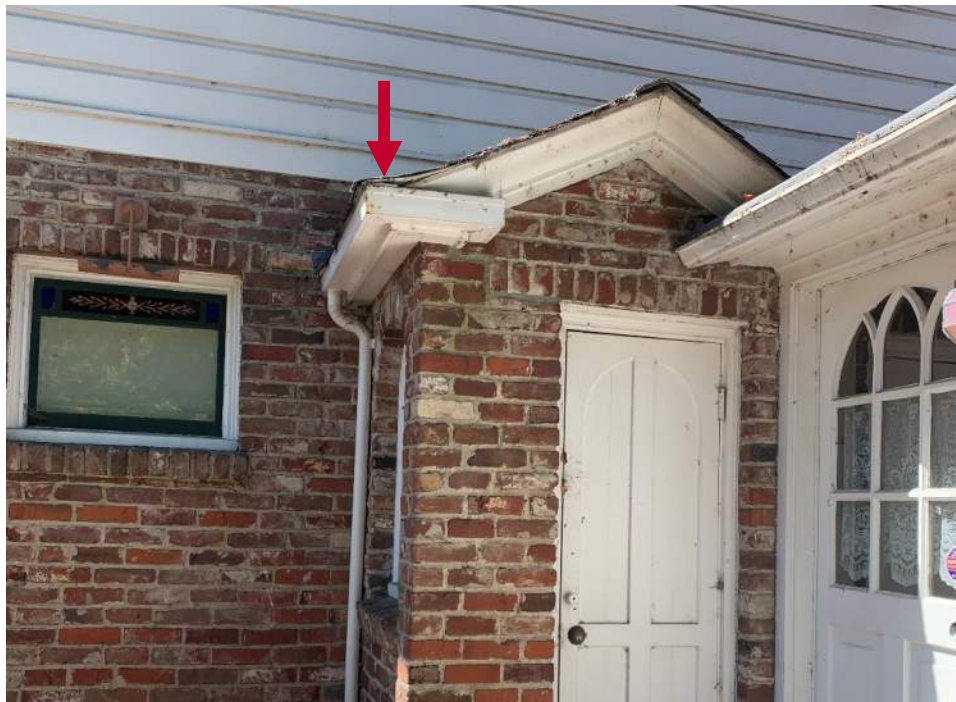
Images courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa and the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1940 (left) and c.1950 (right). Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note asphalt shingle roofing.



Image courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa and the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1950. Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note asphalt roof and gutters.



Current image of rear (east) elevation of Main House. Note the existing asphalt roofing is a red-brown color. One alteration to the gutters and downspouts is the installation of a new gutter and downspout on the east elevation (red arrows). This newer gutter and downspout replaced the existing wood box gutter integral to the cornice that was shingled over and abandoned at this location.



Current image of rear (north) elevation of Main House. An alteration to the drainage system is that the existing wood box gutter integral to the cornice has been shingled over at this location.



Current image of west elevation of Main House. Another alteration to the drainage system is that the existing wood box gutter integral to the cornice has been shingled over at this location.

Elizabeth resided at the Main House until she died in 1977 at which point possession transferred to the City of Santa Rosa. It is likely that the Main House was again reroofed in the 1980s with what is currently extant. It is likely that this roofing was put directly on top of the previous asphalt roofing.

### **Summary and Recommendation for the Main House**

The interior of the Main House is currently arranged as it would have been while Elizabeth was living there and functions as a house museum. Elizabeth performed a fairly significant remodel to the Main House prior to moving in and re-roofed the building with asphalt in c.1940. A new wood shingle roof would be a compatible choice for the building, but fire codes prohibit wood. It is therefore recommended a new asphalt shingle roof be installed. The new asphalt roofing material will simulate the original roofing to the greatest extent possible in size, shape, and color. The color we are recommending is brown which will more closely reflect the color of the wood shingle roof that was originally on the building. This color recommendation is a departure from the existing reddish-brown material that is on the building today.

The original Main House had no gutters or downspouts. There are currently two types of drainage systems on the Main House, installed c.1930 and c.1940. These include the wood box gutter integral to the cornice with metal downspouts at three locations and copper gutters and downspouts. It is recommended that the existing wood box gutter integral to the cornice be reactivated as part of the project. The wood gutters will be inspected for reuse when the shingles are removed from the roof and the downspouts from c.1930 shall be reviewed for reuse as these appear to be in good condition. The gutters and downspouts from c.1940 are of copper, in good condition, and should remain. Also, it is recommended to install a new gutter and downspout at one location on the north elevation. This new gutter and downspout will be of painted aluminum or galvanized steel, and designed to blend into the edge of the roof and to the building to the greatest extent possible.







Current image of porch roof on west elevation of Main House.

The project proposes to remove the connection between the main roof and porch roof. This will help restore the original look of the porch area which historically featured two separate roof surfaces.

### Carriage House Roof

The Carriage House was built by Luther Burbank c.1889 and was used by him until his death. According to the *Historic American Building Survey Written Historical and Descriptive Data* (HABS) document, it was built as a barn for storing packing material and housing livestock. The original roof material appears to have been wood shingle. Built-in gutters and downspouts are evident in the earliest photographs of the Carriage House.



Image courtesy of the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1890. Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note wood shingle roof on Carriage House.

Also shown in early photographs is ridgeline cresting and a cupola. It is likely that the cresting and cupola were removed when the Carriage House roof was re-shingled. Based on photographs from the time period, this seems to have occurred when the Main House was re-roofed with an asphalt system c.1940. The 1890s photograph only shows two of the four dormers that currently adorn the roof. By the 1930s the Carriage House featured four dormers.



The Carriage House currently exhibits the same red-brown asphalt roofing material as the Main House suggesting that the work was done at the same time, c.1980. The cupola was also reconstructed c.1980.

In 2014, the original built-in gutters on the Carriage House were covered and new metal gutters and downspouts were installed. The work was carefully done, with consideration of size, shape, color and location.



Image courtesy of the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1930. Only part of the original photograph is shown.  
Note cupola and cresting on roof of Carriage House.



Image courtesy of the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1953. Only part of the original photograph is shown.  
Note missing cupola and cresting on roof of Carriage House.

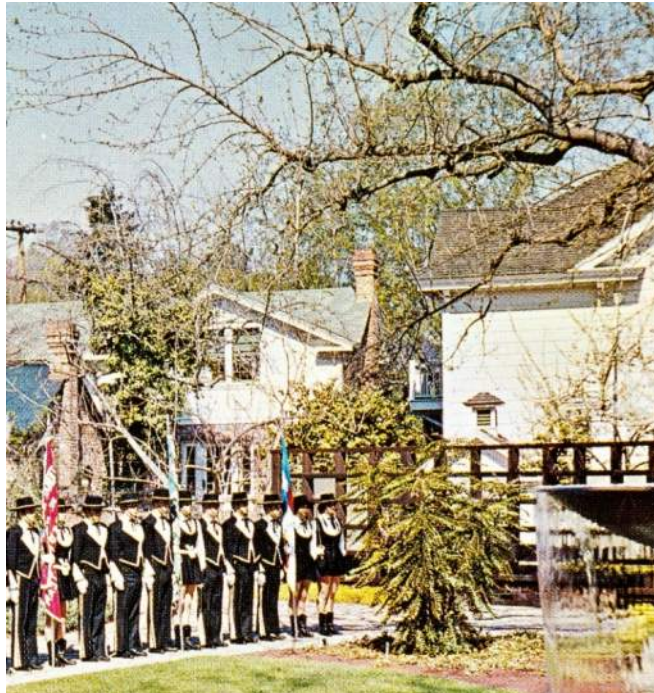


Image courtesy of the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Association. c.1960. Only part of the original photograph is shown. Note what appear to be wood shingle roof on Carriage house.

### Summary and Recommendation for the Carriage House

The Carriage House retains a strong association with Luther Burbank due to his involvement in the construction and relatively few alterations over time. A new wood shingle roof would be the most compatible choice for the building, but fire codes prohibit the use of wood roofing. Therefore, it is recommended that new asphalt roofing material simulate the original roofing to the greatest extent possible in size, shape, and color. The color of the Carriage House roof should match that of the Main House. The gutters and downspouts date to 2014 and are recommended to remain in place with any deficiencies repaired as part of the project.



Current image of south elevation of Carriage House. Note existing red-brown color of the asphalt roofing.

END OF MEMORANDUM

