

CITY OF DAVIS BUYS HISTORY RESOURCES SURVEY

Reported by John Lofland

February, 2006

The Davis City Council recently received a report of a survey of “historic resources” it contracted in connection with its current effort to demolish and replace houses in the Third and B area of Davis.

Dated January 17, 2006, the report is written by Sheila McElroy, an employee of Circa: Historic Resources Development, One Sutter Street, San Francisco.

Titled “Historic Research and Cultural Resources Evaluation for the 3rd and B Street Area of the City of Davis,” it consists of 22 numbered pages plus appendices and a “primary record” sheet on 14 B and Third area properties (of 17 properties said to be part of the “evaluation”).

A color copy of the report can be downloaded from the City of Davis web site at <http://www.city.davis.ca.us/>. Under “Current Issues” on the home page, click on “B Street Visioning Process,” which takes you to the set of documents relating to the Council’s efforts to demolish and replace structures in the Third and B area of Davis.

The first and prime reason this document is news for the DHRG is its compilation of assertions about some history aspects of 17 properties in the Third and B area and about the area itself. These history aspects include information on past and current residents and owners of the 17 properties.

Holding aside questions of the truth of assertions in the survey report, it is, at minimum, useful to consult if one is researching the

17 properties and the area.

The 17 properties are: 225 B, 229 B, 233 B, 241 B, 301 B, 305 B, 311 B, 315 B, 319 B, 337 B, 246 Fourth, 232 Third, 235 Third, 236 Third, 239 Third, 240 Third, 247 Third.

There is a second reason this survey is newsworthy for Davis history researchers. It is the most recent installment in a series of these contract-researches done over some 30 years.

In each survey, the contracted company has asked an employee to “day trip” several times to Davis, to look around, to go through some records, to take pictures, and to talk to a few people about a Davis area thought to have “historic resources.”

Davis history researchers interested in these surveys can read a brief account of them in my *Demolishing a Historic Hotel* (2003), pp. 88-110, “Local History and Preservation: Fragile Forces in Davis.”

Major such surveys have included (1) the Cultural Inventory Survey Final Report of 1980, (2) the City of Davis Cultural Resources Inventory and Context Statement of 1996, and (3) the Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhood Guidelines of 2001.

A fourth major survey was conducted in 2003, but has yet to be completed and published, although a CD of it in draft form is available from the City’s Community Development Department.