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memorandum

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from Katherine Anderson, Architectural Historian (ESA)

subject Dry Shed #4 of Union Lumber Company Lumber Mill (Georgia-Pacific Wood Products Facility)

Introduction

Between 1974 and 2011 a total of sixteen investigations for cultural resources at the Georgia-Pacific Wood Products Facility (Facility) have been conducted. As part of a Phase II evaluation of the site's built environment, following the Phase I analysis in 2003, TRC recommended that the Georgia-Pacific Mill had achieved significance as a historic district under the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) criteria A/1 through D/4 due to: (1) its 115-year association with the redwood lumber industry and with the urban development of Fort Bragg between 1885 and 1953; (2) its association with the lives of persons significant in the past; principally with the life of C.R. Johnson, a founder of the lumber company and Fort Bragg's first mayor; (3) its large collection of early twentieth-century buildings and equipment associated with the Mill's historic use; and (4) its potential to contribute important data regarding the relationship between the redwood lumber industry and associated urban development.¹

The Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill Historic District (P-23-004385) was described as including 22 contributing buildings and structures dating from 1885 to 1953. In order to mitigate significant adverse impacts to the proposed historic district, the Phase II report recommended preparation of a formal historical recordation of the entire property. A Site Specific Treatment Plan for Cultural Resources was developed by TRC for the project, including specific treatment to be implemented for built resources in documenting the significance of the site.²

These measures included:

¹ TRC Companies Inc, n.d. "Phase II Determination of Significance Standing Structures Georgia Pacific Lumber Mill Fort Bragg, California: Draft Report." Prepared for the City of Fort Bragg.

² TRC, nd_b, Site Specific Treatment Plan for Cultural Resources: Georgia Pacific Lumber Mill, Fort Bragg, California. Prepared for the City of Fort Bragg.

- A. The entire property should be historically recorded. This would include:
 - a. Large format photography
 - b. Copies of construction drawings
 - c. Production of a detailed history of lumber operations on the property
- B. The collection of historic company photographs, and the historic blueprints and construction drawings of the mill property that are currently stored at Noyo Hill House should be cataloged and stored in a permanent facility that allows for historical research
- C. Interviews should be recorded with (ex) employees at the mill, describing its operations and importance within the community
- D. A biography of C.R. Johnson should be produced describing his importance within the redwood lumber industry and the town of Fort Bragg
- E. A publically accessible document should be produced that described the importance of the mill with regards to the lumber industry and to local history.

Of these proposed measures, Measure E) appears to have been completed through the documentation of the site by Garcia and Associates in 2008, who drafted a detailed public history of the Union Lumber Company Lumber Mill (the historic name of the Facility), providing a written record of the importance of the company in relation to the lumber industry and local history.³

By 2013, nearly all the buildings and structures at the Facility had been demolished, with the exception of Dry Shed #4. As part of the 2014 Subsequent Environmental Impact Report completed by the City of Fort Bragg, the Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill Historic District was recommended as no longer eligible for the National or California Register due to a lack of integrity through loss of its contributing resources. Only one of what once were 22 contributing resources remained, and the setting had been greatly altered by the demolition of the other related buildings.⁴

Dry Shed #4, Description and Evaluation

TRC's circa 2003 Phase II report completed for the project described Dry Shed #4 (below, and **Figure 1**), and recommended the building eligible as a contributor to the (now defunct) Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill Historic District.

Dry Shed #4 is a two-story warehouse-type property that appears to be four separate buildings joined at the east/west and north/south facades. The property was constructed circa 1960 and is located on the north end of the mill site, near the railroad tracks.

³ Garcia and Associates, 2008. "Transitions Over Time: A Chronological Perspective of the Union Lumber Company Lumber Mill: Fort Bragg, Mendocino County, California." Prepared for ARCADIS and the Georgia-Pacific Corporation. July 2008.

⁴ City of Fort Bragg, Coastal Restoration and Trail Project Phase II, Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR). November 2014.

The building features a gambrel roof covered with rolled asphalt, exterior plywood panel walls, and a poured concrete foundation. The south façade has two open loading bays. There is no fenestration at the east façade. The north façade features one enclosed loading bay and one loading bay that retains an overhead track door. The west façade features two shed wings, one of which (at the north end) appears to hold an office. Both of the shed wings feature sing-door entrances that face west. Also at the west facade is an enclosed single-door entry (facing west).

The Phase II report did not, however, provide an individual recommendation for the building. The following text from the Phase II report provides a brief context for the lumber industry in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The 1950s and 1960s saw an increase in the consolidation of the redwood industry into large corporations such as Georgia Pacific. The increasing costs of maximizing efficiency, by investing in new technology to increasing automation, continued the trend of companies requiring large amounts of investment capital in order to remain competitive. Most of the family owned businesses were sold to the larger corporations.

In 1955 lumber output in Mendocino reached its peak at over 1 billion b.f. per year. Production was high throughout the 1950s, but declined in the subsequent decades. Within ten years of reaching its peak output, production had dropped by half. Despite a recovery in the late 1980s, output continued to drop and by the 1990s it was only 250 million b.f per year (TRC, 2003).

Archival review associated with Dry Shed #4 recommends the building as not eligible under Criteria A/1, as the extant building was constructed well after World War II, and is not directly associated with the early development of or prominent years of the lumber industry in the area (significant patterns of development). Nor is Dry Shed #4 eligible under Criteria B/2, for direct associations with persons important in history. Although the larger mill site property was associated with C. R. Johnson from its inception in 1885 until his death in 1940, the extant building was constructed after his death and has no direct association with Johnson. The structure is not eligible under Criteria C/3, as the building is a common industrial building, not remarkable example of a style, and does not exhibit extraordinary design or craftsmanship. As described in TRC's report, the post-1945 buildings, especially those post-dating the period of significance of the district (1885-1953) such as the 1960 Dry Shed #4, are generally simple, post-war utilitarian warehouses and office buildings. Finally, Dry Shed #4 is not eligible under Criteria D/4, as it is not expected to yield useful information important to history.

Conclusion

Dry Shed #4 is recommended not eligible for listing as either an individual resource, nor a contributor to a historic district, to the California or National Registers. As noted above, the Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill Historic District no longer retains sufficient integrity to function as a historic district, and as such Dry Shed #4 can no longer function as a contributor. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the finding that the district is no longer eligible for listing based on the current conditions.⁵ Additionally, Dry Shed #4 does not possess the historically significant associations to be considered eligible as an individual historical resource. No further mitigation is necessary for Dry Shed #4 as a built cultural resource.

⁵ State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Letter to Rick M. Bottoms, Ph.D. – Chief, Regulatory Division U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding Section 106 Consultation for Georgia-Pacific Operable Unit E former wood products facility excavation and disposal activities at 90 Redwood Avenue in Fort Bragg, County, California (2009-00372N). Dated July 13, 2017.

Figure 1. Dry Shed #4

