

## 3

## The G Street 200s The Heart of the Original “Davisville”

In the eyes of the railroad company that created “Davisville” in 1868, a central purpose of the place was to provide a point at which to gather and store grain prior to loading it on trains.

People involved in such farming and shipping of course also needed the amenities of a “business district.” The G Street block closest to the train depot—eventually numbered the 200s— immediately became the heart of one. Over the some eight decades between 1868 and the end of World War II, the G Street 200s stayed remarkably the same. After that war, though, change was rapid.



**3.1. Postcard maker Jarvie Eastman’s 1951 iteration of “looking north up G Street from Second.”** You are looking at the 1951 version of what was, until recently, THE iconic view of quintessential Davis. The first known photograph showing this view was taken in 1870 (two years after the town’s founding) and postcard makers have regularly featured it over the decades (ten are shown in X, pp. 18-22). (Eastman B-7593, UCD Special Collections.)



**3.2. 2008 iteration of “looking north up G Street from Second.”** Postcards as major means of sending notes have almost disappeared, of course, and their iconic images along with them. In order to have a 2008 Second & G view, I have had to take it myself.

The Anderson Bank Building on the left is still there, but the Terminal Hotel on the right was replaced in the early 2000s by the Chen Building, a change described later in this unit. (John Lofland.)



**3.3. The Anderson Bank Building, 203 G, 2003.** This building was erected in 1914 by J. B. Anderson, a major Davis businessman and the first mayor of the town. A 2003 survey of Davis historical resources calls this an “impressive Prairie Style Commercial building” that is “pivotal” in the “remaining group of historic commercial buildings in Davis” (X). A City-designated Landmark, the current owner has several times attempted to lower the sills on the windows for retail improvement purposes, but the City Council has not allowed him to do so. (Roland-Nawi Associates.)



**3.4. 207-09 G Street hotel site turned retail.** From the start of Davis to the 1950s, hotels of changing ownerships and names occupied 207-09 G. Here we see the last one, the Etna, c. 1950. Prior hotels included the well-remembered Hunt's Hotel that operated here for some decades. (Hattie Weber Museum of Davis.)





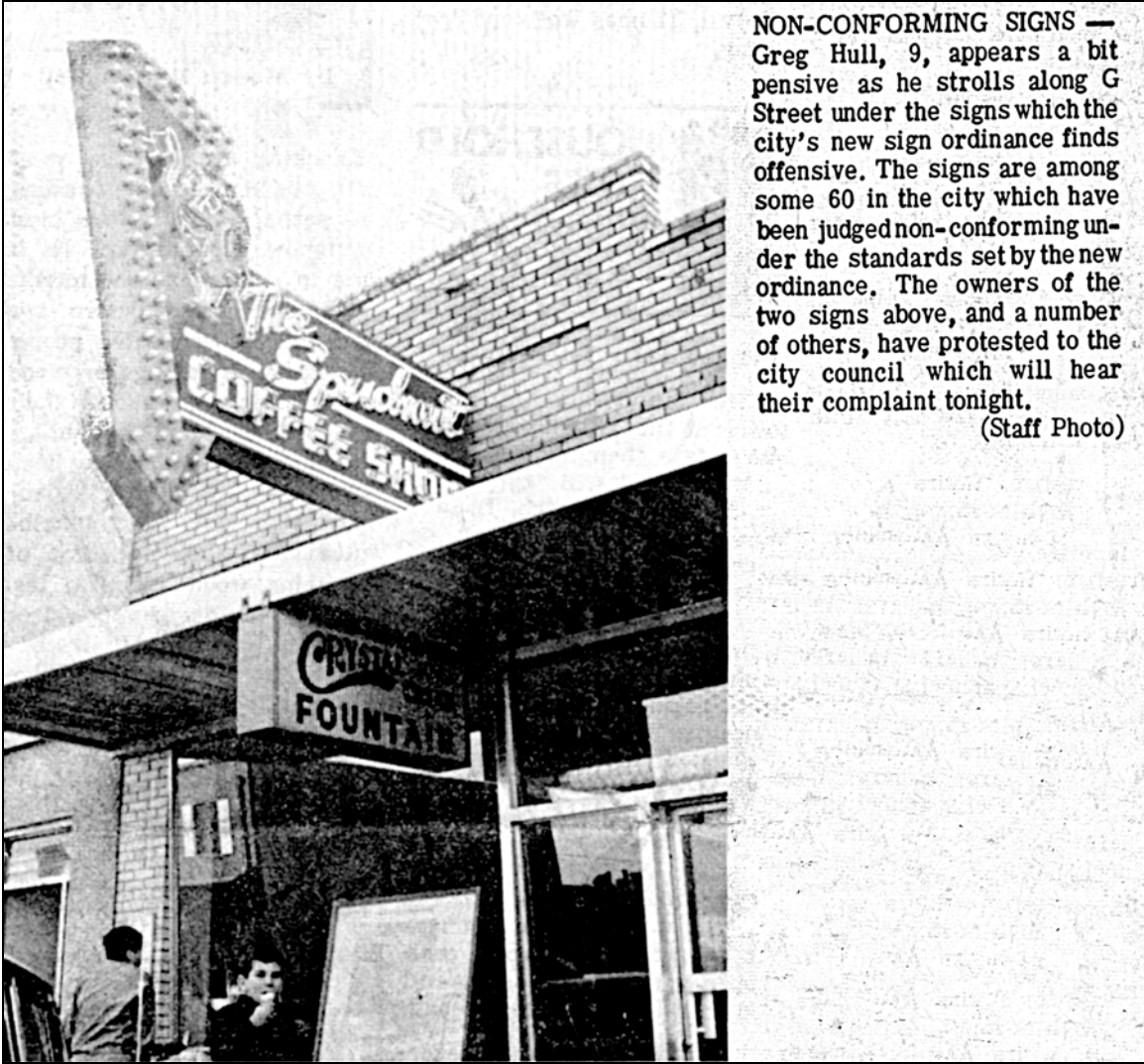
**3.5. West side of the G Street 200s, 1951.** This is an excerpt from image 3.1 showing more clearly the ten buildings making up the west side of this face-block. Moving into the 1960s, Davis movers-and-shakers regarded this and nearby streetscapes as “drab and uninviting” (X, p. 127). When City Manager Frank Fargo departed Davis in 1959 for better city manager jobs such as in Stockton, he declared to the Davis Chamber of Commerce in his farewell address: “You must clean up G Street, make it look more modern . . . New businesses won’t move into an area that is so run down” (X, p. 127). (Eastman B-7593, UCD Special Collections.)



**3.6. West side of the G Street 200s, 1965.** Some fifteen years later, the three older buildings closest to us in this view are gone, replaced by single story retail shops. The rest of this side of the block is intact, but not for long. (Yolo County Historical Museum.)



**3.7. West side of the G Street 200s, 1988.** Some 20 years later, we see that an assertive program of street tree planting has begun to bear fruit. There is also a program of making it easier for pedestrians to cross streets by installing “bulge-outs” at corners that shorten the curb-to-curb walking distance. (Norman E. Riley.)



**NON-CONFORMING SIGNS —** Greg Hull, 9, appears a bit pensive as he strolls along G Street under the signs which the city's new sign ordinance finds offensive. The signs are among some 60 in the city which have been judged non-conforming under the standards set by the new ordinance. The owners of the two signs above, and a number of others, have protested to the city council which will hear their complaint tonight.

(Staff Photo)

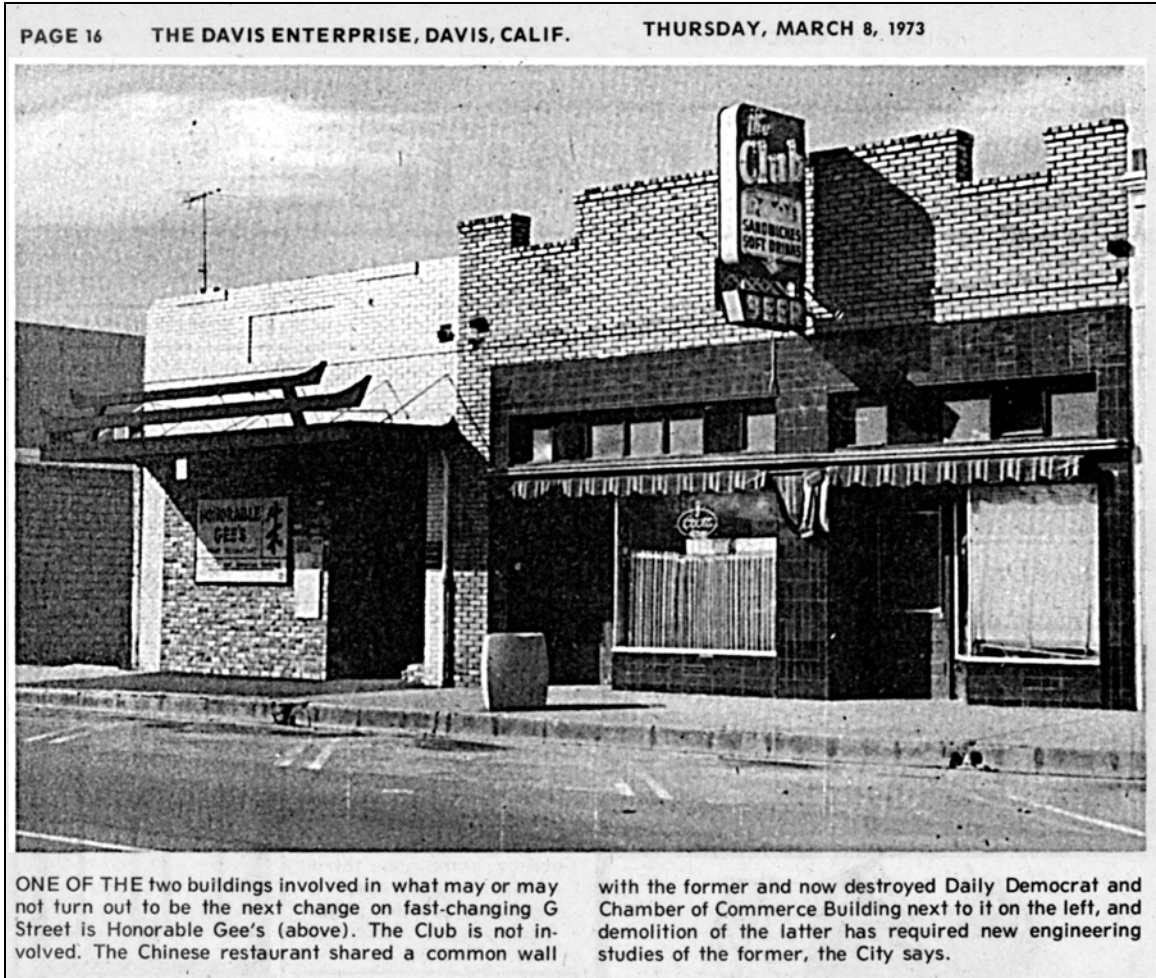
**3.8. “Beautification” pressure mounts, 217 G Street, 1964.** In the 1950s and 60s, some downtown business people tended to a certain Los Angeles flamboyance in their signage. Such signs as the one shown here were deemed by City Council majorities to be incompatible with the “new” downtown that was envisioned. (*Davis Enterprise*, November 28, 1964.)



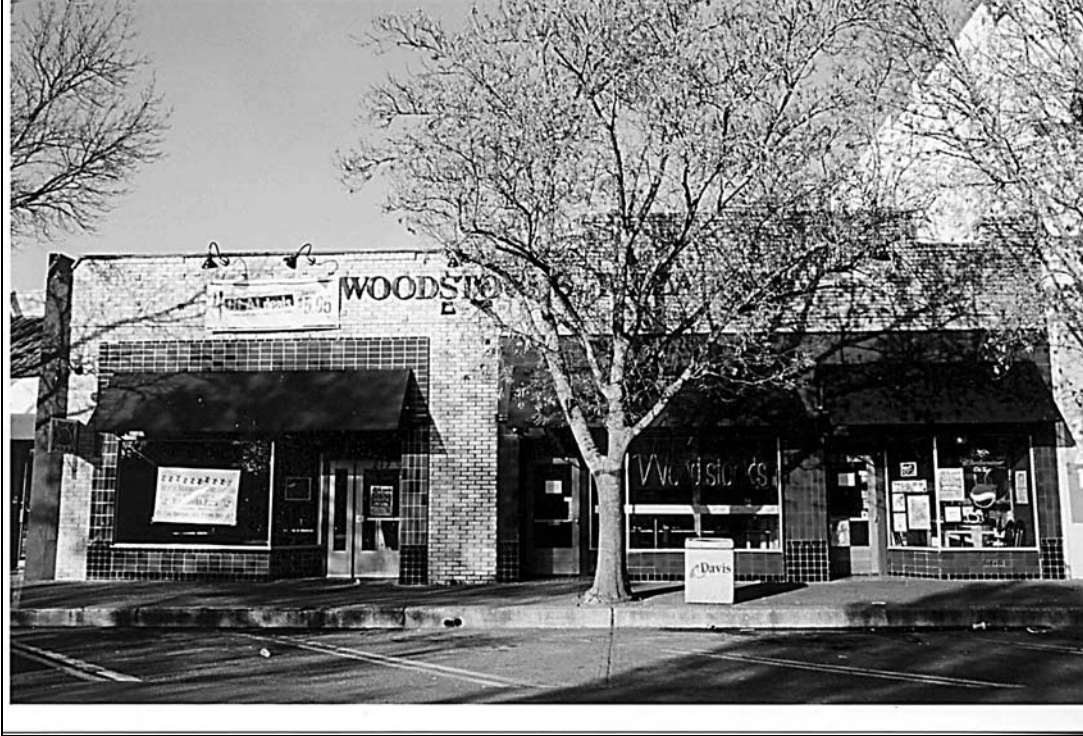


**OLD GLORY**—This is a section of G Street where Davis merchants displayed the flag today to represent their support of the U. S. government's policy in Vietnam. The display was throughout the entire business district and will continue Saturday.

**3.9. View looking southwest along the west G Street 200s, 1965.** The “new urbanist” transformation of the downtown started in the 1950s and ‘60s, the progressivism for which Davis would become known in the 1970s had not yet begun. The bleakness of this scene also suggests that in the absence of other changes tearing down and replacing old buildings does not in itself create an inviting streetscape. (*Davis Enterprise*, November 19, 1965.)



**3.10. 217 and 219 G Street, 1973.** 217 G, which is the Spudnut Coffee Shop shown in images 2.8 and 2.9 above, is now the Honorable Gee's restaurant shown on the left above. Notice that it has lost the brick cornice that is so evident in the two previous images. *The Davis Enterprise* caption to this image quite accurately reports that things are "fast-changing" on G Street. (*Davis Enterprise*, March 8, 1973.)



**3. 11. 217 and 219 G Street, 2003.** As the saying has it, “everything that goes around comes around.” In a turn-of-the century resurgence of appreciation for “historic” architecture in Davis, this pizza place, assisted by City redevelopment funds, expanded its 219 G location into 217 G. The tile facade at 219 was replicated at 217, although the 2003 historical resource survey opined that the “restoration . . . does not match the earlier tile as well as it might” (X). (As the photos make clear, though, there was no earlier tile to be restored, only imitated from next door.) (Roland-Nawi Associates.)

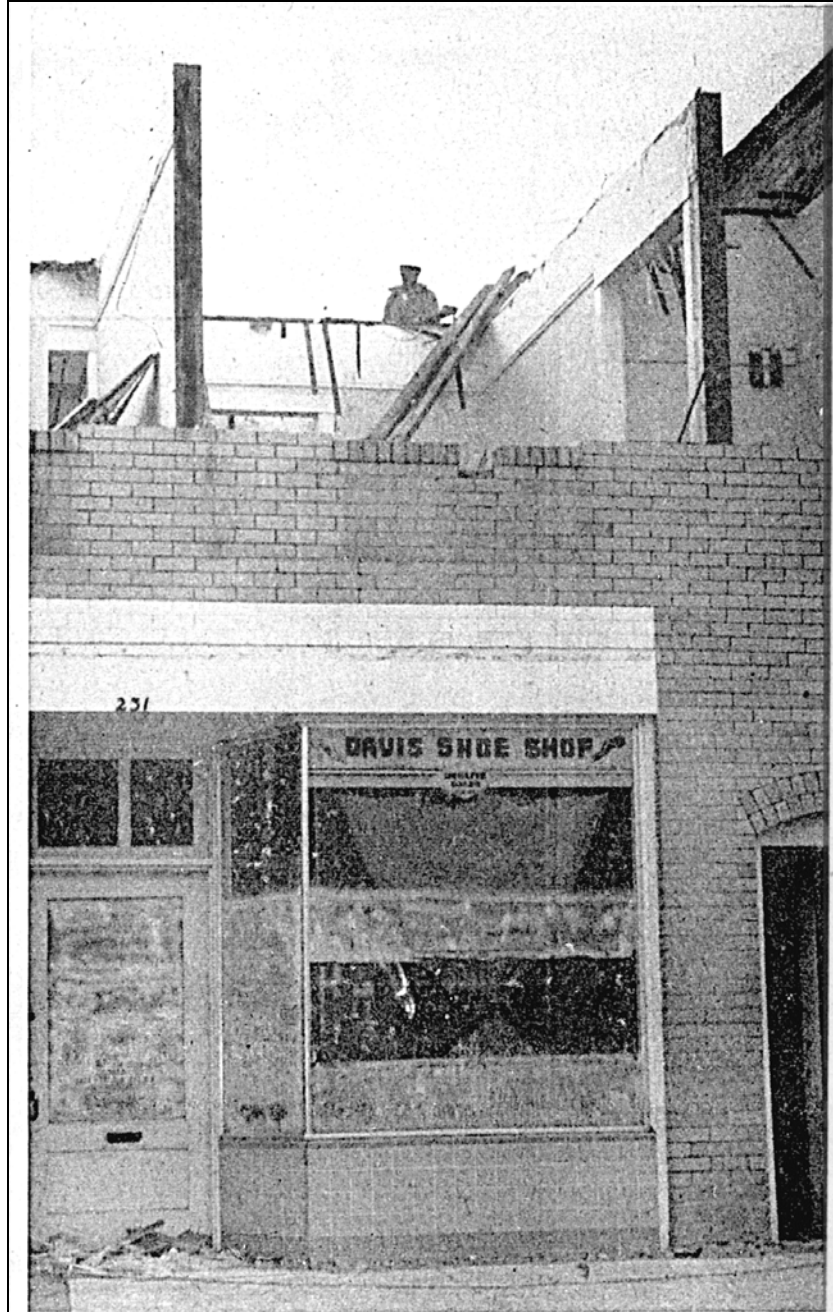


**3.12. 225 G, the Masonic Lodge and retail shops, 2003.** The Masonic lodge originally built on this site early in Davis' history burnt down in 1916 along with much of the west side of G Street. This building was almost immediately constructed to replace it. Historical surveyors call it "one of the largest and most imposing of the historic commercial buildings on G Street" (X). The ground floor is commercial rental space. Masonic facilities, as well as office rentals, are on the second floor. (Roland-Nawi Associates.)





**3.13. Looking southwest at the west G Street 200s, 1951.** This Eastman photo shows us the three buildings toward the northern end of the west-side G Street 200s that will be demolished in the 1960s and 1970s. The most southern is next to the Masonic Lodge (shown in the center of the block.). The most northern contains the “Davis 5-10-15 [cents symbol] & up store” and the Vienna Bakery. (Eastman B-7594, UCD Special Collections.)



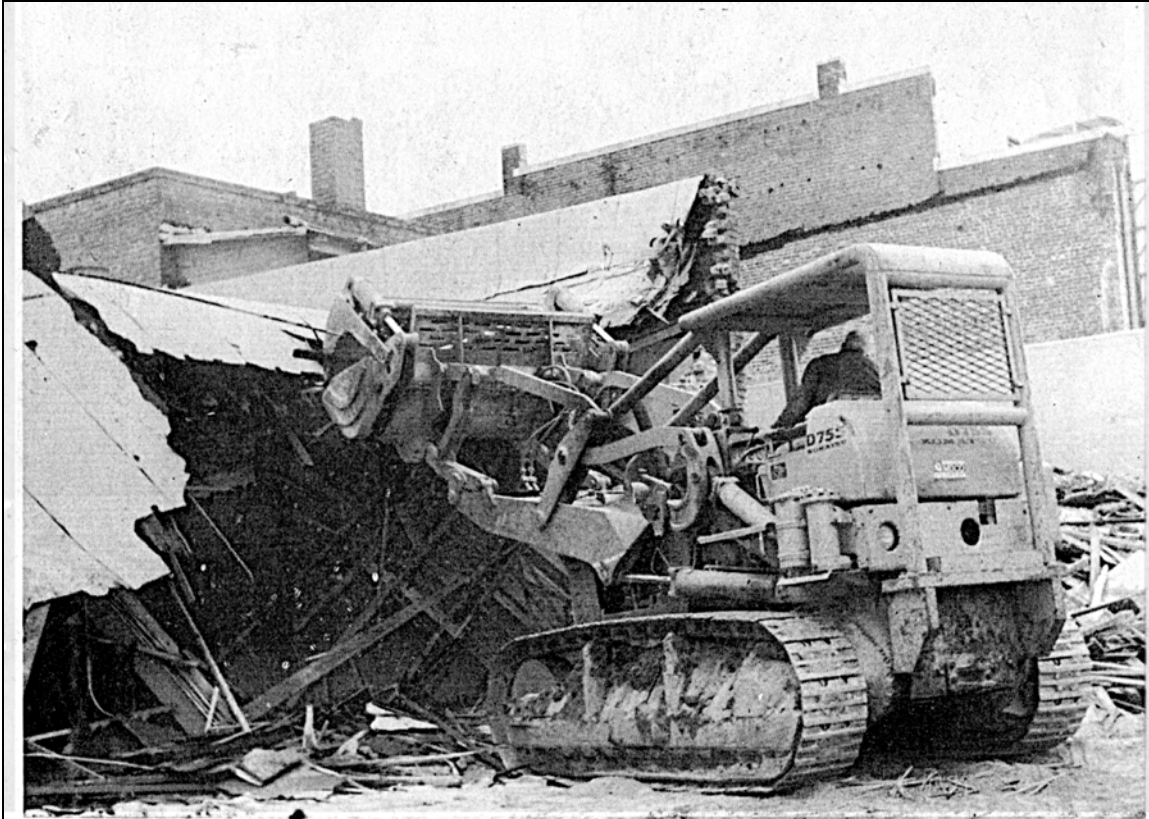
Enterprise photo

### WRECKED BUILDING

A WORKER peers down at the ruins of the partially demolished Davis Shoe Shop, 231 G St. The California Building Wrecking Co. of West Sacramento began demolition Friday to make way for a new two-story commercial building on the site. The

remainder of the old shoe repair shop will be levelled when local rains cease. The new building will be built this Spring by Davis realtor Robert Warren and contractor James Adams.

**3.14. 231 G Street, 1974.** This is the middle building of the three demolished on the north end of the west side of the G 200s. As is clear in image 2.13, 231 G was two stories. It appears to be a one story here because of the neatness with which the wrecking company has removed the second story facade (*Davis Enterprise*, April 1, 1974.)



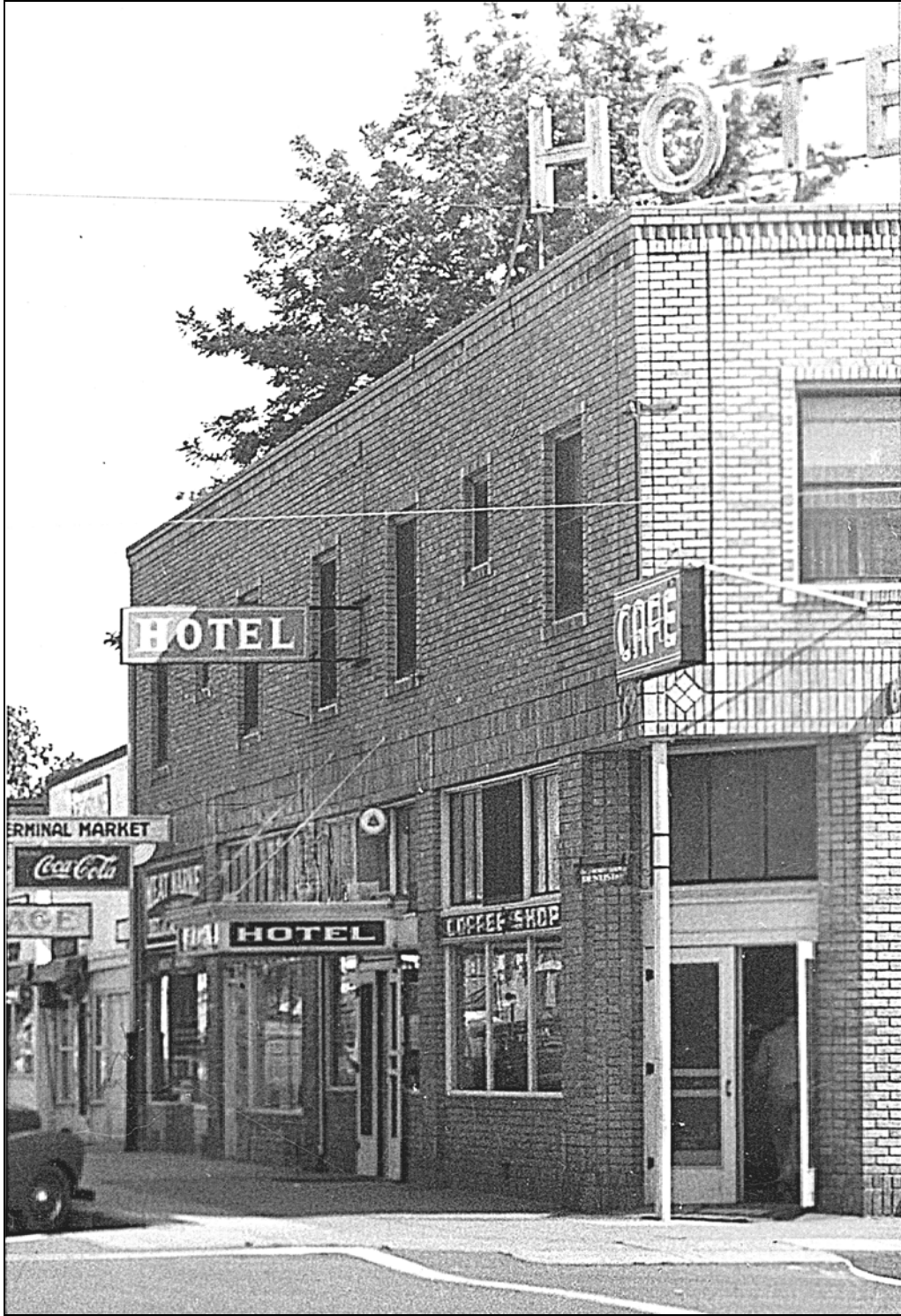
**DIME STORE DEMOLISHED**

THE CAPITOL Wrecking and Building Co. of West Sacramento bit into the old Riley's Five and Ten building at 233-35 G St. this morning, and by nightfall today the structure should be gone. Chief Building Official Doran Maxwell estimates the venerable landmark is 50-70 years old. There are currently no specific plans to replace the structure, owned by Warren Real Estate and Jim Adams of the Adams Construction Co. Adams told the **Enterprise**

this morning they had tenants for, and plans for a new building nearly approved when the City Council slapped a development freeze on the whole block four months ago. Since then the tenants have left, and the plans are obsolete. The freeze was lifted Feb. 20 and now a new building depends on what new tenants want, said Adams.

ENTERPRISE PHOTO

**3.15. 233-35 G Street, 1973.** 233-35 G met the wrecker's caterpillar in February, 1973, about a year before 231 G just next door. The caption reports that the Council "slapped a development freeze on the whole block four months ago." The context here is that the historic "progressive" era of Davis politics had begun less than a year before this—in April, 1972. Developing the downtown remained a top policy, but the *character* of that development was being reconsidered, hence a "freeze." (*Davis Enterprise*, March 1, 1973.)



**3.16. The Terminal Hotel and Cafe, 200 G Street, c. 1945.** From its opening in 1925 to the end of World War II, the “cafe” in this building was the routine meeting and dining locale of Davis movers-and-shakers (ref #x, Ch. 3). In much of that period, the hotel/cafe was the only place open all night in the Davis. (David Herbst.)





**3.17. The Terminal building suffers “demolition by neglect” after World War II.** The building changed owners several times over the 1950s-1990s and, in the view of many, was not adequately maintained. Among other assaults on it, a shingled porch, seen above, was added in the early 1960s, apparently in an effort to make it look more like a “town and country” suburban shopping center. (*Davis Enterprise*, February 22, 1984.)

# Historic hotel destroyed



## 75-year-old brick walls come down in 45 minutes

By Elisabeth Sherwin  
Enterprise correspondent

On Monday morning a small group of people watched as the demolition of the city's historic downtown Terminal Hotel began.

It only took about 45 minutes for Stan Bowers of Valley Construction Co. to drive his excavator into the back of the 75-year-old brick hotel,

See HOTEL, Page A4



**TUMBLING DOWN:** The Terminal Hotel demolition began Monday. While the mural, above, cannot be saved, the bricks are being sold to the city. Mayor Ken Wagstaff hopes the bricks can be used in the site's new building.

Alison Portello/  
Enterprise photos

**3.18. Terminal building demolished in 2000.** The building's neglect meant that it fetched low rent and that many "funky" stores, bars, and eating places operated from it over the 1970s-90s. This created a fond-memories constituency that resisted the building's demolition when the owners proposed that. (The story of that conflict is told in reference number x.) (*Davis Enterprise*, September 19, 2000.)



**3.19. The Chen building on the site of the Terminal building, 2008.** One major concern was that any new building not be out of scale with existing nearby commercial structures such as the Anderson Bank building. For this reason, the G Street facade of the new building is to the scale of the Terminal building and its third and fourth stories are seriously stepped back. (John Lofland.)



**3.20. The seven buildings on the east side of the G 200s, 1944.** Five of the seven buildings forming the eastern G Street 200s were demolished—four of them by the early 1960s and the Terminal in 2000. In addition, increasingly downtown-incompatible types of commercial activity left G Street, including here an auto dealership (Chevrolet) and a welding shop. Signifying the shift, a boutique and health food store would soon locate in the east G 200s. (Eastman B-2123, UCD Special Collections.)





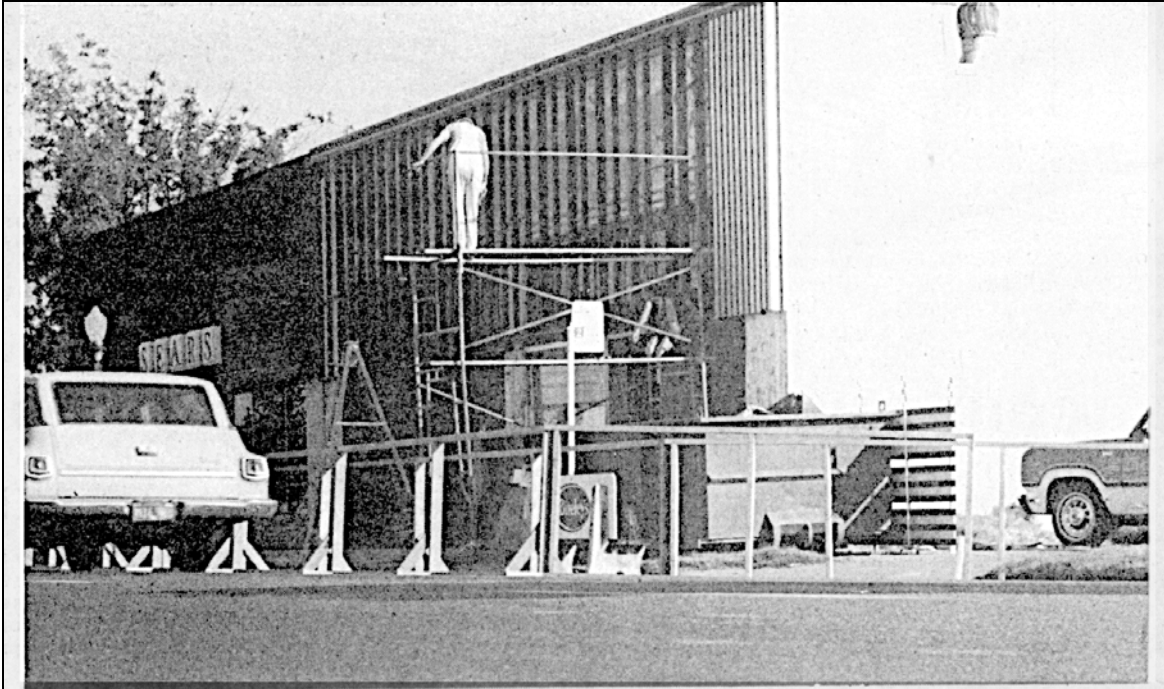
**3.21. New parking lot in the east G Street 200s, 1964.** The point of demolishing the middle four buildings was to create a quasi-private “parking district” with the lot seen here. The plan also created a widened G Street sidewalk (with a water feature and bulletin board) named the G Street Plaza. Bleak when it began, remodeling and a three planting program softened it over the decades. (*Davis Enterprise*, March 5, 1964.)



**3.22. New Davis Lumber building, 1964.** As can be inferred from image 3.21, just above (and from image 2.2.), the farther eastern part of the G Street block—which faces H street—is covered with *sheds*, not human-habitable buildings. These were the lumber-storage buildings of Davis Hardware and Lumber. Getting on the right side of history so to speak, this business removed that part of its operation and replaced it with the large hardware store shown here. Ever so conveniently, the building fronts the new parking lot. (*Davis Enterprise*, December 4, 1964.)



**3.23. 238 G Street, Davis Lumber Company building, 1937.** Specialists in architectural styles tell us that 238 G is a Streamline Moderne building and a break from past retail buildings in being a “broad-front storefront,” meaning among other things that it has large panels of glass (x). Unlike anything seen before it Davis, it was enthusiastically welcomed when under construction in 1936 (x, p. 111). (Hattie Weber Museum of Davis.)



A FACELIFT to dying G Street was begun this week by Cowal Construction Co. of Sacramento. Property owners have been meeting to plan a revival of the old shopping district. The construction above will turn the abandoned

Thriftyways Market into the Elegant Barn restaurant. Future plans for the adjoining lots include the construction of office space and a Round Table Pizza Parlour.  
ENTERPRISE PHOTO

**3.24. G Street Doldrums, 1970s.** 238 G may have been beautiful in the late 1930s and later, but (as has been alluded to before) it and the rest of its face-block fell onto harder times after World War II. The Enterprise caption for the above image even says “the old shopping district” is “dying.” On the far left, we see that that previously elegant 238 has disappeared under a Fifties-style facade. And it has become, of all indignities, a dreaded local revenue-sucking Sears catalogue store. (*Davis Enterprise*, October 12, 1973.)



**3.25. 238 G Street, Strelitzia Flower Company 2003.** But, as previously seen at 217-19 G (image 3.11), “everything that goes around comes around.” Although Davis Lumber stopped using the building for its own enterprise, the Davis Lumber family had retained ownership. The heir now running the business decided to remove the facade and restore the building to a semblance of its original Streamline Moderne. The florist there at the time of this picture was of course much more new-Davis than the paint cans seen in the windows of the building in 1937. (Roland-Nawi Associates.)