
NEGLECT DECADES, 1980s-90s

Over the 1980s-90s, the Terminal Building continued its slow decline. In contrast, the immediate G Street area began a slow but solid rise. Indeed, the improvements in the vicinity of the Terminal Building made its own creeping blight all the more evident. For better or worse, and with the exception of the 1984 episode described in this chapter, no one appeared to have put much pressure on the building's owners to improve their property.

As mentioned, the reason I divide the five post-war decades into the 1950s-70s versus the 1980s-90s is that the number and rate of demolitions dropped significantly from the 1950s-70s to the 1980s-90s. One obvious reason for this decline was that by 1980 almost two thirds of the older structures in the "new" downtown had already been removed. (Eighty-six of the 233 buildings there in 1945—37%—survived to the year 2000 [Lofland, 2000:7]). One-hundred percent of the buildings (or close to it) in some Core Area blocks were gone (Fig. 5.2).

In addition, policies of the more liberal Councils of the 1970s-80s began to encourage "adaptive reuse" of older buildings rather than demolition. Such use became, indeed, the line of least resistance among developers, who seemed, on the whole, more interested in getting-on with projects within the prevailing rules than in bucking them and "making statements." (William Kopper---Council member 1976-84, Mayor, 1982-84---spearheaded these adaptive reuse policies. Small world aside: Kopper was also a long-time friend and the political mentor of Julie Partansky. With Partansky, he had been a key figure in the 1975 campaign to save the Second Street houses [described in section 8, of Chapter 5, "The First Grassroots Campaign"].)

I think our understanding of the eventual fate of the Terminal Building is advanced by examining two aspects of these 1980s-90s decline decades. One, we need to bring forward and to conclude the depiction of local history and preservation activity begun in the last chapter. This aspect of the context will help us understand why the Terminal Building merely stood there in slow decay for so long. Two, in 1984, there was a (failed) effort to designate the Terminal Building a historical resource. We need to understand this failure and its consequences.

In the last section of this chapter, I will draw together (1) episodes of owners resisting preservation and (2) instances of citizen campaigns for preservation. A compact portrait of these will provide a context in which to place the struggle of these two forces that is the subject of the five chapters comprising Part II of this book.

1) THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH PERIODS OF LOCAL HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

Recapitulating from the previous chapter, I divide Davis local history and preservationist activity into five periods, which are:

1. 1963–68: Local History Research
2. 1969–77: Struggle
3. 1978–87: Crisis and the New Professionals
4. 1988–94: Percolating Quiescence
5. 1995–02: Resurgence and Reaction

The first two of these were described in the last section of the last chapter. Let us now look at the third, fourth and fifth periods.

THIRD PERIOD, 1978-87: CRISIS AND THE NEW PROFESSIONALS. The third period featured significant influences from outside Davis along with some distinctive indigenous happenings.

Three External Changes Affecting Davis Preservation. In the later 1970s, the world outside Davis was changing in three ways that brought about changes in Davis preservation activities.

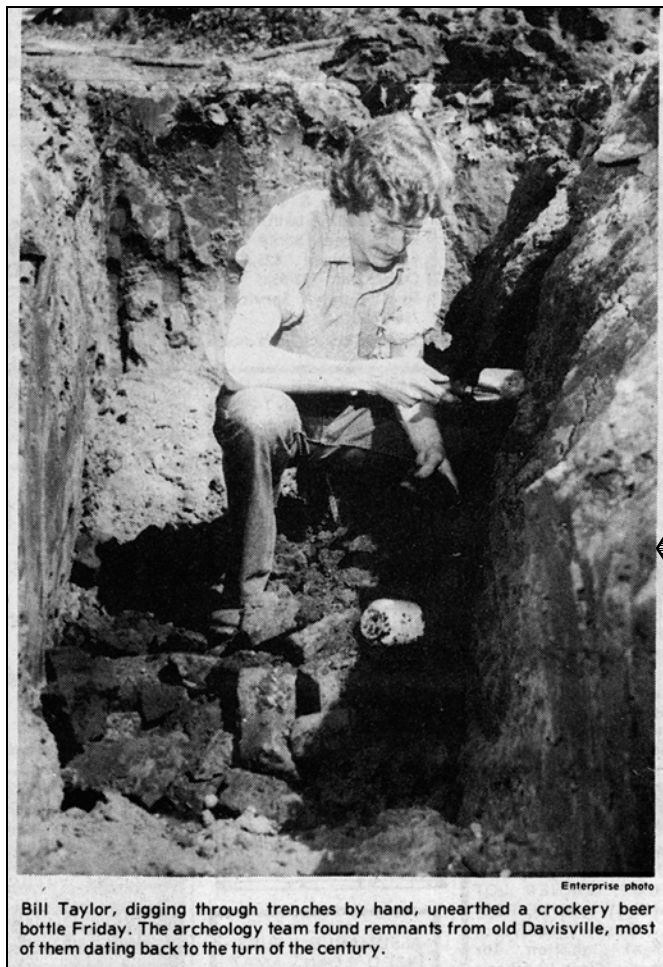
1. Proposition 13 Budget Trauma, Late 1970s. In June, 1978, the California electorate adopted a constitutional amendment that sharply curbed property taxes accruing to local governments. This, and subsequent state legislation restricting tax revenues even more, sent shock waves of spending cuts through local governments. (Bizarrely, at the Davis City Council meeting of June 21, 1978, two members voted to “stop supplying pens and pencils to . . . City employees.” The motion failed with two members against and one absent.)

Already at or near the bottom of lists of spending priorities, City of Davis preservation spending was virtually stopped. Specifically, the single part-time city staff person who worked with the Commission, William H. Taylor, Jr., was reassigned to other duties. (In Fig. 6.1, he is shown at work.) He continued to help the Commission on his own time, but, in frustration, gave this up in August, 1979. In a memo to the City Manager, Taylor described the Davis preservation situation:

I think it is . . . accurate to say that there is a lack of substantive support for Historical Preservation/Restoration/Education from the City Council, the Planning Commission, the community, etc. (to differing degrees certainly). This observation is not meant to be judgmental, I'm just stating what I believe to be the current reality. . . . The present “voluntary” framework, combined with what I have seen other communities accomplish, makes the frustrations of the current arrangement unacceptable to me. It is with regret that I rescind my former offer of voluntary service to the Davis Historical and Landmarks Commission (Haig Collection, Box 2).

This event provoked members of the Commission to speak “mutinously of their lowly stature in the city [and they] made plans to take their grievances to the City Council The commission currently has no quarters, no storage space, no regular meeting place and no city aide to help with its work” (*Davis Enterprise*, September 12, 1979). Among other indignities, the December 18, 1979 meeting was cancelled for “lack of a meeting place.” In the *Davis Enterprise* of January 23, 1980, a reporter observed, “No other commission in the city raises money to pay for itself, but the funds used by the Historical and Landmarks Commission come from publication sales and donations raised by the commission.”

2. Professional Preservationists Emerge, Late '70s–Early '80s. One of the effects of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966—and subsequent amplifying legislation at both national and state levels—was to begin to create a new kind of occupation: the professional preservationist. Part architect, part historian, part lawyer, part developer, part bureaucrat, this new kind of job specialized in assessing the “whats” and “whys” of “historic resources”—the new, central concept of this occupation. (Because preservation was so heavily volunteer before professionalization, some of these new professionals have referred to themselves with ironic humor as “preservationists-for-hire.”)



6.1. William H. Taylor, Jr., referred to in many city documents in the impersonal abstract as “the Administrative Assistant II,” pictured in the *Davis Enterprise* of April 28, 1975. He is at 231 G Street, the site of the demolished building seen in Fig. 5.10.

In 1975, this kind of poking around at demolition sites was considered just fine. However, more recent preservationist practice requires that professional archeologists do this job.

Even so, and as we shall see in Part III, the excavation of the Terminal Building site in 2000 did not rate the presence of City staff, “Administrative Assistant II” or not.

Training programs for this verbal-intensive specialty were only starting. Therefore, many early practitioners were not formally trained in the topic. Instead, they were self-taught migrants from disciplines that overlapped preservation. And, as with other new professions, preservation attracted young people rather than older occupation-changers (Lee, 2002).

Such was the case for the two preservationists who chaired the Commission in the early 1980s and who had much influence on the course of Davis preservation. This influence included a ground-up consolidation and systematization of the old patchwork of ordinances, including a change in the very name of the commission. A term like “landmark” had come to seem quaint and antique. One had, instead, in the new national nomenclature, “historic resources.” So also, in the new ordinance of 1984, the commission went from the Davis Historical Landmarks Commission to the Historical Resources Management Commission (HRMC).

The first of these new, young professionals was Robin Datel (Fig. 6.2), a native of Stockton, California who graduated from UC Davis in 1976 and was a “historic preservation specialist” in the California Office of Historic Preservation in the mid-1970s. In 1983, she earned a Ph.D. in geography at the University of Minnesota. Her specialty was the geography of historical preservation (“why places are preserved”) and she published important research on that topic (e.g. Datel, 1985; Datel and Dingemans, 1988).

Following her as Commission Chair was Stephen Mikesell (Fig. 6.3), B. A., Harvard University, who had done graduate work in history at UC Davis before going to work for the State of California Office of Historic Preservation, the place of his employment while he served on the Davis HRMC.



6.2. Robin Datel, *Davis Enterprise* photo in the Question-Of-The-Day column, May 13, 1983.



6.3. Stephen Mikesell, second from the left, *Davis Enterprise*, January 13, 1983.

Commission composition was also changing in other ways. The early commissioners were “old Davis” in the sense that they were born in the town, or had lived there a long time. For them, local history and preservation often had a genealogical slant. History and preservation were in part about one’s family and one’s own personal past.

In the later 1970s, these features were changing. Neither Datel or Mikesell were born in Davis and neither had lived there very long. Both were young. (Datel was twenty-eight when she became commission chair.) These two features were now also seen in yet other new members of the Commission. For these immigrant, younger people, there was no genealogical slant or possible element of a quest for personal “roots.” Instead, this was a new kind of cosmopolitanism in which one could be interested in local dead strangers because one was broadly interested in the past, had an appreciation of it, and wanted to learn from it.

3. “Cultural Resources” Survey, 1979-80. By the later 1970s federal and regional government programs were financially encouraging local governments to perform a “survey of cultural resources.” This was a fancy name for hiring one of the new professional preservation consultants to orchestrate a listing of, mostly, a jurisdiction’s older buildings (those 50 years or more old) thought possibly to possess historical significance.

In Davis, this took the form of contracting, in 1978, with the recently-formed Sacramento firm of Historic Environment Consultants. Specifically, this was Paula Boghosian, another young preservationist in this new occupation. She trained and supervised a volunteer corps of almost two dozen Davis surveyors. The surveyors, members of the Commission, and Ms. Boghosian filled out the official historical resource forms on 140 Davis and Davis-area structures. (The one for the Terminal Building is reproduced in Fig. 6.3.) Ms. Boghosian put these forms in final order and added considerable text on the larger and broader historical context of Davis.

As a physical object, the survey was a hefty tome of 450 letter-sized, comb-bound pages (Historic Environments Consultants, 1980). Something like 50 photocopies were made of it (and additional copies were prohibited as an economy measure by the then Assistant City Manager). Presented to the public in June, 1980, the inventory was a wide net that captured all structures that were plausibly historical (*Davis Enterprise*, April 18, 1979). In doing this, it set the stage for isolating an “elite” class of structures that were of special import.

The survey cost \$9,000 and was possible despite post-Prop 13 tight budgets because the Sacramento Regional Planning Commission funded \$4,000, which was matched by \$3,500 from the Commission’s Historic Trust Fund and \$1,500 from the city’s General Fund (Taylor 1981, 4). (For several years, the Chamber of Commerce sponsored an antique show and other fund-raising activities, which, together with receipts from the Larkey book, gave the HMRC a modest account on which it could draw.) (This regional-local matching grant arrangement is yet another example of how the level and form of local preservation was importantly influenced by outside agencies.)

Survey-Spurred Further Changes. The 1980 survey was the starting point for and the basis of a new era in Davis preservation. In addition to the three externally-stimulated changes just enumerated, there were two further changes based on, and made possible by, the existence of the survey.

1. A New Historic Preservation Code, 1984. As part of her contract, Paula Boghosian made a list of recommended changes in the existing patchwork of preservation ordinances and wrote suggestions for the elements of a consolidated and extended replacement. Her recommendations were informed by her knowledge of professional preservationist practices at the federal level and across the country. Although Datel and Mikesell were involved in the rewrite, they were working off Boghosian’s recommendations.

But getting the new ordinance adopted was not easy. It went through the usual public hearings, where it encountered accusations of being too “coercive” and “heavy-handed.” It was revised to meet these objections. In October, 1982, it went to the City Attorney for a final review. But, this person did nothing with it for almost a year. In exasperation, then Commission Chair Mikesell wrote the Mayor on September 9, 1983 pleading for action:

The written and verbal requests of the Commission have produced no tangible results. It seems to me that a reasonable review period has long been exceeded and that the City attorney has simply assigned a low priority to this task (Haig Collection, Box 4).

With this prodding, the new ordinance was “sprung,” and finally adopted by a 4-1 Council vote on February 22, 1984 (with minimal attention from the public, Robin Datel reports).

2. Re-Certifying “Landmarks” as “Historical Resources,” Mid-1980s. A listing of 140 structures in an “inventory” raises the question of which ones might be more important or more historic. How could one identify more important structures? The Federal program called the National Register of Historic Places was dedicated to answering exactly this question and had developed four criteria of significance (Chapter 1, Fig. 1.1) that local preservationists could also use. A structure that met at least one criterion was significant. And, preservation professionals were, of course, the people trained to determine whether a structure met a criterion or not.

The image shows two pages of a survey form titled "HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY" from the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation. The form is filled out for the Terminal Building in Davis, California.

Page 1 (Left):

- IDENTIFICATION:**
 - 1. Common name: Hotel Aggie/Antique Bazaar
 - 2. Historic name, if known: Terminal Hotel and Cafe
 - 3. Street or rural address: 200, 202, 204 G Street
 - City: Davis, ZIP: 95616, County: Yolo
 - 4. Present owner, if known: Dr. Lee Chin, Address: _____, City: _____, ZIP: _____, Ownership: Public Private
 - 5. Present Use: bar/restaurant/hotel, Original Use: hotel/restaurant
- DESCRIPTION:**
 - 6. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition: This two story flat-roofed brick building has a wooden gallery which covers the sidewalk at the ground floor level. On the end of the building, facing a parking lot, is a mural of G street before the destruction of its Mission Revival welcoming arch. The building itself has been much changed over time. The buildings occupies a prominent corner site near the railroad station in the center of the Davis downtown commercial area.
 - 7. Approximate property size: Lot size (in feet) Frontage: _____, Depth: _____, or approx. acreage: _____
 - 8. Condition (check one): a. Excellent b. Good c. Fair d. Deteriorated e. No longer in existence
 - 9. Is the feature: a. Altered? b. Unaltered?
 - 10. Surroundings (Check more than one if necessary): a. Open land b. Scattered buildings c. Density built-up d. Residential e. Commercial f. Industrial g. Other
 - 11. Threats to site: a. None known b. Private development c. Zoning d. Public Works project e. Vandalism f. Other
 - 12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s): 1978

Page 2 (Right):

- NOTE: The following (Items 14-19) are for structures only.**
- 14. Primary exterior building material: a. Stone b. Brick c. Stucco d. Adobe e. Wood f. Other
- 15. Is the structure: a. On its original site? b. Moved? c. Unknown?
- 16. Year of initial construction: 1925. This date is: a. Factual b. Estimated
- 17. Architect (if known): _____
- 18. Builder (if known): Erikson (son of Highway Construction Engineer)
- 19. Related features: a. Barn b. Carriage house c. Outhouse d. Shed(s) e. Formal garden(s) f. Windmill g. Watertower/tankhouse h. Other i. None
- SIGNIFICANCE:**
 - 20. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site when known): The principal current importance of the Hotel Aggie lies with its cultural contributions to the city rather than its architectural values. Although much altered, it does however contribute in scale and form to the few early downtown Davis structures still remaining. It particularly relates to the corner structures, the Anderson Building, and the building which now houses the Paragon restaurant, and the Masonic Hall down and across the street. The Hotel Aggie, originally known as the Terminal Hotel, was built in 1925 by George Tingus and James Belinis. Designed to be a "home style" hotel, it served as an overnight stop over for train travelers from the S.P. Depot nearby. At the time the hotel was built, as many as 18 trains a day were passing through Davis. Being close to the station the Hotel also served as the first home for many students and faculty newly arriving at the University. The first owners wanted the hotel to serve the community as well as the itinerant traveler so many university and service organization meetings were held in the building. Today the Hotel Aggie still serves its original purpose.
 - 21. Main theme of the historic resource: (Check only one): a. Architecture b. Arts & Leisure c. Economic/Industrial d. Exploration/Settlement e. Government f. Military g. Religion h. Social/Education i. social center and travelers rest.
 - 22. Sources: List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews, and their dates: Building Permits interviews with George Tingus, Jane Eberle & Bob Dunharn Silverman, G.I., "Hotel Aggie-Davis Landmark", Enterprise, March 15, 1976
 - 23. Date form prepared: June 1978, By (name): Faye Le Clair-research/Historic Environments, Address: 226 F St., City: Davis, ZIP: 95616, Phone: _____, Organization: Davis Historical & Landmarks Commission

6.4. Survey form for the Terminal Building in the City of Davis Cultural Resources Inventory, 1980.

Datel and Mikesell also played important roles here. In order to make a structure a historical resource, someone had to (1) write a ten or so page document to be presented to the City Council that (2) asserted in some historical detail that a given structure met at least one of the criteria of significance. This in turn required doing some historical research. Dattel and Mikesell were educated in doing such work and were adept at it. As well, they provided leadership for other members of their commissions in performing these tasks (Dattel Files, 1980-86).

The first structures written up and put forth for the status of “designated historical resource” (a new phrase and category in the 1984 ordinance) were simply taken from old-timer lists of

“Landmarks.” That is, the consolidated historic resource ordinance of 1984 involved, as a first matter, a re-certification as “historic resources” what were previously termed “landmarks.”

Between 1984 and 2002, this process of the City Council voting to make a structure a “designated historical resource” would be successfully completed 34 times for properties within or near the 1917 city incorporation boundaries (Fig. 6. 6 lists all of them). (Technically, it was 35 times because 623 Seventh was done twice). Thirty-four designations over 19 years averages to about two a year. This, though, is wildly misleading. The actual number of designations in a given year is given in Fig. 6.5. There we see that almost half of the 34 (16) took place in the first year—and all these were simply re-certified “landmarks.” Then the number drops off sharply, becoming zero in 1988 and remaining zero for a full decade.

6.5. Number of “1917 City” Historical Resource Designations By Year, 1984-2002					
Year	Number of Designations	Year	Number of Designations	Year	Number of Designations
'84	16	'88	0	'98	7
'85	2	'89	0	'99	1
'86	7	'90	0	'00	0
'87	1	'91	0	'01	0
		'92	0	'02	0
		'93	0		
		'94	0		
		'95	0		
		'96	0		
		'97	0		
	26		0		8

Of great pertinence to understanding the Terminal matter: **the Terminal Building was not one of the structures designated a landmark prior to the re-certification in 1984.** Instead, it appeared on lists of possible landmark structures and was in the cultural resources inventory, but had not been finally included on any landmark list.

At the point of re-certifying the landmarks as historical resources, it was added to the list. As I will describe in more detail in a moment, its nomination appears to have been accelerated in this way because the owner announced in early 1984 that he was going to demolish the building. It was in reaction to this threat that the Commission then included it in the first batch later in 1984, rather than waiting until the next years when it moved to a fresh set of structures.

Other Aspects of the 1978-87 Period. Several additional aspects of the 1978-87 period of crisis and professionalization are notable.

1. Second Printing of *Davisville '68*, 1980. The first printing of 2,000 copies of *Davisville '68* was almost all sold by the late 1970s. In 1980, the City Council authorized a second printing of 1,500 copies for a printing cost of \$7,800.

2. Adaptive Reuse Begins. Although not necessarily "preservationist" in a strict sense of complying with what preservationists call “the Secretary’s Standards,” in the late 1970s (and especially in 1979) and continuing into the 1980s, a number of projects developed "adaptive reuse" alternatives to "scrape-off" demolition. Facilitated by zoning changes in the mid-1970s that encouraged converting residences into commercial structures rather than demolishing them, the following were among the larger of these new re-use projects:

- I have already mentioned incorporating the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer mansion into the larger Mansion Square shopping complex at Second and E.
- With partners, Richard Berteaux converted two older houses at 125-137 E Street into commercial structures, added other buildings behind them, and integrated the set into a complex named Orange Court. Done in stages over several years, it was formally completed in April, 1979.
- Park Place at 216-224-228 D Street "combined [five] old houses and outbuildings with new construction . . . to house a complex of specialty shops, a restaurant and . . . [a] real estate office" (*Davis Enterprise*, March 24, 1978, November 2 and December 31, 1979)
- After several unsuccessful efforts to site a new and larger city hall, the school district's leaving its high school building at Russell and B opened the way for the City to purchase, rehabilitate, and open it as the new City Hall in May of 1981.
- Saunders Place at the northeast corner of Fourth and D streets was a complex of buildings reconstructed as the kind of faux Victorian structures that make some preservationists cringe. But they were charming to the eyes of others (as to, for example, the eyes of the *Davis Enterprise* on May 4, 1984).
- What might be called the Carrere-Harby complex, completed in 1982, consisted of the two converted houses at the Southeast corner of Fourth and D. The Carrere home was moved there from the Wells Fargo Bank site rather than demolished (*Davis Enterprise*, July 30, 1980, December 24, 1982).

3. The Old High School Becomes City Hall, 1981. The rapid growth of Davis meant the rapid growth of Davis government. The number of City staff greatly exceeded space available to accommodate them at the little city hall at Third and F streets. After a long and tortured search for a site and funding, the old high school at Fifth and B, as noted just above, was bought from the school district and rehabilitated. With this, the City of Davis itself went into the historic preservation business.

4. The Avenue of the Trees Protest, 1984. This period saw the first major episode of public outcry against anti-preservationist **City of Davis** actions.

The City arborist and supporting "experts"—with the City Council going along—decided, in 1984, that a significant proportion (75 of about 260, the *Enterprise* reported) of the Black Walnut trees in the Davis "Avenue of the Trees" had reached the end of their "useful lives." They should be cut down (*Davis Enterprise*, May 15, 1984).

This declaration led to numerous and packed public protest meetings and the marshalling of equally credible experts opposed to the cuttings and who testified that the trees were nowhere near the end of their useful lives and could be maintained.

At the time of the publication of this book only a few of those trees had been cut down. So, you know what happened.

FOURTH PERIOD, 1988-94: PERCOLATING QUIESCENCE. The later 1980s and early 1990s were years of relative quiescence, at least with regard to the HMRC, which seemed to have moved into a "caretaker" mode. Further, looking over the Commission minutes of these years, one sees more than a few meetings disbanded for "lack of a quorum" and meetings canceled for "lack of items."


This, though, does not mean the period was without preservation and local history episodes and brouhaha. In fact, it was rather rich in these ways.

The City Council Preserves Buildings. In acquiring the old high school and converting it into a city hall, the City started down the historic preservation road. In this period they traveled down it quite some distance.

1. Southern Pacific Station Rehabilitation, 1980s. The Southern Pacific Railroad divested itself of passenger facilities in the late 1970s and in that process the City of Davis came to own the 1913 “Mission-style” station at the intersection of Second and H streets. In work extending a decade, a million and a half (or more) dollars were spent on “restoring” or otherwise re-doing the building and its environs.

6.6. City of Davis Designated Historical Resources, 2002. An * (asterisk) means an “Outstanding” as opposed to a mere “Historical” Resource.

There are 38 rather than 34 structures on this list because four are in the wider Davis area rather in or near the 1917 incorporating city limits of Davis.

- 
- *Davis Subway (Richards Underpass) (Ord. 2003, 9/29/99)
 - 221 First Street - A.J. Plant House (Ord. 1343, 1/8/86)
 - 616 First Street - Boy Scout Cabin (Ord. 1282)
 - 209 Second Street - Barovetto Home (Ord. 1363, 4/9/86)
 - 209 1/2 Second Street - Barovetto Tank House (Ord. 1363, 4/9/86)
 - 505 Second Street - H.J. Hamel House (Ord. 1291, 11/14/84) (National Register)
 - *604 Second Street - Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Home (Ord. 1282, 7/25/84)
 - *616 Second Street - Varsity Theatre (Ord. 1930, 2/25/98)
 - 716, 718, 720, 722, 724, 726 Second Street - Brinley Block (Ord. 1291)
 - *840 Second Street - Southern Pacific Station/Davis Junction (Ord. 1282) (National Register)
 - 232 Third Street - Eggleston Home (Ord. 1410, 1/7/87)
 - 923 Third Street - The Montgomery House (Ordinance 1928, 2/25/98)
 - 619 Fourth Street - First Presbyterian Manse (Ord. 1295)
 - *623 Seventh Street - Anderson-Hamel House (Ord. 1355, 2/19/86) (Ord. 1929 2/25/98)
 - 310 A Street - Asbill-Grieve House (Ord. 1364, 4/9/86)
 - 232 B Street - Jacobson-Wilson House (Ord. 1295, 11/28/84)
 - 337 B Street - McDonald House (Ord. 1360, 3/12/86)
 - 137 C Street - Clancy House (Ord. 1334, 12/4/85)
 - *412 C Street - Davis Community Church (Ord. 1282)
 - 445 C Street - Old Davis Library (Ord. 1282)
 - 602 D Street - the Grady House (Ord. 1954, 7/15/98)
 - 648 D Street - (Ord. 1954, 7/15/98)
 - 616 E Street - (Ord. 1954, 7/15/98)
 - *226 F Street - Old Davis City Hall (Ord. 1282)
 - 513 F Street - (Ord. 1954, 7/15/98)
 - 619 F Street - (Ord. 1954, 7/15/98)
 - *203 G Street - Anderson Bank Building (Ord. 1282)
 - 225 G Street - Masonic Lodge (Ord. 1291)
 - 301 G Street - Bank of Yolo (Ord. 1291)
 - *320 I Street - Williams-Drummond-Rorvick House (Ord. 1282)
 - *334 I Street - Schmeiser House (Ord. 1335, 12/4/85)
 - 405 J Street - McBride Home (Ord. 1402, 12/3/86)
 - *434 J Street - Joshua B. Tufts-Longview-Jones Home (Ord. 1282)
 - *1140 Los Robles - Werner-Hamel House (Ord. 1282)
 - *820 Pole Line Rd. - Davis Cemetery (Ord. 1282)
 - *Russell Boulevard, West of Arthur Street - Avenue of the Trees (Ord. 1282)
 - *23 Russell Boulevard - Davis City Offices (Ord. 1282)
 - *2727 Russell Boulevard - LaRue-Romani Home (Ord. 1282)

In view of the poverty the City so commonly pled about almost everything, one could ask how such a large project was possible. The answer is that staff were adroit grant writers and that the state or federal government paid 85 percent or more (but plus or minus fifteen percent still represented a lot of City loose change) (*Davis Enterprise*, May 29, 1988).

The work was done in phases, the first major one of which was completed, in the official reckoning, on Saturday, June 4, 1988. There was an elaborate dedication ceremony that day, along with a downtown “street faire” and other celebration activities.

Work on the SP station was commonly spoken of as a “transportation enhancement” matter (as a “multi-modal” facility) rather than as a preservation effort. Even so, such a “saving” of the SP station had major preservationist import and meaning. Indeed, one might claim it was one of the two or three most important preservation events in Davis history.

2. From Old Library to Part-Time Museum, Late 1980s-Early 1990s. In the late 1970s, City officials began to conceive the properties at and near the southwest corner of First and F streets as a site for a multi-story parking structure. A building constructed in 1911 as Davis' first public library stood on one of them. The library function was transferred to a new building (on Fourteenth Street) in 1968. The structure at 117 F fell into relative disuse. Officials began to think about demolition.

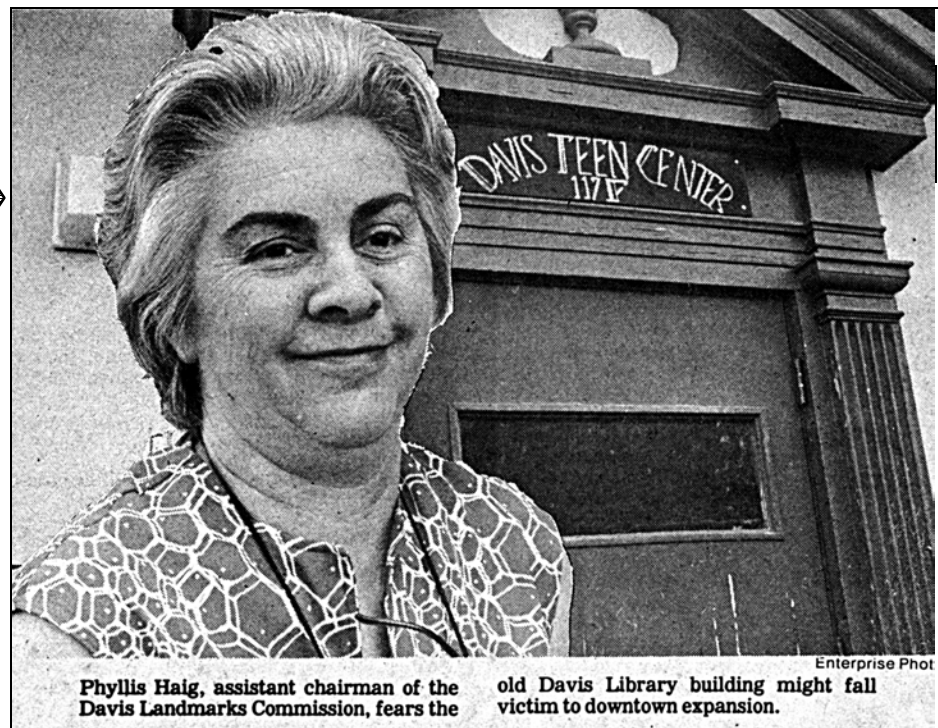
But, in the early 1980s, Phyllis Haig, descendant of Davis pioneers and a major figure in Davis historical and preservationist matters, proposed a different future: A Davis history museum. Backed by the Historical Commission and other groups, she campaigned to save the building at that location or to move it.

Petitioned almost continuously by Haig and others over several years, the City Council finally agreed to keep the building as a City-owned structure, but not entirely as a museum. Instead, it would become a Parks and Recreation meeting facility that would also function, part-time, as a museum.

The building was moved four blocks northwest to Central Park (445 C) in August of 1988. Rehabilitated, it was made the Museum of Davis (although only partially used as that) in 1991.

Subsequently (see below), the building was formally named the Hattie Weber Museum of Davis in honor of Harriet Elisha Weber (1872-1961), who ran the public library in Davis from 1910 to 1953. (Those who think “small world,” will appreciate knowing she was a daughter of George Augustus Weber and an aunt of John Weber Brinley.)

6.7. Phyllis Haig, *Davis Enterprise*, May 10, 1979.



Phyllis Haig, assistant chairman of the Davis Landmarks Commission, fears the old Davis Library building might fall victim to downtown expansion.

Enterprise Phot

At this time, the City contracted with “The Library Club”—a group whose membership was restricted to female descendents of Davis pioneers—to run the Museum. This contract provided that the Club would operate a museum in exchange for being allowed to use the building for club meetings. (The contract did not involve the exchange of any money and could be canceled by either party at any time.)

3. Varsity Theater Leased and Renovated, Early 1990s. Deciding the “Streamline Moderne” Varsity Theater on Second Street was obsolete for showing motion pictures, the owners closed it in September, 1990. As part of a then-new economic development strategy for the downtown, the City took a 25-year lease on it and, with significant cost overruns, spent more than \$800,000 renovating it.

Orchestrated by then-Mayor David Rosenberg, more than \$400,000 of these costs were raised from developer contributions. (For example, one developer pledged \$240,000, which was \$800 for each house he built.) Asked why almost all the donations were from developers, Mayor Rosenberg (ever the deadpan comic) opined, “Money comes from developers because they are civic-minded” (*Davis Enterprise*, October 1, 1991).

4. Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Purchased, 1994. When the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer mansion was “saved” through redevelopment as “Mansion Square” in 1978, the lot was split, leaving the mansion on its own small plot. In 1994, its owner decided to sell it. Saying that it was desperate for more office space, the City bought it.

Other City Preservation Activities. In addition to getting into the historic rehabilitation business, the City engaged in some other activities.

The 75th Anniversary of Davis Incorporation, 1992. In mid-1991, the HMRC and city staff began planning the City’s 75th Anniversary of incorporation. Consisting of a year-long series of events, the actual “birthday party” was held outdoors in Central Park on the blessedly balmy day of Saturday, March 28. (The vote to incorporate took place on March 20, 1917.)

Among other performances in the seven-hour long celebration, Mayor Maynard Skinner arrived at noon on a “Highwheel bicycle followed by Skydance Skydivers descending into the park.” Not to be overshadowed, Council Member David Rosenberg rode about on a rented horse. In a ceremony at 1:00 p.m., the meeting-museum building was formally declared the Hattie Weber Museum of Davis.

One of the more striking aspects of the 75th Anniversary was the amount of attention given to it in the pages of the *Davis Enterprise*. In addition to abundant coverage in ordinary stories, the paper developed and printed a two-part insert, called “Remembering Our Heritage,” containing a great many stories on aspects of Davis history (*Davis Enterprise*, March 22 and 23, 1992). Separate from this, there was a six part series on “Davis historic homes,” as well as assorted other history stories over the year.

The Second Davis History Book. In 1988, the idea that Davis needed an updated book of history that reflected the new environmental and liberal Davis of the recent period found favor among members of the City Council. A request for proposals was issued, revised after being criticized as too narrow in conception, and then reissued. Providing a stipend of \$10,000, to be taken largely from the Davis History Trust Fund, an author was selected.

The writer began interviewing people for the history. Soon, word began circulating that this would-be historian lectured interviewees more than interviewed them and spent too much time giving her personal opinions on many topics, including her negative views of current Council

members. The critical reaction was so wide and strong that the author resigned. A second author was recruited. But he posed a different kind of problem. He went years over the deadline to deliver the manuscript. Under the threat of having to return the portion of the stipend he had already been paid, he turned in a draft of his book in 1998. Quite well done but narrowly focused on only a few public policies, it generated almost no public reaction or interest when the draft was put on the City's web site. It never proceeded to hardcopy publication.

Citizen Campaigns. Some of the percolating aspects of this period's relative quiescence took the form of citizen resistance to City anti-preservation initiatives.

A "Defended Neighborhood:" Old East Davis, 1988. In the mid-1980s, the City Council began to think that perhaps it was time to redevelop the area bounded by the railroad, L Street, Second Street, and Fifth Street with apartment buildings at much, much greater than existing population density.

This area happened also to contain a number of the oldest homes in Davis and residents attached to those homes and the neighborhood. They regarded the contemplated redevelopment as a threat. They thereupon invented the term "Old East Davis" and formed an association with that name. This area thus become Davis' first (in sociological jargon) "defended neighborhood," an area that is spurred into creating an identity for itself and organizing its residents because of external threats (Suttles, 1972: Ch. 2, "The Defended Neighborhood").

For whatever reasons, the plan the Council floated never moved forward. In the year 2002, Old East Davis still looked very much like it did in the mid-1980s. (And, there was a continuing Old East Davis Association, which is described below.)

Subway II, 1988. In 1988, the Council tried a second time to achieve approval for a bond to widen the Subway. But, the effort was overshadowed by a concurrent controversy and public vote on the issue of building a freeway overpass at one rather than another location in east Davis. The citizenry was almost evenly divided on the two overpass locations, which aroused high emotions and intense campaigning on both sides. The consequence was rather little attention to the Subway bond either for or against. It achieved 60% approval in the November balloting, but failed because two-thirds was required.

Alley Paving Protest, 1991-92. The City of Davis Department of Public Works continuously works on a list of "capital improvement projects," a set of year-after-year construction changes in and upgrades to the City's physical infrastructure. One of those projects, that hardly anyone reviewed or paid attention to, was the cement paving of the six gravel-surfaced alleys in the Old North neighborhood. Moving up a notch in the list each year, this activity was scheduled to happen in 1992.

After she was evicted from her to-be-demolished home on Second Street, Julie Partansky had moved four blocks north and lived in a cottage on one of those six alleys. In mid-1991, she learned of the impending paving of her and the other five alleys.

With the help of dozens of residents in the neighborhood, she organized "stop the paving" petitions to the City Council. Under this citizen pressure and with Public Works Department surveys that showed most Old North people opposed paving, the City Council mostly relented. The alley between G and F streets in the 500 block, which had the most commercial presence and traffic, would be paved. The other five were re-graded and re-graveled (*Davis Enterprise*, January 9, 1992).

What makes this episode of interest here is that Partansky enlisted the HMRC in the struggle. She and the Commission made “historical resource” arguments for not paving. That is, gravel alleys were a part of the historical integrity of the Old North. While the concept of “integrity” had previously been applied to buildings, application to a feature of a neighborhood was new. And, it opened the way to thinking about a “conservation district” later in the 1990s. (Some people of course tried to discredit this line of thinking by charging that Partansky and the HMRC believed that one should preserve “historic potholes.” No one ever made such an argument, but it made a good “Davis is wacky” story in the *National Inquirer*.)

Paving or not paving was a major topic of public attention in the last months of 1991 and the early months of 1992. Julie was clearly the major spokesperson for and the leader of the anti-pavers. Based on this, people urged her to run for City Council in the election to be held in June, 1992. She did and she won. (Another small world aside: William Kopper was one of the key people encouraging her to run and who worked in her campaign.)

FIFTH PERIOD: RESURGENCE AND REACTION, 1995–2002. In the early 1990s, John Meyer, the new City Manager appointed in 1990, reorganized the Davis City government. Shuffling the departmental homes of various activities, the HRMC was moved from the Planning Department, with a planner as Commission staff, to the Parks and Recreation Department, with two liberal-arts-trained people assigned (each part-time) as Commission Staff.

The HMRC Moves Upscale. In this new home, the HMRC was given a new and different identity. It was now a high-tone “cultural service,” rather than a low-tone and gritty land-use restriction. As if to stress the point, the Civic Arts Commission was put beside the HRMC in the City’s organizational chart. The staff person in charge was titled the “Cultural Services Manager” (as opposed to the less sacred and blunt “planner”).

The importance of this change is that the two young staff with HMRC responsibilities—Sophia Pagoulatos and Esther Polito—were trained in aspects of the arts, particularly in art history, not in planning or in preservation. However, they were sophisticated and cosmopolitan about cultural matters, believed in preservation, and were hard workers who learned quickly.

Becomes a Certified Local Government. They began to educate themselves about preservation at the state and federal level and learned that there was a new a program for historical commissions called the Certified Local Government (CLG). This federal-state effort provided incentives to local governments to undertake preservation activities, especially “surveys of cultural resources.” A local jurisdiction agreed to appoint commissioners of certain qualifications and specialties and to require a number of hours of training per year in exchange for which it was preferentially eligible for preservation-related grants. (CLG membership would cost the City \$600 a year for the required training of commissioners.)

Pagoulatos and Polito worked-up the idea of joining. It was subsequently supported and sponsored by the HRMC, the Head of the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the City Manager, John Meyer. (Meyer was himself a preservation supporter and the owner-occupant of a house he seemed happy to see become a “historic resource” in 1998 [Fig. 6.6, 616 E Street]).

So sponsored, the City Council unanimously approved application for CLG membership on February 9, 1995. Julie Partansky, who was one of the strongest supporters of preservation ever elected to the Council, was in the third year of her first term. The then-Mayor, David Rosenberg, was also a preservationist. (We will meet both of them again in the chapters of Part II.)

Three Major Official Actions. CLG membership opened the door to a resurgence of preservationist activities. Here are what I think to have been the three most important of these.

1. The Second Cultural Resources Survey, 1996. The HMRC and its staff right away parlayed their CLG preferential eligibility for funding into a \$15,000 grant for a consultant to conduct an update of the 1980 survey of cultural resources. By “right away,” I mean the Council unanimously approved application for the grant on May 24, 1995, less than three months after approving an application for GLC membership.

This second survey fielded some two dozen volunteer surveyors and was conducted and completed in 1996. It produced a document about as fat the first one but in fact much longer because the type was much smaller. This time it was titled *City of Davis Cultural Resources Inventory and Context Statement* (Architectural Resources Group, 1996).

The list of possibly historical structures was longer than that of 1980. The enumeration reached farther from the original center of the town at Second and G streets and now included, in particular, many homes in the “Old North” area, the twelve blocks bounded by Fifth, Seventh, B, and the railroad tracks. And it included all the houses in the area called “College Park.”

2. Eight New Designations. This expanded enumeration provided the basis for renewed effort to “designate” “historical resources.” Guided by the expertise of a new set of technically-trained Commissioners, a fresh list of properties on which to work up “nominations” was created.

This fresh list importantly consisted of residences rather than other types of buildings. As one can see in Figs. 6.5 and 6.6 there would eventually be eight new designations, seven in 1998 and one in 1999. Six of the eight were residences. One of the other two was the Richards Underpass and the other was the Varsity Theater, a structure considered obsolete for its original use.

Of importance, I think, there were no ordinary commercial buildings (the Varsity Theater being obsolete). The one commercial structure that the HMRC actually moved to the nomination phase—the Terminal Building—was turned down by the Council—a subject I examine in detail in Part II of this volume.

But there was a phase previous to nomination. This was the phase in which Commissioners asked themselves if it made sense to try to work-up a nomination. One major reason it would not make sense would be an owner’s already known opposition to preservation, combined with the importance of the owner’s business in Davis. Indeed, at least one key building on G Street never got near the point of nomination because Commissioners were well aware of this owner’s virtual hate of preservation.

Also at this time, Commissioners desired to nominate the Catholic Church at Fifth and C streets. Told of this desire, the owner said it did not want designation. Litigation and legislation pending in California regarding religious structures also clouded what was possible. Time passed and the matter was not taken up again.

3. Conservation District Design Guidelines, 2001. Aside from issues of preservation, guidelines for design of new construction in the Core Area had been an issue for many years. Indeed, the matters of “design review” and “design guidelines” had become so contentious and seemingly subjective that one Council even abolished what was called the Design Review Commission. Deciding to ignore the problem did not, though, make it go away.

Hanging out there as a sore that became acutely inflamed on occasion, this long-standing problem of what to do about design opened the way for the HRMC to broach a modest solution.

Perhaps one only needed design guidelines that applied to the “traditional” part of Davis (the 1917 incorporating area, the blocks bounded by A and L and First and Seventh streets).

The path in this direction had already been opened in the Davis *Core Area Specific Plan* of 1996. That plan stipulated that “any design guidelines developed for the City shall contain special guidelines for the Core Area that will take into account its uniqueness and architectural heritage” (City of Davis, 1996: 14).

Applying and extending that requirement, the HMRC, the Planning Commission, and staff joined in developing a plan to hire a “Design Guidelines consultant” who would conduct a series of public meetings to determine citizen desires and write up a draft booklet of guidelines. The “budget adjustment” for this was \$40,000. Again with the support of the City Manager and other key city staff, the Council unanimously approved the measure on April 4, 1999. At this time, Julie Partansky was the mayor.

Of key importance, the plan called for the creation of a “conservation district,” **not** a “preservation district” or a “historic district.” The idea was to create a zoning “overlay” area, not to engage in entirely new zoning. This was done, HRMC members and staff said clearly, because they doubted people in Davis would accept something as strong as a preservation or historic district. (These distinctions among districts are described in Terrell, 1996: 9-10.)

Bruce Race of RACESTUDIO was awarded the contract. He orchestrated public meetings to elicit resident views of their respective areas and worked with City planner Ken Hiatt and others to produce a draft. This draft was then the subject of several more public meetings.

I was a participant in this process and I attended almost all the public meetings. I was especially interested in the degree to which and ways in which there was public opposition to the Guidelines. To my surprise, I observed or knew of no one who publicly opposed them in principle and called for the adoption of no guidelines. Instead, what little public opposition there was related to changes in particular provisions. The strongest form of this selective opposition came from architects who feared that their creative talents would be stifled by a strict reading of the guidelines. But, this was not opposition to the Guidelines per se. (And, architects were assured they would not be stifled.)

On the other side, residents who came to the meetings—perhaps two hundred people over all the meetings—were quite enthusiastic and evidenced considerable pride about living in “traditional Davis.”

But still, the very absence of wholesale opposition to the Guidelines in principle made me nervous. This was because in a number of private conversations I sensed people did not much like the idea of the constraints of the Guidelines, but felt reluctant to say so. In the People’s Republic of Liberal Davis, it was not “politically correct” to be against historic preservation. I therefore worried that there was a dammed up reservoir of anti-preservationist sentiment that a catalytic event might release. (The outcome of the Davis City Council election of March, 2002 and events following from it suggested that my fears were not baseless.)

Be that as it may, three Council members were not allowed to vote because they owned property in the “1917 city.” Using a random draw to allow one of these three to vote in order to achieve the possibility of a majority (Greenwald winning), the Guidelines were adopted by a unanimous vote of that three on August 1, 2001. (One of these three said, though, that she did not really like the Guidelines, but would not stand in the way of what seemed to be a well-negotiated plan that was arrived at democratically.)

Subway III, 1996-97. The above describes Davis preservationist activity dominated by government. But preservation also had other sources and actors; namely, grassroots citizen action. The 1995-2002 period had important such citizen-based episodes.

Recall that the City Council of 1973 wanted to widen the Richards Underpass, but the bond to execute the plan was defeated (**Subway I, 1973**, Chapter 5, section 8)). Then, in **Subway II, 1988**, a second bond issue failed with 60% voting in favor, but two thirds needed for adoption.

In a three to two vote, the Council of 1996 decided to try a third time to widen the Subway, but by other than bond financing. But, the two dissenting Council members—Julie Partansky and Stan Forbes—sparked a citizen referendum to overturn the plan. Vigorous campaigning by an coalition called SMART (Save Money and Reduce Traffic) triumphed in a special election held in March, 1997 (44% yes, 56% no).

As I said before, while there was a preservationist element in this contest, anti-tax sentiment was also likely a strong force. Nonetheless, preservationist values were also clearly visible in the campaign. (In addition, Julie Partansky stresses that the sheer, massive scale of the proposed replacement underpass worked against passage. Opponents developed an in-scale photographic mock-up of how the replacement tunnel would look at that location. According to her, its massiveness startled many people and turned them against the project.)

Old East Davis Celebrations, 1998- —. Starting in 1998, each Fall the Old East Davis Association held a day-long “Old East Davis Neighborhood Celebration.” Several streets were blocked off, bands performed, walking and house tours were conducted, a history contest held, ceremonies celebrated, the year’s Grand Marshal (an old-time resident) spoke about the neighborhood, dignitaries welcomed everyone, and, in general, a good time was had by all.

The consciously sponsored atmosphere was that of a party, but the underlying message was dead serious: We are organized and ready to respond to threats to our neighborhood. As it had developed in Davis and in the United States in general, historic preservation had become, in major respects, a government program. But in Old East Davis we saw historic preservation of a different kind with a different basis: grassroots residents acting on their own for their own neighborhood interests. Such indigenous initiative was so rare that one could not but be inspired when one encountered an authentic instance of it.

Terminal Building Demolition, 2000. For the sake of contextual clarity, I roster here the event that this book is about. The event itself and aftermath are treated in Parts II and III.

An Aside: The City as the Major Figure in Historic Buildings. Given the City of Davis’ reluctance to spend money on local history and preservation, it is ironic that, by the year 2000, it had nonetheless wound up being a major owner or controller of Davis historic buildings. These were: (1) the Old Davis High School remodeled into a City Hall (late 1970s); (2) the Southern Pacific Rail station (1980s); (3) the old library remodeled into a meeting-room/museum (1980s-90s); (4) the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Mansion (1994); (5) the long-term lease on and remodel of the Varsity Theater (1990s); (6) The old City Hall, originally the only building the City owned; and, (7) the Boy Scout Cabin, on which the City had a lease with an option to buy the land from UC Davis, giving it operational if not “on paper” ownership.



As of finishing this book in early 2003, it was still too soon to perceive with any clarity the end of the fifth period of Davis local history and preservation and the start of a sixth one.

2) THE FAILED 1984 EFFORT TO DESIGNATE THE TERMINAL BUILDING

Against the local history and preservation background and context sketched in this and the last chapter, we come to the 1984 failed effort to designate the Terminal Building a historical resource.

Recall from the previous chapter that in 1977 it had been acquired by the Chens and a shifting series of ancillary owners and corporate entities (Chapter 5, sections 3, 7, and 9). Electing not to bring the hotel portion up to code, that use had stopped, but the apartments and retail spaces were still rented.

OWNER'S DEMOLITION PLAN. Matters drifted in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Then, in 1983-84, the owners embarked on a plan to demolish the building and to put a four story box in its place (as shown in Fig. 6. 12). Apparently not opposed by the Planning Department, Lee Chen brought this scheme to the attention of the City Council on January, 25, 1984 (Fig. 6.8).

As it happened, other developers were also starting to float ideas for four story buildings in the downtown. Davis had no buildings of such a height—or hardly any that were even three stories. The prospect of a sudden set of tall structures precipitated a City Council move to freeze development of that sort until the likely consequences of such changes could be thought through. So, the Chen plan got an initial chilly reception for other than historic preservation reasons.

But there was also negative preservationist response. Mayor Bill Kopper was quoted and re-quoted as declaring at the January 25th meeting, “It would be a public outrage if that building were torn down” (Fig. 6.8). Apparently surprised by Kopper’s response and others like it, Chen said he would “not tear the building down at this time” (Fig. 6.8).

DEBATE. Three months of public debate on demolishing the Terminal Building ensued. In Fig. 6.9 we see side-by-side pro and con letters published in the *Enterprise* on January 31. Later that week, one of the two builders and original owners of the building—George Tingus, who was now 91 years of age—weighed in with a letter urging preservation (Fig. 6.10).

Responding to these and additional opinions, *Enterprise* reporter Mike Fitch composed an overview piece that appeared on February 3rd (Fig. 6.12). Of particular note, drawings of Chen’s proposed building accompanied the article.

The next week saw additional pro and con letters (Fig. 6.13). The pro-preservation letter penned by Dennis Dingemans offered especially sophisticated arguments. Its sophistication is perhaps made more understandable by knowing that Mr. Dingemans earned a Ph. D. in geography at UC Berkeley in 1975 and was a UC Davis faculty member, whose scholarly specialties included the subject of historic preservation (e.g. Datel and Dingemans, 1988). In addition, he was the spouse of Robin Datel. The sentiments expressed in the second letter, by Gale Sosnick, would be reiterated by her numerous times in diverse public venues over subsequent decades.

The last item in this little flurry was an opinion piece by Stephen Mikesell published in the *Enterprise* on February 10 (Fig. 6.14). As a preservation professional, Mikesell tried carefully to separate issues that were often tangled together but logically separate.

DEMOLITION PERMIT WITHDRAWN. Although Lee Chen had said on January 25 that he would not tear down the Terminal Building, he did not withdraw his application for a

demolition permit until early April. The *Enterprise* hailed this as “saving” the building in a front page story on April 4th (Fig 6.15).

THE HRMC MOVES. Recall that the City Council adopted a new and “modernized” historic preservation ordinance on February 22 of this same year (section 1, this chapter). This change required that the old “landmarks” be re-certified as “historical resources.” The Landmarks Commission, now renamed the Historical Resources Management Commission, had set about this task of re-certification when the Terminal Building was suddenly threatened.

Responding to this threat, at its meeting of May 29 the HRMC added the Terminal Building to its list of structures to be considered for historical resource designation. As would also happen when the building was again presented for designation in 1999, Lee Chen was unable to be present. The hearing was postponed to June 26. The *Enterprise* story reproduced in Fig. 6.16 describes the events of the May 29th meeting, which set the stage for June 26th.

No minutes of the June 26th meeting seem to have survived, so we must rely on two newspaper accounts of it (Figs. 6.17 and 6.18). The cast of leading participants in the meeting were the familiar ones: Chen, Mikesell, Dingemans, Sosnick. One interesting change is that Lee Chen was now represented by an attorney. This was Joan Poulos, a member of the famous liberal trio who changed the direction of Davis government in the election of 1972 and who was the first woman mayor of Davis (Fitch, 1998; Lofland, 2001: 16-17).

I note that only five of the seven members of the Commission were present and one of them voted against the designation. So, unlike the second time the time the building would be considered for designation, this approval was rather tepid.

THE COUNCIL VOTES NO. Thusly supported by the HRMC, the case went before the City Council on July 18, 1984. The official City account of what happened is reproduced in Fig. 6.19. Designation failed on a two to three vote.

The two news accounts are different enough in emphasis to justify reproducing both here, as Figs. 6.20 and 6.21. Two themes broached by Lee Chen and Joan Poulos are amusingly ironic. First, Mr. Chen asserts that “we should think about the future of Davis, not the past” (Fig. 6.21). In 1984, the Davis powers-that-were had already torn down or moved away almost two-thirds of the older buildings in the downtown area and replaced them with rather futuristic structures. That massive, future-oriented fact suggests that people in Davis were thinking about the future rather more than Mr. Chen wanted to give them credit.

Second, Ms. Poulos made a telling point when she declared that “any cultural value the building may have had has long since been forgotten” (Fig. 6.21). I think a fair-minded observer would have to agree with her that, in 1984, the state of popular historical knowledge and appreciation of Davis history was not great. Indeed, the now-city was entering the fourth decade of explosive growth (Fig. 1.3). The great bulk of the then-current residents had not lived in Davis very long. Understandably, their knowledge of Davis history was scant or zero.

In addition, there were hardly any efforts at this time to promote public understanding of Davis history. The “cultural value” of most **everything** historically Davis had “long since been forgotten.” Even more and to repeat: most then-residents of Davis, being new to the town, **never knew such “cultural value” in the first place.**

City wants old hotel preserved

By Teri Robinson
Staff writer

First steps were taken last night to prevent the demolition of the Aggie Hotel building and to prevent the construction of extra tall buildings in the downtown area.

Developer Lee Chen has proposed to tear down the Aggie Hotel, which is located on the northeast corner of Second and G streets, and put up a four-story office/retail building. This plan, so closely following that of two other multi-story buildings, has the city planning staff concerned and prompted last night's discussion.

"It would be a public outrage if that building were torn down," said Mayor Bill Kopper at last night's city council meeting. The building is not technically an historical landmark, but it is on a list of 100 city buildings that are historically significant. It also sports a mural of the Davis Arch.

The council requested the city staff to prepare an ordinance that would make the commercial area south of Third Street a "study zone" for four months. That would stop all building in the area until the council can decide what kind of construction should be allowed. Public hearings will be held on the proposed ordinance before the

See HOTEL, Back Page

6.8. *Davis Enterprise*, January 26, 1984. This story does not actually report that the "City" wanted an "old hotel preserved." At best, it only reports the reality that one member of the City Council did not want to tear down the Terminal Building.

Hotel

Continued from Page 1

council takes any action.

The study zone would not prevent Chen from tearing down the building, but it would prevent him from building on the vacant site. The council learned last night that it had little control over demolitions of non-historical buildings.

Chen told the council that he would not tear the building down at this time.

The council also asked the staff to recommend measures to restrict building height in the downtown area and to ensure that adequate parking accompany new or expanded structures.

Currently, there are no height restrictions on buildings in the commercial area. Also, owners of property within existing parking assessment districts are not required to supply more parking spaces when they enlarge their businesses. These businesses have already paid to provide parking lots in the downtown area.

Chen's proposed building would have created a demand for 83 new parking spaces, city staff anticipated, but it would have been required to supply none.

Changing the parking regulations for existing parking districts was opposed by Davis businessman Paul Garritson. "You have no legal right to change the rules on the first parking district," Garritson said to the council. "People have always had the idea they could add to their structures without adding more parking."

The council rejected a request by the city staff for a comprehensive study of the entire downtown area. There appears to be a trend toward tall buildings, said Senior Planner Tom Lumbrazo, which will place special de-

mands on city services and possibly change the character of the area.

A three-story commercial/residential building has been approved for Third and B. Central Park Plaza, and a four-story movie/office building is planned for Fifth and G Street.

Lumbrazo recommended that no further building permits be issued until a consultant be hired to review the possible effects and suggest new city policies or ordinances to regulate them.

Though environmental impact reports are done on each large project, that is an "incremental approach," said Community Development Director Fred Howell last night. The study would take a broader, more comprehensive view of the situation.

Councilmember Ann Evans suggested that the study be one task of the recently approved Davis 2000 Committee, a group which will recommend programs and policies for the next 20 years and which will examine the implications of various future population levels in Davis.

"A consultant cannot know what we want the character of the core to be," said Evans. Chen told the council that he had been led to believe by the city staff that there would not be a problem with his proposal. It does not violate any city ordinance, he pointed out.

He said the structure he proposes would fit in well with the surrounding structures. "We would like to do as much as possible for the city."

It would be very costly to simply renovate the structure, he also said, because the walls would have to be reinforced to bring them up to current earthquake standards.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is the Aggie Hotel really worth saving?

Following is a copy of a letter I have sent to the City Council concerning the proposed destruction of the old Aggie Hotel which was brought up at a recent council meeting and reported in *The Enterprise*.

I hope there will be an uprising of objection and alternative suggestions by the citizens of Davis. I have been here only four years, but it was the spirit and the civic pride in its roots that attracted me to this community.

I fear greedy real estate developers swallowing up all the old buildings and all the vacant spaces left in Davis. If we don't get vocal about it, the Core Area will be filled in with huge, badly designed buildings worse than some of those along Second Street, and the traffic will be even worse than it is now. Moreover, it appears we will have a glut of office space if the developers are left to their own devices.

The attractiveness of Davis has already been marred. Let us not ruin the rest of it by default. The developers need control and guidance from the citizens who love and appreciate the Davis character and history, and are concerned for its future, based on its traditions and customs.

Dear Council Members,

It appears that the wily developers have pulled the wool over the eyes of the city officials and once again we are in danger of losing the ambience of Davis that was nearly decimated a few years ago.

The ill-advised Central Park Plaza is too far along to stop, and the city will find, eventually, what a mistake we have made. It is not, however, too late to stop the tearing down of the old Aggie Hotel, and possibly it is not too late to modify the plans for the property at Fifth and G.

Before taking the word of Mr. Chen that restoring the Aggie Hotel building would be too costly (to whom and for what reason?) I suggest that a careful study be made to see if the building could be restored, or if it is possible to impose strict design and structural requirements on the developer to retain the north wall, including it in the new struc-

ture, and to make the new design conform as much as possible to the original.

The usual argument of the developers is that they need to make a "reasonable" profit on their investment. But when their needs conflict with the needs of the community, someone has to ask which is more important, the *laissez faire* desires of the developer, or the long-range welfare of the community.

If the plans made for the renovation of the train depot are still in order, and a schedule for this construction has been confirmed, it appears to me that a cooperative planning of the two sites, the depot and the hotel, in the Core Area. With the Greyhound depot transferred to the Amtrak station, more visitors will get their first view of Davis in this part of the town. It could be made into an attractive entrance into the city, and introduce visitors and new residents to the business area in a positive way. In addition, if the Aggie Hotel could again become a functioning hostelry, it would help relieve the accommodation congestion that occurs during the times UCD has special events, and provide another alternative, convenient to transportation, for business and vacation guests.

I agree with the mayor that we cannot let the mural be destroyed. It is not only, as he said, something paid for by the city, but it is a dramatic reminder to all Davis residents of the heritage of this unique community. To destroy that mural would be to destroy a part of the heart and spirit of Davis that we all enjoy.

If the developer persists in his intention to destroy the entire building, isn't there a chance that the citizens of Davis can join together to force an alternative decision by the council and the Planning Commission?

Margaret Milligan
Davis

The real issue

I was amused to read that Mayor Bill Kopper expects "a public

Letters to the editor



outrage" if the old Aggie Hotel building at Second and G is torn down. Personally, I've always felt that that building was one of the most unaesthetic and slum-like structures in the entire city.

But really, my opinion of the building's looks is beside the point. And so is Mayor Kopper's. The central issue is that Lee Chen, and not the mayor or I, is the owner of that building.

Let's take an analogous situation. Suppose Old Mr. Smith owns a Model T. He's been driving it around Davis for 50 years. But repairs on the old car are becoming more and more expensive. Finally, he decides to junk it and buy himself a new Porsche.

"No, Mr. Smith," says the City Council. "That old Model T is part of our city's historical heritage. It would cause a public outrage if you junked it. You may not replace it with a new car."

Surely the injustice in such a council decree is self-evident. So what difference is there between Mr. Smith's old car and Lee Chen's old building? Is not the principle the same?

Those people who want to see the old Aggie Hotel building preserved have the option of raising the money and offering to buy the building from Mr. Chen. For people to pay for what they want is fair and just; to force Mr. Chen to bear the cost is not.

William S. Statler
Davis

6.10. *Davis Enterprise*, February 2, 1984.

Save the hotel

In 1924 I was the original owner and developer of the property on the corner of Second and G streets (currently the Aggie Hotel).

As a cornerstone of the original downtown Davis business area, and one of its few remaining landmarks, I strongly urge the City Council and Planning Commission to recognize its historical significance and not allow the building to be demolished.

The future direction of the downtown Core Area is in the hands of the citizens of Davis, they have the duty to preserve a little bit of the past for future generations. I sincerely hope the citizens of Davis do not allow development of this type to change the "personality" of our town forever.

**George J. Tingus and family
Davis**

6.11. Photograph of the Terminal Building printed in the *Davis Enterprise*, February 22, 1984.



Debate may decide Aggie Hotel fate

Historic site or eyesore?

By MIKE FITCH

To some residents, the building is a historic landmark, a vital link to the community's past.

To others, it is an eyesore, a slum-like structure that should be torn down and replaced with something new, something more efficient.

The Davis City Council ultimately may be asked to decide who is right and who is wrong about the two-story structure which has rested at the northeast corner of Second and G streets since 1925. In the meantime, the debate continues about what should be done with the structure.

For decades, the building housed visitors to Davis, provided newcomers with a resting place while they looked for permanent accommodations and offered a refuge for transients and others down on their luck.

At first, it was known as the Terminal Hotel and Cafe and served primarily as a overnight resting place for train travelers from the nearby Southern Pacific Depot.

Later, the building housed the Aggie Hotel and the Antique Bizarre, a bar and restaurant which long was one of the city's weekend hot spots. The two businesses closed several years ago, but the memories remain.

Covering the north end of the building is another reminder of the city's heritage, a mural based on a 1919 photograph of Second Street.

The building, its past and its future were thrust into the limelight recently when Lee Chen, its owner, applied to the city for permission to build a new four-story structure on the site.

The application has polarized those who hold opposing views about the issue. Supporters charge that developers are willing to throw away the city's heritage because of their devotion to profits.

"It appears that the wily developers have pulled the wool over the eyes of the city officials and once again we are in danger of losing the ambience of Davis that was nearly decimated a few years ago," says one local resident, Margaret Milligan, in a letter to the council.

Several years ago, the community was divided over a similar issue: what to do with the Hunt-Boyer Mansion, a historic structure which sits at Second and E streets. In that case, a compromise solution was worked out that allowed the mansion to remain at its traditional location and owners to construct a shopping center, Mansion Square, at the rear of the site.

Those who oppose sentiments such as those expressed by Milligan question whether the building is worth saving.

"Personally, I've always felt that building was one of the most unaesthetic and slum-like buildings structures in the entire city," said William Statler in a recent letter to The Enterprise.

Chen does not want to be cast as the villain in the controversy, saying he has looked into restoring the



Photo by Ken Browning

What to do?

The old Aggie Hotel building, which displays a mural of the old Davis arch on its north wall, is the focus of a debate between

citizens who want to preserve the structure as a landmark and those who want to see a larger office and retail building in its place.

structure, but has learned that restoration may be too costly to be feasible.

According to Chen, an initial study indicates restoration of the building would cost between \$70 and \$75 per square foot. A new structure would cost only about \$60 per square foot. He also believes restoring the building for office use will be difficult since the north wall has no windows.

Chen said he closed the hotel in 1979 because it wasn't very profitable and caused too many headaches.

He says the new building being proposed will benefit Davis and its business community and stresses its features are being designed to blend in with surrounding buildings.

Faced with strong opposition to his plans, Chen says he may withdraw his application for the new project.

"We are thinking about it, whether we should withdraw it or continue," he said this morning, indicating he plans to decide within a week or so.

Chen also indicated he may hold on to the property for several years and then decide what to do with it or may seek less expensive estimates for restoring the building.

If Chen does not withdraw the application, the City Council probably will decide the fate of the project. At a meeting on Jan. 25, Chen's plans met a cool reception, particularly from Mayor Bill Kopper.

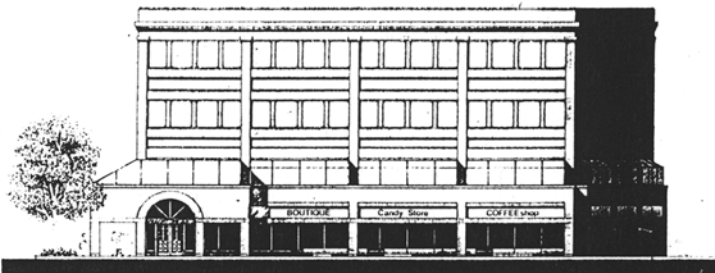
Said Kopper during the meeting, "I think there would be a public outrage if that building was torn down."

During a telephone conversation this week, the mayor stressed that such buildings should be retained so that residents can maintain a sense of history.

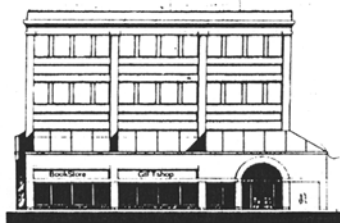
He admitted, however, "If I owned the building, I would probably feel the way Mr. Chen feels."

Kopper, Chen and others have indicated that some kind of compromise can be reached which will meet the owner's financial needs, but still allow the community to retain the building.

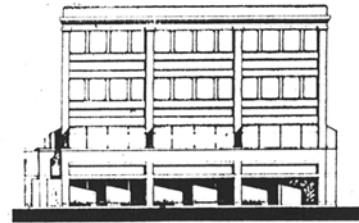
In the meantime, the council is considering the possibility of placing much of the downtown area in a study zone, a move which would postpone development of properties such as the Aggie Hotel site until issues raised by Chen's projects and a couple of others can be resolved.



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

6.12. *Davis Enterprise*, February 3, 1984.

Save building

It was not a pleasure to read that the owner claims that the Hotel Aggie "is old and deteriorating and shouldn't be there" or to hear a citizen (Paul X) at City Council declare that the building "is a piece of junk and should be torn down."

The news that this familiar place might be removed was strangely disconcerting to me when I first heard it, but after reflection I now better realize why I think it is worthwhile to pause and consider alternatives that would save the Hotel Aggie building.

As a piece of architecture, it is an ordinary Main Street building, but as part of the recent past it has meaning and value for me. That it is possible to grow attached to a town's familiar businesses was well shown when I saw the closing of Lee's Drugs bring tears to many last-time shoppers there.

I was not one that got emotional over Lee's but the Hotel Aggie building houses many pleasant personal memories for me and, I suspect, for other citizens of our town.

When I first came here to teach part-time in 1972, overnight room upstairs were just \$3.50 and you rented them from two delightful characters that exhibited a strong sense of proprietorship. J.B. Jackson, noted commentator on the ordinary landscapes of American small towns, was delighted to stay there when he visited UCD in 1975.

Downstairs, at the Antique Bizarre, town met gown and faculty met students, duplicating nicely the informal setting of Jimmy's at Chicago and LaVal's at Berkeley. Many nights during 1973-74 when my father visited me here we would finish the day with a slow walk downtown to the Antique.

Finding the hotel's Natural Food Works seemed a rare and comforting link to the Bay Area's counter-culture. Next door was the Davis Florist where I am a loyal customer for bouquets that celebrated my wedding and many other lesser events. I invite the residents of Davis to consider the memories they have of events in this venerable old

Letters to the editor



landmark.

Personal memories are not, even in the aggregate, the main reason why I think the city should nudge the owners toward rehabilitation and away from replacement of the Hotel Aggie building. The Aggie is the anchor of Davis' remaining "Main Street" environment.

Scholars of America's cities have discovered that the Main Street districts of small towns are powerful and positive symbols, conveying meaning and value to Americans who, overwhelmingly, prefer to live in a small town setting (albeit one that is conveniently close to a metropolis). Only the New England Village is an equivalent icon of what is good about our national urban experience.

The "Main Street" imagery of Davis is already severely damaged by the parking lot that cuts out part of eastern G Street, but the Hotel Aggie is a vital and effective reminder that Davis once had the archtypical block length of shoulder-to-shoulder commercial buildings.

As one of the remaining corners of a four-hotel intersection, the Aggie is also a railroad hotel that reminds us of the depot's role in our town's more ancient history. "Davisville '68" and the Davis "Cultural Resources Inventory," both available at the library, do a good job of illustrating the importance of G Street and the Hotel Aggie intersection as the historic center of our town's economic and social life.

Finally, we might all benefit from knowing a few facts about the economics of "rehabilitation versus replacement" at the Hotel Aggie site. The Yolo County tax rolls (public record data) indicate that the building and land carried a value of \$178,593 in 1983 and surely cost

6.13. *Davis Enterprise*, February 7, 1984.

less than that in 1977 when the property was last assessed for (or changed hands to) the current owners.

The lower floor commercial space occupies a bit less than 4,000 square feet (it is 53 by 75 feet) and the two currently rented apartments occupy a bit less than 1,500 square feet (they are 53 by 23 feet). Thus, even without renting the upper floors and even without getting premium downtown rents, the rental of this 5,000 square feet of space must provide an adequate return on an investment of less than \$200,000.

Despite the apparent positive cash flow, and despite the apparent lack of any structural problems that would limit the long future of the building, the owners have not been maintaining the Aggie Hotel with the care that a highly visible Main Street property (or any property) deserves. I have watched for years as the only second floor window shutters break loose and tilt and drop without repairs (only 8 of the 14 now remain).

I conclude that the owners have been "disinvesting" and acting like slumlords. By skimping on normal exterior maintenance during the past 10 years the owners have failed to be good citizens or good neighbors to the rest of Main Street. A rehabilitated Hotel Aggie would do much to compensate for those years of neglect to one of our town's landmarks.

Dennis Dingemans
Davis

'New's not bad'

Thank you *Enterprise* for showing us the alternative to the old Aggie Hotel. All old buildings are not beautiful; all new buildings are not ugly. I happen to think that Mr. Chen's building is more handsome.

Mr. Chen's building also offers economic advantages. The entire first floor will be devoted to retail space, which will contribute to a healthier Core Area. So will offices/apartments above. High density is a sound city-planning principle.

The Aggie Hotel is not one of the 14 historical buildings that the Historical Commission designated for saving. The lease for the mural expired in 1981, and the agreement explicitly said that the mural could be demolished: (I don't know why a painting of a structure that is ugly is worth looking at.)

Let us not be carried away by nostalgia.

Gale Sosnick
Davis

Aggie Hotel worth saving as historic gateway

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephen Mikesell, a Davis resident, is chairman of the Historical and Landmarks Commission.)

By STEPHEN MIKESELL

I think the Hotel Aggie should be saved, for its own sake and the sake of downtown.

The corner of Second and G streets was historically the gateway to Davis. This is illustrated in the mural on the north wall of the hotel and can be seen in the four major historical structures that anchor

Opinion

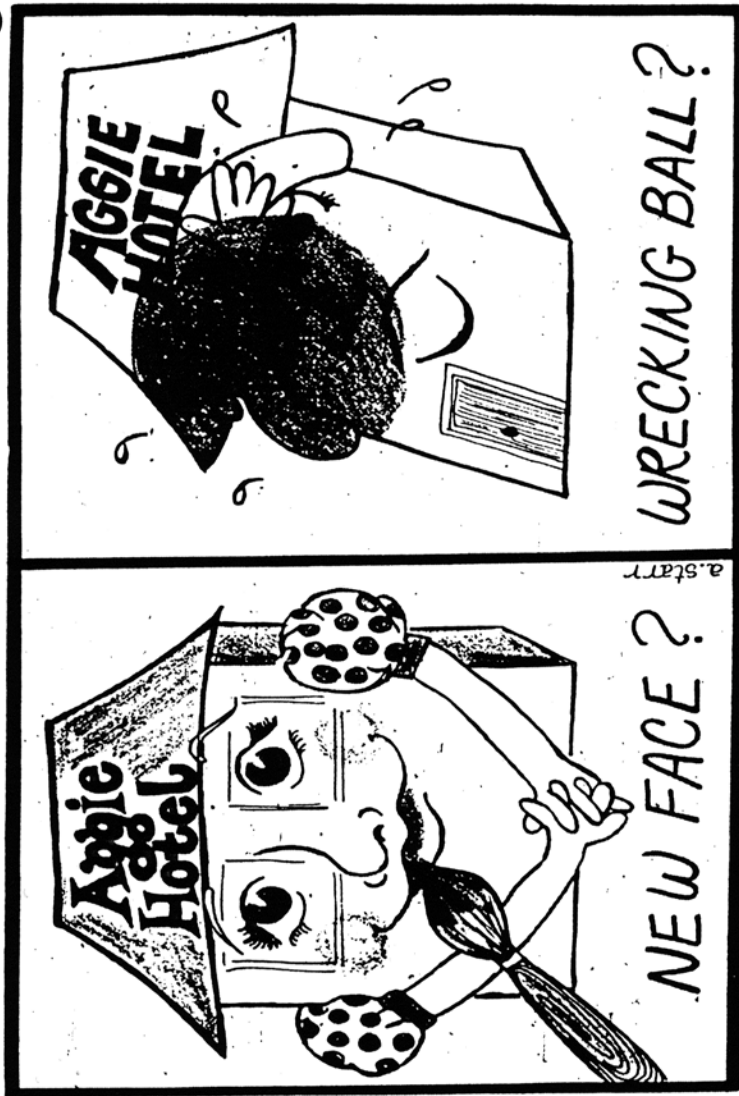
that corner: the Terminal Hotel (Hotel Aggie), the Anderson Bank (Barney's Records), the Brinley Block (the Paragon Restaurant) and the Southern Pacific Depot complex.

This corner is all that remains of the traditional "Main Street" of Davis. If we lose the hotel, we lose a large part of our Main Street and the character of downtown.

The hotel is important in its visual context and for its long history of service to the community.

George Tingus, scion of a proud local family, remembers the building for the restaurant and hotel he ran in the 1920s.

My own memories of the place have to do with Anchor Steam on tap at the Antique Bizarre, while waiting for the Coast Starlight to Portland. A public house in service for more than half a century will gather such memories about it. No



because citizens oppose demolition, but also because the proposed four-story replacement structure is so out of scale and incompatible with adjoining structures.

The Hotel Aggie issue can be resolved well or it can be resolved poorly.

In the worst case, the property owner could demolish the hotel and the City Council could deny the new project, leaving the lot vacant and everyone the poorer.

In the best case, the city and the applicant could work together to devise a plan that would provide adequate economic return to the owner while preserving what should be preserved of the old hotel.

This alternative — adaptive reuse of an historic building — is not novel. The charm of cities from San Francisco to Nevada City is attributable to the success of adaptive reuse projects there.

Let's try for the best case. Let the property owner avail himself of the talents and ideas of the city — of the City Council, city staff, Historical and Landmarks Commission, Design Review Commission. Let the city define the boundaries of an acceptable project and advise the property owner of the financial and design advantages of a reuse project.

I am convinced that this alternative is superior to any other alternative raised to date and will prove entirely satisfactory to everyone concerned with the Hotel Aggie issue.

Davis, like many other California cities, includes design review as well as zoning in its planning process, effectively dividing the city into zones of compatible activities and architectural design. The hotel issue is before the City Council not only

streets and vice versa. Neither should we cloud the issue with talk of inviolable property rights. The very notion of planning presumes that property rights are partially constrained by community prerogatives.

not resist the tendency toward density in commercial development that accompanies population growth. The question is where dense development should take place. What is right for Fifth and G streets may not be right for Second and G

surprise that a large public opposes its demolition. The issue of saving the hotel can be discussed on its own merit and should not be confused with the larger issue of growth in the central Core. I happen to believe we should

6.14, Davis Enterprise, February 10, 1984.

G STREET SITE

Hotel Aggie saved

By **MIKE FITCH**

The building that once housed the Hotel Aggie and Antique Bizarre and a mural located on the north end of the building apparently have escaped destruction.

Lee Chen, the owner of the building, has withdrawn an application that asked for city permission to demolish the structure and replace it with a four-story commercial building. The building is located on the northeast corner of Second and G streets.

"I don't think I can fight the city," Chen said this morning, alluding to the controversy his project has encountered.

Chen said he plans to keep the property for a couple of years and then perhaps come forward with a revised development. The hotel and Antique Bizarre, a bar and restaurant, were closed in about 1979. A restaurant, health food store and photography studio currently are located in the building, which was built in 1925.

The mural depicts Second Street as it looked in 1919.

Chen also indicated he did not expect his development plans to create much controversy.

"If I had known we would have that much problem I wouldn't have submitted an application at all," he said.

Chen's plans to destroy the building created considerable opposition from residents who feel the structure is a historic landmark that should be saved.

City Acting Planning Director Tom Lumbrazo announced the withdrawal of the project during a meeting of the Davis Planning Commission Tuesday. The announcement was made during a discussion of the project and other high-rise developments proposed for the Core Area.

In part, Chen's plan created controversy because initially the four-story building could have been built without providing any on-site parking. The reason: it is located in a parking district and traditionally the city has not required on-site parking for developments located in downtown parking districts.

Since then, the commission and City Council have adopted a measure that requires downtown commercial projects with more than two stories to obtain conditional use permits. City officials hope to counter parking and other problems through conditions in the permits.

During Tuesday's meeting, commissioners unanimously approved a set of guidelines for judging whether high-rise projects should receive permits.

One guideline indicates buildings should have no more than five stories and shouldn't rise more than 70 feet above ground level.

Another guideline indicates high-rise projects located in parking districts should have to provide on-site parking based only on the square footage of the structures located above the first two floors. Lumbrazo indicated the guideline makes sense because the parking exemption for developments in the parking districts was based on the assumption that downtown structures would have one or two stories.

6.15. *Davis Enterprise*,
April 4,
1984.

HISTORIC STATUS

Hotel decision delayed

The Davis Historical Resources Management Commission decided Tuesday the Davis Cemetery and seven local buildings should be protected as historic landmarks, but delayed consideration of the Hotel Aggie.

Lee Chen, owner of the hotel building, had requested that discussion of the building be postponed, because he was unable to attend Tuesday's meeting. The matter is now scheduled for the commission's June 26 meeting.

The hotel closed several years ago, but the building still is generally referred to as the Hotel Aggie. It is located on the northeast corner of Second and G streets.

The commissioners agreed to designate the cemetery and seven buildings as outstanding historic resources. Included among the seven are the Southern Pacific Depot; the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer home at 604 Second St.; the LaRue-Romani home at 2020 Russell Blvd.; and the Williams-Drummond-Rorvick house at 320 I St.

Outstanding historic resources cannot be demolished; the proposed destruction of a historic resource can be delayed up to a year.

Others are the Anderson Bank Building, 203 G St.; the Joshua B. Tufts-Longview-Jones house at 434 J St.; and the Werner-Hamel house at 1140 Los Robles St.

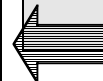
Commissioners decided the Davis Boy Scout Cabin, a building located on the southeast corner of First Street and Richards Boulevard, should be classified as a historic resource.

All of the buildings except the Hotel Aggie had been protected under old city historic preservation regulations, but had to be redesignated under a new two-tier system.

Outstanding historic resources cannot be demolished. The proposed destruction of a historic resource can be delayed up to a year while city officials and the property owner seek to work out some compromise.

The commission designated Russell Boulevard and four buildings protected under the old system as outstanding resources at an earlier meeting and decided the Downtown Recreation Building should be a historic resource.

6.16. Davis
Enterprise, May 30,
1984.



Hotel Aggie gets historical designation

By Brian Fies
Staff writer

Davis' Aggie Hotel has gained "Historical Resource" status, despite several architects and its owner calling it everything from an eyesore to a safety hazard.

The Davis Historical Resources Management Commission held a public hearing Tuesday night regarding the Second and G Street building.

Owner Lee Chen, represented by attorney Joan Poulos, urged denial of Historic Resource classification, saying it would stand in the way of his plans to construct another building on the site, and that the former hotel didn't deserve the label.

"When I bought the building seven years ago, I really did think about renovating it," Chen said.

"The city planning department told me not to touch a thing unless I was doing massive renovation or it would all come down like a house made of matchsticks."

Chen said installing fire sprinklers and bringing the building up to earthquake protection standards would cost as much as a new building.

"If I could find a way to save it that was architecturally and financially feasible I would do it," Chen told the commission. "I don't want to spend \$2 million on a new building. If you have an idea what I can do with it, let me know."

Commission chairman Steve Mikesell repeatedly stressed that Historical Resource status does not prevent renovation or even demolition. It only calls for a more careful review beforehand.

Arguments for the designation centered around the hotel's history more than its architecture.

Dennis Dingemans, a member of the Design Review Commission who spoke as a private citizen, defended its value to the community.

"Its primary importance is that it is a railroad terminal hotel of a type that appeared in many small towns all across America," Dingemans said. "It's one of the most important buildings in Davis in the way that it anchors the traditional Main Street."

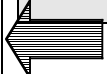
"We have a building at least minimally attractive, and it could be very attractive if appropriately maintained," Dingemans continued. "It's a valuable reminder that we pride ourselves on being a small town."

Opponents of the designation attacked the building as having no architectural merit.

"It's an eyesore, there's no getting around it," said architect and Planning Commission member Javier Chavez, also speaking as a private citizen.

"It does not conjure up any ideas of history," he said. "I don't see how it would contribute to the social or cultural attributes of the community to preserve that building. [...]"

6.17. Woodland Daily Democrat, June 27, 1984.



6.18. Davis Enterprise, June 27, 1984.



Hotel Aggie may become historic landmark

By MIKE FITCH

The Davis Historical Resources Management Commission decided Tuesday the Hotel Aggie should be protected as a local historical landmark, dealing a possible blow to the owner's hopes for replacing the building with a new structure.

On a 4-1 vote, commission voted to recommend that the building be designated as an historic resource. In its recommendation, the commission notes two justifications for such a designation: the building exemplifies valued elements of the city's history and reflects significant historical patterns of development in Davis. Commission Chairman Steve Mikesell noted, for example, the building and others located near it

are reminders of how the downtown's main streets looked early in the city history.

The commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

Even if the building is designated as an historic resource, it could be demolished or altered, but only after a lengthy city review. The building became the center of controversy early this year when its owner, Lee Chen, submitted plans to the city for demolishing the building and replacing it with a four-story commercial project.

The Hotel Aggie is located on the northeast corner of Second and G streets. Built in 1925, it originally housed the Terminal Hotel, a home-style facility that served primarily

as a stopover for railroad travelers.

In recent years, the building has been best known as the site of the Hotel Aggie and the Antique Bazaar, a restaurant and bar. Both businesses closed several years ago.

Lee Chen, the owner, and several others argued against designating the building as an historical resource during a public hearing, generally saying it is not significant architecturally and is not important as a symbol of the city's past.

Chen stressed that he has looked into renovating the building, but found renovation would be too expensive, in part because the walls would have to be reinforced with steel so the building could meet state earthquake standards.

In the past, Chen has argued that

the new building would be an attractive addition to the downtown area.

He also has said the upstairs of the current building is not well suited for offices because the north wall has no windows. That wall is covered by a mural that depicts early Davis.

Chen has withdrawn his project application because of the controversy it generated.

Commissioners indicated they don't want to place an economic burden on Chen by deciding the building should be an historical resource, saying they would be willing to work with him on a renovation project that could be economically feasible.

Commissioners indicated, for example, Chen perhaps could be al-

lowed to add extra business space at the rear of the building, perhaps by adding a third story on the rear.

As he was leaving the meeting, Chen said he was willing to consider such renovation schemes.

During the public hearing, Gale Sosnick, a member of the Design Review Commission, told the historical commission it should carefully choose buildings for protection and shouldn't decide to designate them as landmarks because of mere sentimentality.

"I don't think that's a valid reason for keeping buildings," she said.

Dennis Dingemans, chairman of the Design Review Commission, differed with his colleague, saying the building is the second largest in the

downtown area and is a significant reminder of the community's past.

Said Dingemans, "I think it would be quite attractive if it was properly maintained by its owners."

Commissioner Robert Pipkin cast the sole negative vote.

The city has a two-tier system for designating historical landmarks. The regulations governing historical resources are less strict than those for outstanding historical resources.

During the meeting, the commission chose new officers, selecting Robin Datal to replace Steve Mikesell as chairperson and naming Valerie Olsen to serve as vice chairperson.

Consideration of
Historical Commission
Action to Designate
Hotel Aggie a Historical
Resource

Opposing the recommendation was D. Anderson; C. Cunningham, Chamber of Commerce representative; J. Poulos, attorney representing property owner; L. Chin, property owner.

Supporting the recommendation to designate the Hotel Aggie as a historical resource was S. Miksell, Historical Resources Management Commission representative.

D. Rosenberg moved to designate the Hotel Aggie as a historical resource, seconded by T. Tomasi, but failed by the following vote:

AYES: Rosenberg, Tomasi.

NOES: Adler, Taggart, Evans.



6.19. Minutes of the Davis City Council regarding the Terminal Building, July 18, 1984.

No landmark status for Hotel Aggie site

By MIKE FITCH

The Davis City Council decided Wednesday the Hotel Aggie should not be protected as a local historic resource, possibly paving the way for the building to be demolished and replaced with a new structure.

and is somewhat ugly.

If the council had decided to protect the building, the owner, Lee Chen, could not have demolished or significantly altered it without a review by the commission.

The fate of the building and a mural of early Davis that adorns its north wall emerged as an issue several months ago when Chen submitted an application to the city for permission to demolish the building and replace it with a four-story commercial project.

On a 2-3 vote, the council declined to designate the Hotel Aggie, a building that sits on the northeast corner of Second and G streets, as a historic resource. Councilmen Tom Tomasi and Dave Rosenberg cast the two votes to protect the structure.

Chen said this morning he may submit a new development plan to the city, but must discuss that possibility with his architect and attorney first. The owner indicated he will work with the city to design an acceptable project before officially submitting an application and said the new project may call for a structure with fewer than four stories.

The Historical Resources Management Commission had recommended that the building be designated, but several speakers, including the owner of the structure, lobbied against that recommendation. They stressed that the building is not architecturally significant



6.20. Davis Enterprise, July 19, 1984.

Hotel doesn't qualify as historical landmark

By Brian Fies
Staff writer

Davis' City Council has decided that the Hotel Aggie, old that it may be, does not have what it takes to be an historical resource.

The council was acting on an Historical Resource Management Commission recommendation that the building be designated an historical resource based on two criteria:

- It found that the hotel "exemplifies or reflects valued elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, archeological or architectural history" and;

- The hotel "reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particularly transportation modes," namely the railroad.

Hotel Aggie owner Lee Chen has long opposed the designation, saying that the building is difficult to use for commercial purposes as it is, and that naming it an historical resource would frustrate any efforts to renovate or replace it.

"The point is that we should think about the future of Davis, not the past," said Chen. "At some point Davis has got to change and decide that it wants the core area to be vital and thriving."

Historical Resource Commission chairman Steve Mikesell said that the commission had wrestled with the issue in a long and open public hearing.

"No one's making a case that it's a handsome building," said Mikesell, "though I think it could look much better with renovation.

"We are not forever mandating that the property never be demolished," he continued. "The applicant would only have to come back to us beforehand."

Attorney Joan Poulos represented Chen, saying that three architects have found that the building has no design merit. She suggested that any cultural value the building may have had has long since been forgotten.

Adler suggested that the Historical Commission's concern would be better directed elsewhere.

"If you care about the railroad, we're already spending a lot of money to save the train station and the area around it," Adler said. "There used to be a nice little park back there with walkways and gaslights — if you want to preserve something, make it something worthwhile and not an eyesore."

Councilman Tom Tomasi said that he didn't particularly care what happened to the project, but that he was willing to take the advice of the commission.

"They put in their expertise, that's why they're there," Tomasi said. "I'd like to follow their guidance."

Tomasi voted in the minority with Dave Rosenberg to make the Hotel Aggie an historical resource. Adler, Debbie Taggart and Ann Evans voted against it.

3) PRESERVATION RESISTANCE AND CAMPAIGNING IN OVERVIEW

The (1) resistance to preservation and the (2) campaigning for preservation we will see in the next chapters regarding the Terminal Building are better understood by viewing each of them as events in their respective series of such events.

Both these series have, for the most part, already been described in this and the previous chapter. But in that narrative, they are intertwined with other kinds of local history and historic preservation matters. Therefore, each is difficult to see.

In order to display each series as clearly as possible, I want to bring together only instances of preservation resistance (Fig. 6.22) and pro-preservation campaigning (Fig. 6.23). Having already described most of these episodes, short-title references to them will suffice. (Though a few of them do not appear in the foregoing narrative, this is not a problem for the generalizations to be offered below.)

Let me be clear that these two series are **not** rosters of land-use changes and new constructions in general. Such lists would be vastly longer than the ones we consider here. Instead, we are concerned **only** with episodes that generated either (1) **resistance to preservation** or (2) **campaigning for preservation**. Phrased differently, these are instances of **dispute over preservation**. As such, each list is a very small sub-set of all land-use changes and constructions over the five decades (or a little more) of the 1950s-1990s.

This understood, what do we see in Figs 6.22 and 6.23? **First**, there would appear to have been only a few more than a dozen episodes of either resistance to preservation or campaigning for it.

Second, viewed in the context of the large number of demolitions and related changes that took place in Davis over the 1950s-90s, this is a notably low rate of disputation. It perhaps bespeaks a very low level of preservation consciousness in, especially, the early decades after World War II.

Third, the number of preservation contentions increased over the decades. There were apparently none in the 1950s and 1960s and only a few in the 1970s. But this changed in the 1980s and 1990s.

Fourth, the scale of the "unit" acting in preservation contentions became larger over time. In the beginning, the acting unit was likely to be an individual. More recently, the "unit" was more likely a group, such as a neighborhood association or an emergent citizen network or coalition.

Fifth, the sheer number of participants in resistance or advocacy episodes increased over time (expected, in part, from large increases in the population of Davis).

Sixth, the City of Davis was increasingly a presence either as a resister to preservation or as a promoter of it.

6. 22. INSTANCES OF RESISTANCE TO PRESERVATION, 1950-2001

1974. Owner of 305 E Street successfully opposes landmark designation.

Owner of the Schmeiser Mansion, 334 I Street, successfully opposes landmark designation but the decision is reversed by the 1986 City Council.

The Boy Scout Cabin land owner (UC Davis) and the user (the Davis Rotary Club) successfully oppose landmark designation, but the decision is reversed by the 1984 City Council.

Owner successfully opposes designating the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer mansion a landmark, but the decision is reversed by the 1984 City Council.

1984. Owner successfully opposes designating the Terminal Building a historical resource.

Owner of 403 G successfully opposes designating that home a historical resource (an especially ironic event because of one of the owners conspicuous involvement in local history).

City of Davis plans to cut down a substantial portion of the Avenue of the Trees (unsuccessful).

1985. Owners unsuccessfully oppose designation of 137 C a historical resource.

1986. Owner resists designating the McBride home, 405 J Street, a historical resource (unsuccessful).

Late 1980s-Early 1990s. City of Davis plans to demolish the Old Library building at 117 F (unsuccessful).

1991-1992. City of Davis plans to pave all six Old North Davis alleys and is one-sixth successful in doing so.

1998. The owner of the church buildings at Fifth and C streets successfully aborts a HRMC designation plan.

1998-2001. Owners of 328-336 A Street propose an out-of-scale building and redesign it twice, eventually achieving City approval for construction.

2000. Owner plan to demolish the Terminal Building is successful.

City plan, joint with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, to cut down substantial numbers of City street trees beneath overhead electric wires is stopped.

2001. The owner of 238 G Street successfully stops a HRMC plan to make a "preservation appreciation" award for recent restoration work on that building

6. 23. CAMPAIGNS FOR PRESERVATION, 1950-2001

1975. Campaign to save homes on Second between C and D is unsuccessful.

Late 1970s. Campaigns to save the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer are eventually successful.

1984. Campaign to designate the Terminal Building a historical resource fails.

1984. Campaign to save the Avenue of the Trees from major removal of Black Walnuts is successful.

1986-87. Citizen efforts to stabilize the University-Rice area for single family housing, resulting in Ordinance 1415 (February 4, 1987) is successful.

1988. Formation of the Old East Davis Association in response to City Council consideration of major redevelopment plans for that area seems to stop those plans.

Late 1980s-Early 1990s. Campaign to preserve the Old Library building is successful.

1991-92. Campaign to stop paving of the six Old North Davis alleys is five-sixths successful.

1996. Campaign to save 239 J Street is unsuccessful.

1998-2001. University-Rice area residents partially successful in opposing proposed out-of-scale building for 326-338 A Street.

1999-2000. Campaign to in some fashion “save” the Terminal Building is unsuccessful.

1999-2000. Campaign to stop the City-PG&E plan to cut down City street trees under overhead electric lines in the 1917 city limits is successful (in the short run, anyway).

2000-01. City plan to develop and implement design guidelines for a “conservation district” is successful.



These six generalizations about the history of historic preservation in Davis bring us to the case of the Terminal Building. As we shall see in the five chapters of Part II, features of the Terminal Building case were consistent with these six trends and not a statistical “fluke.”

Instead, that case expressed these six large and long-term movements. If the past is taken as the best predictor of the future, then we should predict more and bigger episodes like the one centered on the Terminal Building.