

# Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage

PRESERVATION  
ACTION COUNCIL



## CONTINUITY

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## Downtown SJ Draft EIR Threatens Historic Buildings

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*Vintage postcard of the Bank of Italy/  
Bank of America Bldg. at First and  
Santa Clara Sts. courtesy Jack Douglas.*



## From the President

"Preserving the Spirit of Place" is the theme of the week-long celebration sponsored annually by the Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation since 1971. Every community has a spirit of place identifying it as special and unique. It may be a building, monument or a street, a public square or stretch of lakeshore or view of distant mountains. It sets the community apart, attracts tourists, contributes to the area's stability and livability and gives residents a sense of connection with their shared heritage.

Please celebrate National Preservation Week with us, May 12-18. Attend the PAC\*SJ Walking Tour of Naglee Park, San Jose's largest conservation area, (call 998-8105 for tickets.) Walk through you city's older residential and commercial districts and see what's happening in them. Tell your local representatives how important protection and sensitive re-use of these unique resources are to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

The retreat of New York developers, the Palladium Group, from San Jose brings no tears to those who respect our unique and precious, if limited, architectural heritage. Palladium's proposal to change the face of downtown and irreparably damage its historic commercial district has been halted. The Redevelopment Agency (SJRA) is not courting other developers who promise smaller, more sensitive renovations and compatible new construction. But we remain wary of SJRA's new "preservation face" while its draft environmental impact report for mixed use retail downtown (*see p.6*) is on the table.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Kitty Monahan**, our board member in the Almaden Quicksilver area, reports the **Feed & Fuel Restaurant** is safe from the wrecker's ball for now and open for business, [address]. Please take a drive past this Blossom Valley landmark and have a meal in a bit of history.

\* \* \* \* \*

PAC\*SJ's bylaws committee is proposing a revision of our bylaws. A vote will occur at our June 17th board meeting. All members are welcome to attend and vote. Check the calendar on the back page for details re time and location. Call our office at 998-8105 for a copy of the proposed revisions.

\* \* \* \* \*

We congratulate downtown councilperson **Cindy Chavez** for her March 19 memo identifying the need to improve several aspects of the single family house permit process so that potentially historic homes are evaluated prior to demolition or substantial alteration. Copies are available in our office. Call 998-8105.



PAC\*SJ president Pat Curia

*'We remain wary of SJRA's new "preservation face" while its draft EIR is on the table.'*

\* \* \* \* \*

Many thanks to corporate partners, such as **IBM, Compaq** and **United Technologies**, who have matched contributions to PAC\*SJ from their employees. We recently received, for example, a check from IBM for over \$400 as a matching gift contribution. This is an easy way to increase your contribution to the preservation cause. Contact your human resources department to find out whether your firm will match your PAC\*SJ tax-deductible dues with a matching grant.

\* \* \* \* \*

The **PAC\*SJ Resource Center** is a growing collection of materials about San Jose's architectural heritage. It contains many historical reports not easily located elsewhere. We would like to expand the collection to include new publications of direct assistance to homeowners. Please consider donating funds to the address below so that we may purchase additional publications for members' access. Donations are tax deductible.

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## Watchdog Report

Whoo-eee! Talk about trottin' out of town fast. Those N.Y. top dogs from Palladium just set a record! And what a dust cloud they left behind! I'm a humble dog but proud to say I have been nippin' at their heels ever since they ambled into our fair city, expectin' to make a killing tearing down some doggone great old buildings and throwing up some boring, business-as-usual edifices in their place. Whatever were our local top dogs thinkin' by invitin' them here in the first place and allowing mediocre plans to get as far as they did. We are not N.Y. or San Francisco and we don't wanna be! San Jose is unique, has some great home-grown establishments already, and the talent to establish more if given the chance by our so wise leaders. And some irreplaceable historic buildings exist to house retail, restaurants and entertainment which could be found "only in San Jose." That'd bring people looking beyond the same-old, same-old found-in-any-city, USA!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Redevelopment Agency doesn't seem to have a clue how ridiculous they look at times. Now they want to put a parking garage in place of the building where IBM developed the first disk storage system, certainly a claim to fame for the capital of Silicon Valley. Go figure!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now the City wants to raise the price of parking human machines to match fee charged elsewhere. Until the city gets off the dime and builds on San Jose's uniqueness, we aren't there yet! What self-respectin' two or four-legged animal would want to spend \$18 to park downtown for a day when they can amble down to Valley Fair or the new Santana Row, park for free, and spend a whole day ogling and buying the merchandise. Give us a break! We need and want our citizens to come downtown, and one of the best ways to start the trend is to subsidize parking in a big way until downtown becomes THE place to go. Then maybe you top dogs can sock it to 'em!

\* \* \* \* \*

On the upside, for those of you who missed the exciting SharkByte Art auction in March, PAC\*SJ's shark (which drew a lot of attention for its salute to San Jose history) went for the sixth highest (out of 100) bid to a Los Gatos couple as a unique addition to their backyard. Aww, it's too bad it went out of town, but I'm promised I can trot down there occasionally to compare fangs.

\* \* \* \* \*



*PAC\*SJ president Pat Curia (c) with board member Don Gagliardi (r) and the preservation shark buyer, Jim Hogan (l), at the March 2 SharkByte Art auction. Photo by the Dog.*

*'PAC\*SJ's shark went for the 6th highest (out of 100) bid to a Los Gatos couple as a unique addition to their back yard. Aww, too bad it went out of town, but I'm promised I can trot down there occasionally to compare fangs.'*

The City's expensive storm drain requirement to move the historic Mark's Hot Dogs (the Giant Orange) from Alum Rock to Capital is a continuing dilemma for the owner. But Councilmember Nora Campos's office assures that efforts are on-going to solve the problem. Need I bark it out again: waive the requirement or subsidize the costs of complying for this home-grown business! No skin off their snouts. Just good business preserving a landmarked, unique establishment. Grrr.

*— The Dog*



## Redevelopment Agency Proposes Historic Design Guidelines for Downtown San Jose

*The following article is reprinted with permission of the San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA), from its March 2002 **Downtown Dimension** newsletter.*

In the shadows of the modern skyline that South Bay commuters see from the freeways, San Jose's historic core evokes a city of a different era. Over several decades, even surviving the 1970s when entire blocks were demolished, the district has managed to retain its character and sense of history. As downtown San Jose continues its revitalization with dense mixed-use development on the horizon, no real public strategy has emerged to preserve the historic core – aside from a small area enclosed within a national Commercial Historic District.

But that's about to change, as a document is now in development which aims to preserve downtown's vintage

*'As downtown San Jose continues its revitalization with dense mixed-use development on the horizon, no real public strategy has emerged to preserve the historic core. . . But that's about to change.'*

structures and guide policy into the future. While some believe it falls short of establishing a strong enough protection for historic buildings, most agree it's an important first step.

In summer 2001, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency commissioned consultants Page & Turnbull, Inc. to develop design guidelines for a proposed Downtown San Jose Historic District. The district would consist of an area bordered by the north side of San Fernando St., the east side of Market St., the north side of Santa Clara St., and the west side of Fourth St. (excluding the new 101 San Fernando apartment complex).

The district status would not be an official designation, although such a district already exists within its boundaries: the Downtown Commercial National Register Historic District,

which falls under federal preservation guidelines.

The City's recognition of a need to form historic policies comes at a crucial time, with projects such as the proposed Palladium development pending. Such projects would directly impact several key structures and settings, including the Fountain Alley District, an area with buildings that date to the 1800s and remodeling projects from the early 1900s. Several of the Fountain Alley buildings are made of unreinforced masonry, and have been declared unsafe by the city. Before the buildings can be occupied, they must be retrofitted. Since it's likely that this level of construction will dramatically change the buildings, local preservationists see the impending arrival of new mixed-use development to the district as a mixed blessing.

Enter the design guidelines, the first document of its kind to focus squarely on downtown's historic core. Packaged in a 100-page draft, it carries two purposes: to address infill construction (new construction which would take place among historic structures) and the rehabilitation and ongoing use of existing structures. The document's premise revolves around preserving the "character defining features" of historic downtown, which consists of: character defining settings (streets, paseos and alleyways); character-enhancing settings (passages, courtyards and plazas), and character-defining design elements (storefronts, facades and decorative details on corners, rooflines and within interior spaces.) The document explores examples of these elements in great detail and concludes with an overview of 17 historic structures, with observations of their significance and ratings of their historic contributions.

"The benefit (of these guidelines) to property owners is that it gives them a starting point to make repairs and improvements to their building," said Courtney Damkroger, historic preservation officer for the City of San Jose. "It's intended to save them headaches and time by giving them some direction."

The guidelines draft is currently

undergoing public review with the City's Historic Landmarks Commission. An array of stakeholders are now weighing in on the guidelines, including downtown merchants, property owners, preservation groups like PAC\*SJ, city agencies and residents.

"The process of putting the design guidelines together is complicated because there are so many different communities involved, with their own specific interests," Damkroger said. "Our challenge is bringing these parties together and integrating their concerns and interests into one document."

The first public review meeting was held in early January [2002], with a second meeting held later that month. In the two meetings, three issues have emerged as the most controversial: (1) infill construction (introducing new structures within existing settings), (2) the concept of bridging (new construction that takes place over a historic structure, and (3) height restrictions, which the design guidelines currently limit to four stories, or 60 ft. An exception for special projects restricts height to no greater than the "shoulders" of the historic Bank of America building on First and Santa Clara Sts.

"We want to be sure these guidelines protect

downtown's historic buildings," said John Olson, vice president of PAC\*SJ. "For instance, bridging does not look like a good idea . . . it's embedding a historic building inside a modern building, and that's not what we want to see. We want to avoid a situation where we preserve the façade and destroy the building."

Others view that a balance is essential if we are to achieve revitalization of the downtown retail core. "Only the private marketplace and demand for useable and leasable space can reopen many of these buildings without enormous public subsidies," said Henry Cord, SJDA president. "Let's work together to turn the lights back on."

The Redevelopment Agency is hoping the guidelines will infuse more vitality to downtown while still being sensitive to existing structures.

"How do you make an older building viable without disturbing its historic nature?", said Dolores Mellon, senior development officer at RDA. "These guidelines are addressing how to blend new construction with the old."

Once the guidelines are completed and approved by the city council, a review committee to ensure compliance with the established guidelines may be established. Additionally, an environmental impact report (ER) is presently undergoing administrative review at the city's planning department, with no release date yet announced. Once approved, the EIR would likely work in concert with the design guidelines.

While Olson believes the design guidelines should rule out the demolition of contributing structures, he supports the overall effort of establishing a downtown historic policy.

"It's a noble goal," he said. "It's a good thing to have this discussion now in an abstract concept, rather than doing so later on a building-by-building basis."



*Above: a map of downtown San Jose shows the current Commercial National Register Historic Dist. along with the larger Downtown San Jose Historic Dist. which would be subject to the Redevelopment Agency's proposed historic design guidelines. Map courtesy of SJDA.*

# Hit List: Draft EIR for Downtown San Jose Mixed Use Retail Project Targets Landmarks for Demolition!



*Above, below and inset: the Crescent Jewelers (Wilcox) Bldg. at S. First and San Fernando Sts. as it appears today, in the 1920s, and as it might look restored to its former glory. Although it is indisputably an historic landmark, RDA hopes to demolish it for a 15-story tower.*



Half a dozen historic buildings would be demolished and many others “significantly altered” under the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the Mixed-Use Project and Century Center Plan Amendment (MUPCCPA) prepared for San Jose’s Redevelopment Agency (SJRA) to fast-track retail in downtown San Jose.

The draft EIR, which essentially ratifies the grandiose but abandoned development plan of the Palladium Group, which broke off negotiations with SJRA last March, focuses on six blocks in downtown San Jose, between Market and 3rd, St. John and San Carlos, tearing up the heart of the Downtown Nat’l Historic Dist. and encroaching on the St. James Nat’l Historic Dist. According to SJRA’s Leslie Little, 63 of the 86 buildings within the area covered by the EIR are more than 50 years old, forty-five of these are historic, and 21 could be significantly impacted by the development in accordance with the EIR.

“Implementation of the MUPCCPA project could result in direct adverse impacts to up to twenty-one potential historic resources,” the draft EIR states. Changes are proposed so the older buildings will meet current retail standards or provide sufficient density that will encourage the creation of a viable retail district, according to the EIR.

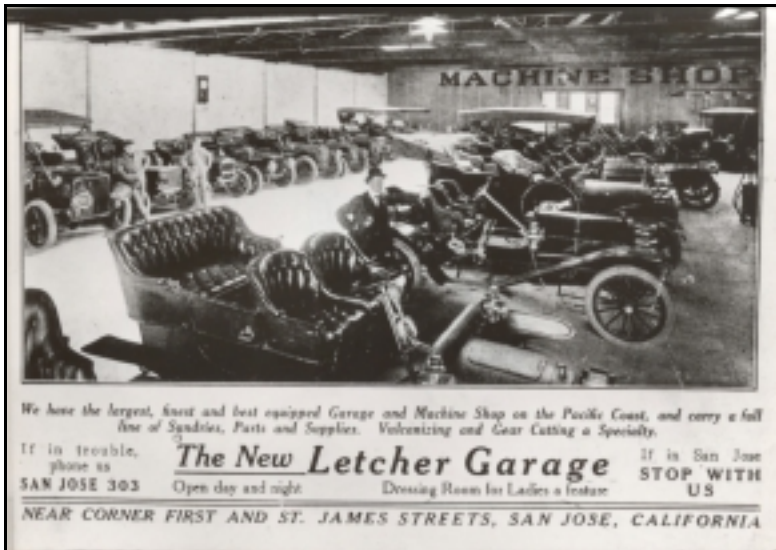
The draft EIR, if adopted by the city council, would permit development in accordance with the prescriptions laid out in the document. It does not, however, represent endorsement of any particular redevelopment project proposal.

Historic buildings which could be demolished are the Wilcox Bldg. (Crescent Jewelers) (1867), 93-99 S. 1st St. (see, *Continuity*, Spring 2001, at p.6); the Blanchard Bldg. (Foto Mexico) (1895), 92-98 S. 2nd St.; the Bassler and Haynes (1876) and Beach Bldgs. (1887) (Dr. Eu Bldgs.) 35-39 E. Santa Clara St.; Letcher’s Garage/Osen Auto Sales (1907), 200 N. 1st St. (see *Continuity*, Spring 2001, at p.11); and St. Francis Block (In &





Above: Osen-McFarland Autoshop, at the corner of N. 1st and St. James Sts. Both photos below: Letcher's Garage, adjacent to McFarland's along N. 1st St. Letcher's was San Jose's first auto dealership. Photos of garages courtesy Leonard McKay, *Memorabilia of San Jose*.



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Out Market) (1876), 17-25 E. Santa Clara St.

Historic buildings that could be significantly altered include the Bank of Italy/Bank of America Bldg. (1925), at 12 S. First St., the single building (historic or otherwise) most identifiably associated with San Jose's skyline. The draft EIR would permit demolition of the rear wing along Fountain Alley and defacing the first floor façade of the building so as to permit floor-to-ceiling windows to promote retail. Presumably also, the gorgeous historic interior (where PAC\*SJ holds its annual preservation celebration each November) would be eligible for gutting.

Other landmarks might be demolished except for their facades include the Porter Stock Bldg. (1866), 87-91 S. 1st St.; the Knox Goodrich Bldg. (1889), 34-36 S. 1st St.; the Dougherty Bldg. (1908), 83-85 S. 2nd St.; the Crydenwise Bldg. (1889), 27-29 Fountain Alley; the Newhall Bldg. (1890), 33 Fountain Alley; the Kirk Bros. Bldg., 28 E. Santa Clara St.; the McLaughlin Ryland Bank Bldg. (1869), 30 E. Santa Clara St.; the Stevenson Bldg. (1870), 36-40 E. Santa Clara St.; the Modern Drug Bldg. (Western Dental) (1870), 42-48 E. Santa Clara Sts., the Knights of Pythias Bldg. (1895), 86-90 S. 2nd St.; the Toccoa (Lawrence) Bldg. (1893), 67-89 E. San Fernando St.; the New Century Block (Voodoo Lounge) (1931), 12-16 S. 2nd St.

The San Jose Bank and Loan Bldg. (1926), 81 W. Santa Clara St. on the so-called Mitchell Block coveted by developers, and the First Church of Christ Scientist (1904), 43 E. St. James St. along St. James Park, might be relocated from their existing sites as well as relocated.

San Jose's Downtown Assn. (SJDA), at its April 12 board meeting, unanimously adopted a resolution

*“To preservationists, “demolition” is a four-letter word.”*

*— Marti Wachtel,  
Chair, Historic  
Landmarks Commn.*

that the city council certify the draft EIR. Pizza-A-Go-Go owner and SJDA board member Chuck Hammers stressed the need to move forward as quickly as possible with retail development in the beleaguered downtown. SJDA board member Don Gagliardi, who also sits on PAC\* SJ's board, agreed that the EIR needs to move forward but pointed out that historic preservation is good for business and that certain aspects of the draft EIR are "seriously misguided."

San Jose Historic Landmarks Commn. chair Marti Wachtel told SJDA that, "to preservationists, 'demolition' is a four-letter word."

The EIR uses three different consultants for the analysis of the historic significance of the buildings endorsed for demolition: the Dill Design Group (DDG), a local independent enterprise, and a pair of other consultants favored by SJRA and developers. Unsurprisingly, DDG uniformly gives higher marks to these buildings on the city's rating system for gauging the historic significance of a structure.

The public review and comment period for the draft EIR was from March 15 to April 29, 2002. PAC\* SJ submitted an official response to the draft EIR, taking issue with its assault on the historic core. "[A]ny development program or project for downtown San Jose should include strong support for the restoration and/or rehabilitation of the remaining historic buildings, not demolition," PAC\* SJ president Pat Curia wrote. "Great care must be made in choosing projects for individual sites because of the extreme historic significance of the entire project area."

The draft EIR is scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing on May 22.

*"Implementation of the MUPCCPA project could result in direct adverse impacts to up to 21 potential historic resources."*

*— Draft EIR*



*Above: Dr. Eu's buildings at the corner of N. 2nd and Santa Clara Sts. They are elegant even amid their decadence.*



*Left: The ground floor facade of the Bank of Italy/ Bank of America Bldg. at First and Santa Clara Sts. The EIR contemplates "significant alteration" to the ground floor facade to make retail more attractive.*

*Below: the Christian Science Church abutting St. James Park. The EIR would authorize relocating the neglected landmark to make way for highrise housing.*





*Left: a 1920s view of S. First St. in San Jose, where virtually every building design emanated from the offices of architect William Binder.*

*Photo courtesy Jack Douglas.*

*They Left Their Mark: Architect Series*

## William Binder: San Jose's First Major Modern Architect (Part 1 of 2)

*by Jack Douglas*

William Binder can be called San Jose's first major modern architect if for no other reason than that he began his career in the 1890s when the innovative ideas of Chicago's Louis Henry Sullivan were spreading throughout the United States. These new concepts included the use of steel framing and the recently invented electric elevator, both of which made the construction of tall buildings possible.

Binder was the first local architect to construct commercial buildings with iron or steel reinforced concrete. These techniques were proven when the 1906 earthquake tumbled older structures built of unreinforced masonry. Binder

*'Binder was the first local architect to construct commercial buildings with iron or steel reinforced concrete. . . . Binder absorbed these new concepts and did the plans for the bulk of San Jose's downtown buildings from 1900 to 1940.'*

absorbed these new concepts, and with the backing of T.S. Montgomery, San Jose's one-man redevelopment agency, did the plans for the bulk of San Jose's downtown buildings from 1900 to 1940.

William Binder (pronounced Bender) was born in San Francisco on March 17, 1871. Like most architects of the day, he acquired his education by working as an apprentice. His boss and mentor was George W. Page, one of San Jose's leading architects. Binder first put out the shingle of his own, in partnership with Fairly Weiland, in the old Porter Building on Santa Clara St. in 1895. The partnership lasted for two years during which the partnership received commissions for a number of local residences.

In the late 1890s Binder set out on his

*‘Almost all of the plans for the buildings on S. First St. from San Antonio to San Carlos and beyond originated in the Binder offices. Only two, the Montgomery Hotel and the Twohy Building, still remain.’*



*Above: a postcard rendition of the Montgomery Hotel. Left: the Twohy Building. These two buildings are the lone Binder-design survivors along S. First St.*

own and acquired jobs for more substantial projects, such as the Alcantara Building (1903), now the Metropole Hotel; the Carnegie Library Building (1903), and the Elks Club (1913). One of his earliest designs for T.S. Montgomery was the seven-story Garden City Bank, San Jose's first steel frame high rise structure (1907).

#### **Moving Picture Theaters**

William Binder designed almost all our local movie houses, including Sid Grauman's Unique Theater (1903), the Jose (1904) and the T&D (1913), which was the first San Jose theater constructed of concrete and steel and designed primarily for showing films. Later came the Hippodrome (1919), done in association with Weeks & Day of San Francisco. Binder also designed the neighborhood theaters, the Willow Glen (1933) and the Hester (1927), now known as the Towne Theater.

*continued on Page 12*



Above: the Metropole (1904), It is has been renovated as headquarters for a dotcom.

*‘One of Binder’s earliest designs for T. S. Montgomery was the seven-story Garden City Bank, San Jose’s first steel frame high rise structure (1907).’*

### **T.S. Montgomery Connection**

Perhaps it was during the period 1902 through 1910, when Binder was providing plans for many of the home in Montgomery’s Naglee Park that the developer began the long association with the up-and-coming architect. Binder’s firm became the chief provider for all of Montgomery’s downtown developments. Almost all of the plans for the buildings on S. First St. from San Antonio to San Carlos and beyond originated in the Binder offices. Only two, the Montgomery Hotel and the Twohy Building – both city landmarks – still remain.

One of Binder’s most beautiful buildings, which still remains much as it was built in 1923 is the former Christian Science Assembly Church at 72 N. 5th St. Now named Le Petit Trianon, it has become a popular auditorium for music concerts. Visitors can marvel at the fine craftsmanship of the interiors which have been spared modification.

Few would claim that Binder and his later partner, Ernest N. Curtis, were highly original or trendsetters, by they worked with great skill in producing a multitude of pleasing designs in a variety of styles that put a stamp of distinction on our city.

*Part two of this article on Binder’s partnership with Curtis will appear in the upcoming Summer 2002 issue of Continuity.*

Above: the Garden City Bank building (1907), San Jose’s first steel frame high rise.  
Right: Carnegie Library (1903), on the site where the new joint City/San Jose State library is being constructed. Below right: the Jose Theater (1904), shown circa 1985, set to reopen as a comedy club later this year after being saved by a PAC\* SJ lawsuit.



**Vintage postcards and photos courtesy of Jack Douglas.**

Book Review:

## California Crazy & Beyond: Roadside Vernacular Architecture

by Jim Heimann

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001. 175 pp. \$18.95

Reviewed by Don Gagliardi

Any building that survives long enough is bound to be considered historic and thus embraced by preservationists. This is among the most frequently levelled criticisms of the preservationist impulse — its supposed lack of discernment about whether a structure is “worthy” of retention (because someone extraordinary lived there or something exceptional happened in it or because it is lavishly appointed or stylistically exemplary) or unworthy (because it is merely old, quirky or unlike anything built today.)

Mark’s Hot Dogs on Alum Rock Ave. in San Jose’s eastside provides a good Rorschach test of one’s preservationist instincts. An un-aesthetic circa 1936 chili dog stand in a dumpy plaster, citrus-shaped, bright-orange shell that may be older still, Mark’s is endangered by encroaching redevelopment. How to judge whether it should be saved? (No fair suggesting a taste test; the dogs are admittedly excellent, but that’s beside the point.)

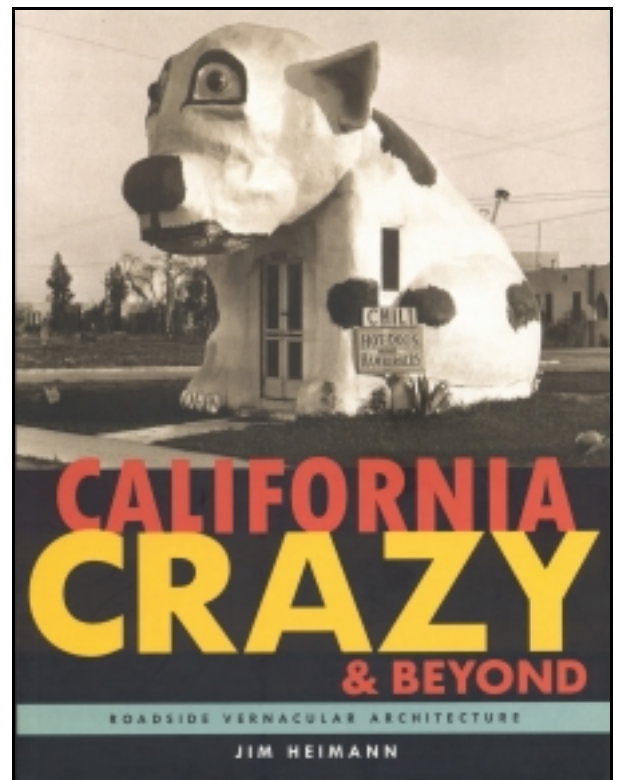
For the true preservationist it is enough that Mark’s is old, offbeat and not being replicated. But that alone does not make it save-worthy, clucks the naysayer. That’s where Jim Heimann’s new book comes in. *California Crazy & Beyond*, a recent update of a work from a generation ago, puts Mark’s Hot Dogs in historical context. Mark’s is a San Jose exemplar (perhaps the only surviving one) of “roadside vernacular architecture,” for Heimann’s lack of an all-encompassing word for the bizarre, oddball architectural aberrations seen along roadsides across mid-twentieth century America, but mostly in California, and especially Southern California.

“Throughout California, the main roads leading into metropolitan areas were the obvious place for refreshment stands, eateries and other businesses to solicit the auto trade with unusual imagery,” writes Heimann. “To behold such haywire crowned and seated in its ultimate glory, you must go to California,” he quotes a *Fortune* magazine article. These quintessentially Golden State structures included contraptions shaped like dogs, frogs, pumpkin palaces, and of course citrus fruit. (The Jumbo Lemon Co., we learn, leased lemon-shaped sites to sell lemonade across the state.)

*California Crazy* is predominately a picture book, with a broad array of photos of buildings, old postcards, handbills and other memorabilia reflecting the wide assortment of roadside vernacular both in California and, as advertised, beyond. The whimsy of these structures and their characteristic reflection of an earlier time cannot help but make for a pleasant sitting.

Some of the structures shown in Heimann’s book (and Mark’s Hot Dogs is not among them), are gone. The loss of each seems terrible because no two are quite alike. That was the purpose of roadside vernacular, a deliberate individuality which screamed to passers-by, “pay attention to me!”

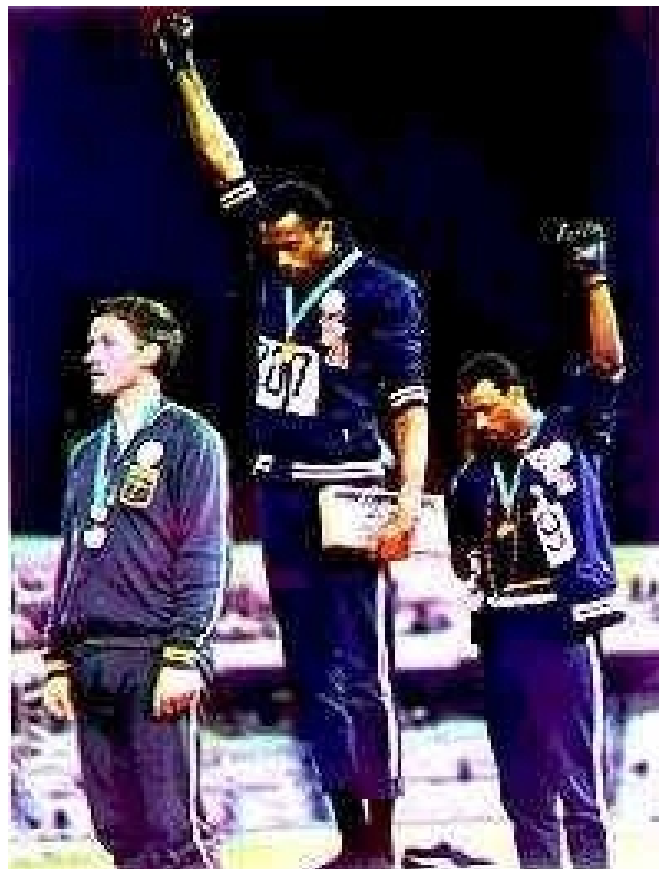
When did American architecture abandon its individuality in favor of stripmall homeogeneity? Perhaps when, by “redeveloping,” we tried to discern only “worthy” buildings to retain and lost our soul in the process.



### Excerpt

*‘While Southern California contained a large amount of offbeat buildings, the rest of the state enjoyed a healthy sampling of architectural anomalies as well. Given the free-wheeling nature of California, its perceived lack of history, wealth of affordable land and anything goes attitude, it is easy to see why the state and climate were perfect for embracing these buildings.’*

Former San Jose State track stars Tommy Smith and John Carlos give their famous "black power" protest while accepting medals at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. *Photo courtesy James Clark.*



*'The monument to Coach Bud Winter and the dilapidated track are the last physical reminders of a truly colossal figure in San Jose history, his progeny and his unstoppable track and field team. Reading through a brief history of Coach Winter's program will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end.'*

---

## Paving Over History: San Jose State "Speed City" Track Threatened by Parking Proposal

by James Clark

In an attempt to address its student parking shortage, San Jose State Univ. (SJSU) plans to pave over Bud Winter Field, its track-and-field venue across from Spartan Stadium to make way for an 819-stall surface parking lot, more than two city blocks of pure asphalt. The proposed parking lot a mile from campus would use the same shuttle buses currently operating from SJSU's existing nearby park-and-ride lot at S. 7th St.

The field on the corner of S. 10th and Alma Sts., though no longer used for track events since SJSU dropped its program, nevertheless is the only outdoor recreation area in the neighborhood.

Bud Winter Field, and the plaque adorning its main gateway, which reads, "In Honor of Lloyd C. 'Bud' Winter,

Track and Field Coach, 1941-1970," are the last physical remainders of a truly colossal figure in San Jose history, his progeny and his unstoppable track and field team, known throughout the international athletic world as "Speed City." Reading through a history of Coach Winter's program will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end: More than 100 All-Americans and 27 Olympians, including Tommy Smith and John Carlos, who transcended their athletic accomplishments when they raised the Black fist of power over the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. Winter's Speed City track teams are arguably San Jose's greatest sports achievement.

SJSU insists the field bearing Coach Winter's name is of no historic value. The draft negative declaration for the project states that "the original track often associated with San Jose State University known as 'Speed City' . . . was actually located just

north of the existing Spartan Stadium and was removed over 20 years ago." And an official SJSU statement assures that, "coach Bud Winter, already a member of the SJSU Sports Hall of Fame, will continue to be honored appropriately on campus."

After removing a generation ago the original hallowed field where history was made, SJSU proposes to leave only the small plaque to look out over the shimmering asphalt of nearly a thousand automobiles -- "Bud Winter Parking Lot," an ironic honor indeed for a man who put San Jose and SJSU on the map by elevating pedestrian transport to an athletic art form.

*James Clark is a Spartan Keyes neighborhood resident seeking to save Bud Winter Field. You can contact him at [sparky95616@yahoo.com](mailto:sparky95616@yahoo.com) or 480-3089.*



*A turn-of-the century grocery sign was uncovered during remodeling at a corner market on 10th and William Sts. near San Jose State Univ. last winter. PAC\*SJ member and neighborhood activist Lisa Jensen salvaged the sign, which will be available to the highest bidder at PAC\*SJ's preservation celebration in November.*

## PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE MEMBERSHIP FORM

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**Enclosed is my \$ \_\_\_\_\_ tax deductible contribution**

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**Please complete this form, enclose it with your check made payable to 'Preservation Action Council of San Jose' and mail to:**

**PAC\*SJ  
 PO Box 2287  
 San Jose, CA 95109-2287**

# CALENDAR

## May

- 20 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## June

- 17 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## July

- 15 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## August

- 19 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.



The Preservation Action Council of San Jose is a nonprofit membership organization providing information to property owners and education to the public and promoting programs and policies for historic preservation and compatible new architectural design.

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