



DRAFT DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENTS

IX. HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Historic Buildings

The rich character of Downtown Pleasanton stems from its abundance of historic buildings that have been constructed over the past 150 years. The architectural styles, small-town scale of buildings, and tree-lined streets all combine to create a setting unique to Pleasanton. Unlike many other communities in the Bay Area where old town areas have long since been replaced with newer and more intensive urban development, Pleasanton's Downtown has remained substantially intact. This character is highly valued by the community and desired to be preserved and enhanced wherever feasible.

The following chapter presents an overview of the historic resources in Downtown Pleasanton and provides guidance for protecting and enhancing these resources.

INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Downtown has played a vibrant role as a center of commerce in Pleasanton for over 150 years. It originated on one of the main routes to the gold fields in the Sierra Nevada mountains and quickly became a mercantile stopover for miners seeking their fortune in the Mother Lode.

In 1863, John Kottinger subdivided a small portion of his land holdings at the north end of Main Street into three “downtown” lots. Another property owner, Joshua Neal, began to subdivide his adjacent land at the south end of Main Street in 1867. Lots were quickly developed, and commercial activity began to flourish. With the coming of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869, the Downtown area soon became a shipping center for agricultural and manufactured products. Many of the Chinese workers that helped build the Railroad through the valley settled here and established laundries and stores along north Main Street. Numerous tunnels were built under Main Street to transport and store foods from their various businesses.

From a handful of business establishments in the 1870’s, Main Street grew to include hotels, general stores, blacksmith shops, professional offices, warehouses, and several saloons by 1894. After the turn of the 19th century, many more buildings were constructed from revenues generated by the hop industry located north of the Downtown. In 1927, Pleasanton was chosen as the background for the movie “Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm” starring Mary Pickford. As a result, Pleasanton became a favorite filming location in the late 1920’s because of its historic downtown and rural environs which led Pleasanton to be called “the Hollywood of the North.”

In addition to the historic Downtown commercial core area, residential neighborhoods sprung up in the outlying area to house local merchants and other workers. Homes were designed using a variety of architectural styles including Victorian, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Mission Revival. Neighborhoods were laid out using the typical grid pattern with tree-lined streets. A “small-town scale” resulted which is still largely intact today.

During the ~~current-2000-2001~~ Specific Plan update process, a Preliminary Historic Resources List and Map of the Downtown historic resources (Technical Supplement) ~~were-was~~ developed which identify the individual sites and neighborhoods that contain outstanding examples of heritage structures within the Plan Area. ~~These documents are intended to expand the City data base for implementing the currently proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance.~~ The list ~~identifies~~ identified: (1) specific sites containing structures of at least 50 years in age which possess outstanding architectural and/or historic quality; and (2) five neighborhoods (residential and commercial) which contain a significant collection of historic buildings. In 2012, an updated “Historic Context” document was prepared to further establish the connection between the City’s history and the built environment, and to establish which components of the built environment are historically significant. In 2013, the name of one of the neighborhoods was changed from “neighborhood on the south side of Stanley Boulevard” to “Stanley Boulevard neighborhood” and five parcels on the north side of Stanley Boulevard were added to this neighborhood.

The high number of historic sites and neighborhoods that were identified underscores the significance of historic resources in the Downtown. Several of the prominent individual Main Street sites include:



Johnston Building

- The **Johnston Building** located at 465 Main Street is a fine example of brick construction using Romanesque-style architecture. This two-story building was constructed in 1896 as one of Pleasanton's first commercial speculation buildings.
- The **Kolln Hardware Store** at 600 Main Street is an example of Victorian Revival-style architecture. It was constructed in 1890 and has been used as a hardware store since 1905. Through the years, it has maintained much of its original character including oak floors and many of the original store fixtures. The store was extensively remodeled in 2008 and converted to a bank and retail stores but retains its historical significance.
- The **"Pleasanton" Arch Sign** has been identified as the gateway to the Downtown since 1932 when it was constructed for \$538 from funds donated by the Women's Improvement Club.
- The original Pleasanton Town Hall located at 603 Main Street was designed in the Mediterranean style in 1915 on land donated by the Women's Improvement Club. The building has also housed the City library and in later years served as the headquarters for the Police Department. In 1984, after extensive historic renovation, the building became the current home of the **Livermore-Amador Valley Historical Museum**.

- The original Farmer’s Hotel at 855 Main Street was constructed in 1864 by town founder John Kottinger. The hotel was the scene of many gala events and was later renamed the **Pleasanton Hotel**. It has twice been destroyed by fire and most recently rebuilt in 1915 to appear as it did in 1898.



St. John Street House

The five heritage neighborhoods identified on the Historic Resources List and Map include the following:

- The **St. Mary Street and St. John Street** neighborhood consists of many fine examples of period revival and cottage-style architecture and represents a strong collection of similarly scaled and styled homes. Its tree-lined streets, front-yard landscaping, and generous setbacks between buildings further add to its historic quality. Many of the Downtown’s early merchants and civic leaders had homes located in this neighborhood.
- The ~~neighborhood on the south side of Stanley Boulevard~~ **neighborhood** consists of modest vernacular residences. ~~All of the homes back onto the Arroyo del Valle, thus giving the neighborhood a uniquely unified theme.~~ Originally called Livermore Road, this street was sparsely developed until the early twentieth century due to its distance from the Downtown commercial area.
- The **First Street, Second Street, and Third Street** neighborhood presents a variety of architectural styles with homes been built over an 80-year time period. Many of the homes on First Street serve as fine examples of Victorian-style architecture. Homes located on Second and Third Streets vary from small cottages built by the Southern Pacific Railroad to more stately homes on the south end of Second Street built during the early 20th century.



*Variety of
Architectural
Styles*

- The **Spring Street and Ray Street** neighborhood was developed generally between 1920 and 1940. The building designs range from bungalow cottages on Ray Street to Mission Revival architecture on Spring Street. These groupings of small residential buildings share consistent scale, height, setbacks, and massing characteristics that further their unique character. ~~The Spring Street neighborhood is considered to be the City's first "modern subdivision tract."~~
- The **Downtown Commercial Center** consists of a variety of architectural styles with many buildings retaining a high degree of integrity. It possesses a series of commercial storefront buildings running nearly the entire length of Main Street, with only a few modern buildings dispersed within. The side streets in this area generally have a more modest scale but also contribute to the historic character of the Center. The historic character of Downtown Pleasanton is further enhanced by the "Pleasanton Sign," which caused Pleasanton to receive the nickname "P-Town" during World War II when all of the lighted sign letters except the "P" were turned off in the event of air raids. The Main Street portion of the Downtown is one of the best preserved of its type in the East Bay, thus heightening its regional significance as a center for tourism.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOAL

The primary Specific Plan goal for historic preservation is to provide for the protection and enhancement of the historic and “small town” character of the Downtown Plan Area.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

1. ~~To complete a thorough inventory of the Plan Area’s historic resources, implement a program of designating such resources, and~~ To take the necessary measures to protect and preserve significant historic resources in the Downtown Specific Plan Area. ~~them through a historic preservation ordinance.~~
2. To establish a clear regulatory process to ensure that additions, remodels, and new development in the Downtown Specific Plan Area are designed and constructed such that they are compatible in scale, massing, height, setbacks, architectural style, architectural features, level of detailing, and materials with the historic character of the Specific Plan Area.
- 2.3. To prevent the demolition of appropriately-designated historic resources which can otherwise reasonably be preserved.
- 3.4.—To ensure that the design of new buildings and modifications to existing heritage buildings and heritage neighborhoods are compatible with the Downtown’s traditional design character and scale.
4. ~~To implement a comprehensive system of incentives to assist in the preservation of the Plan Area’s historic resources.~~

HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Major attention is given throughout this Specific Plan to the preservation and enjoyment of historic resources (i.e., land use, design and beautification, circulation, and economic vitality). The primary purpose of this Chapter is to provide specific standards, ~~and incentives, and procedures~~ for achieving historic preservation. ~~In addition, a major focus of the Specific Plan process was to provide guidance for the preparation of the City's proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance. This Ordinance is intended to enable the formation of a new City process to facilitate the identification, designation, and preservation of major historic resources throughout the Plan Area as well as the remainder of the City.~~

The following policies ~~and programs constitute the action plan to implement the~~ will guide City decision-making in implementing achieving the historic preservation goal and objectives outlined above.

~~MODIFICATIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS~~ HISTORIC RESOURCES POLICIES

Preservation of the Plan Area's historic character will generally rely upon protecting historic buildings from demolition and minimizing exterior changes to significant original architectural features ~~whenever feasible~~. In addition, modifications to these buildings will need to closely reflect the existing architecture, and the construction of new ones in historic areas will need to be consistent compatible with the Downtown's traditional design character and scale. ~~This will require greater focus on these items in the future.~~

- ~~1. Identify all properties with buildings older than 50 years on a list to be updated every two years by the City.~~
- ~~2. Require the completion of the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Survey Form 523 to develop and document a statement of historic significance prior to the issuance of demolition permits for any historic resource older than 50 years. Evaluate these properties using the State of California criteria for the California Register of Historic Resources.~~
1. If a residential building built before 1942 is determined using the "Pleasanton Downtown Historic Context Statement" to be eligible for listing in the California Register, then it is considered a historic resource by the City. The 1942 date shall be revisited every 10 years to determine if a change is warranted.
2. Prohibit the demolition* of any residential building found to be a historic resource unless such building is determined by the Chief Building Official to be unsafe or dangerous, and if no other reasonable means of rehabilitation or relocation can be achieved. A 45-day public notification period shall be implemented for buildings proposed to be demolished which do not pose an immediate safety hazard in order to

assess alternatives and give the public an opportunity to make proposals for rehabilitation or relocation.

*Demolition of a residential building for purposes of historic preservation shall be defined as the removal of the front façade or the most visible façade from the street, including changes to the roof and roof line. The front or most visible façade shall be considered the forward most ten feet of the structure. If the portion(s) of a building that is(are) required to remain as described above are later determined by the Director of Community Development to be unusable due to dry rot, termite damage, etc., then said portion(s) may be removed and reconstructed provided the new construction matches the original.

3. Prohibit the demolition of any non-residential building found to be historically significant with regard to the California Register criteria unless such building is determined by the Chief Building Official to be unsafe or dangerous, and if no other reasonable means of rehabilitation or relocation can be achieved. A 45-day public notification period shall be implemented for buildings proposed to be demolished which do not pose an immediate safety hazard in order to assess alternatives and give the public an opportunity to make proposals for rehabilitation or relocation.

~~4. Prohibit the demolition of primary buildings located in the Ray Street/Spring Street Neighborhood unless such buildings are considered to be unsafe or dangerous and if no other feasible means of rehabilitation can be achieved. These buildings may be retained in residential use or may be converted to another permitted or conditionally-permitted use as long as the primary building's exterior is preserved.~~

4. Permit historic houses to be relocated within the Downtown where: (1) the new neighborhood contains older homes; (2) the replacement home is consistent with the design quality of the relocated home; and (3) the replacement home is compatible with the neighborhood's architectural styles and scale.

5. New non-residential building design, ~~including the design of replacement buildings for buildings older than 50 years which are approved for demolition,~~ should draw upon the primary exterior features of the Downtown's traditional design character in terms of architectural style and materials, colors, details of construction, height, floor area, bulk, massing, and setbacks. These building elements should be consistent with those elements of buildings in the immediate neighborhood, and the design of new/replacement buildings should not represent a significant departure from the existing neighborhood character. Buildings should be designed to reflect, but not necessarily replicate, the architectural time period they represent.

6. New residential building design, including the design of replacement buildings for buildings constructed before 1942 which are approved for demolition, should draw upon the primary exterior features of the Downtown's traditional design character in terms of materials, colors, details of construction, and setbacks and should utilize one

of the following architectural styles found Downtown dating from pre-1942: Gothic Revival, Italianate, Victorian (Queen Anne, Stick, and Folk), Bay Tradition, Craftsman, Prairie, Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Minimal Traditional, Vernacular Forms, and FHA Minimum House.

6.7. Additions and other modifications to the exteriors of buildings ~~considered to be a historic resource exceeding 50 years in age~~ should ~~match~~ complement the original building exterior in terms of architectural style and all other exterior design elements, and should be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

8. Compatibility of new homes or modifications to existing homes with the immediate neighborhood (i.e., homes on lots within 200 feet of the subject lot) relative to mass and bulk shall be assumed if the proposed FAR does not exceed the average FAR of the homes in the immediate neighborhood by more than 25 percent.

Compatibility of new homes or modifications to existing homes with the immediate area relative to height shall be assumed if the proposed height of a structure is no more than five feet higher than the average maximum height of homes in the immediate neighborhood.

Exceptions can be granted to these two compatibility standards if the specific house design is determined to offset issues created by height and FAR above these standards. In no case shall exceptions be granted to exceed zoning restrictions on height and FAR. However, variances may be granted subject to required findings and established processes.

Possible alternatives for the second paragraph above regarding height compatibility:

Alternative 1:

Compatibility of new homes or modifications to existing homes relative to height shall be assumed if the proposed number of stories is not more than one story higher than the immediately adjacent homes on either side of the subject home. For corner lots, the immediately adjacent homes to the rear and interior side shall be used for this standard.

Alternative 2:

Compatibility of new homes or modifications to existing homes relative to height shall be assumed if the proposed height of a structure does not exceed the height of the tallest home in the immediate neighborhood.

7.9. Future residential development (i.e., when additional dwelling units are being proposed on a property that has existing homes) should generally provide for the preservation and rehabilitation of existing on-site street frontage homes built before 1942 ~~which exceed 50 years in age~~ or which otherwise substantially contribute to the "small town" character of the neighborhood in terms of architecture and scale. Exceptions may be

permitted to: (1) relocate such homes to other appropriate Downtown locations for permanent preservation and rehabilitation; or (2) demolish and replace such homes which are specifically found by the City to demonstrate minimal redeeming lack historic and/or architectural significance.

~~8. Permit historic houses to be relocated within the Downtown where—(1) the new neighborhood contains older homes; (2) the replacement home is consistent with the design quality of the relocated home; and (3) the replacement home is compatible with the neighborhood’s architectural styles and scale.~~

~~9. Specify individual City staff representatives from the Building Inspection, Planning, and Fire Departments to review development permit applications relating to historic resources. These individuals should further be provided with the technical education adequate to perform high-level review.~~

~~10. City departments responsible for the review of projects involving modifications to historic buildings should prepare and distribute a public informational flyer that details the application submittal requirements, step-by-step review process, and available historic preservation incentive programs.~~

10. Comply with all relevant policies of the Design and Beautification Chapter of this Specific Plan and the Downtown Design Guidelines.

11. Actively monitor and prevent the loss of historic resources through neglected maintenance.

~~HISTORIC BUILDING PRESERVATION INCENTIVES~~

~~The success of historic preservation in the Downtown will rely substantially upon the implementation of a program of incentives for the owners of heritage buildings. This will allow for the historic character of the Downtown to be more readily preserved in the face of market demands for more intensive development.~~

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

1. Complete Historic Context Document to identify what physical features of the built environment are important reflections of Pleasanton’s history.

2. Prepare Comprehensive Historic Resource Survey in Downtown Specific Plan Area.

3. Specify individual City staff representatives from the Building Inspection, Planning, and Fire Departments to review development permit applications relating to historic resources. These individuals should further be provided with the technical education adequate to perform high-level review.

4. City departments responsible for the review of projects involving modifications to

historic buildings should prepare and distribute a public informational flyer that details the application submittal requirements, step-by-step review process, and available historic preservation incentive programs.

~~II. Undertake the following historic preservation incentive measures:~~

~~A. Develop and routinely update a comprehensive list of historic preservation incentives to assist the owners of historic buildings and to encourage investment in historic properties (such as tax incentives, streamlined permit processing, etc.).~~

~~B. Establish a National Register Historic District in the Downtown and encourage participation in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Certification program when eligible properties are upgraded or rehabilitated.~~

~~C. Provide application assistance to property owners who wish to certify their rehabilitation project for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Certification Program.~~

~~D. Assist the Pleasanton Downtown Association in its efforts to implement the "Main Street Program."~~

~~E 5.~~ Implement an award program for the rehabilitation of historic structures.

6. Amend Property Maintenance ordinance to prohibit loss of historic significance of a property or structure through neglect of maintenance in all zoning districts in the Specific Plan Area.

X. DESIGN AND BEAUTIFICATION

(page 76 of Downtown Specific Plan)

14. Preserve and protect the character of the East Side neighborhood around Second Street from tear-downs, large-scaled and inappropriately-styled additions, and lot consolidations. Preserve and encourage similar architectural elements and details such as porches, picket fences, and flower boxes. Preserve the neighborhood's orientation of street-facing entrances and windows.
15. Protect the character of the West Side neighborhood around St. Mary Street and Division Street from inappropriately-scaled additions or new construction unrelated to the density, size, and character of the neighborhood.
16. Enhance the charm and diversity of the West Side neighborhood around Rose Avenue. Protect its cottages; encourage second units in the rear of existing homes and the construction of duplexes instead of multi-story apartment buildings.
17. Protect the established size and spacing of buildings in residential neighborhoods by avoiding excessive lot coverage and maintaining appropriate separations between buildings.
18. Foster harmonious visual transitions between apartment buildings and single-family homes with the stepping-down of forms, spacing, and landscaping.
19. Maintain the original character of homes by encouraging additions at the rear of the site, where possible.
20. Encourage garages at the rear of lots when lots exceed 50 feet in width. Provide screened rear parking for multi-family units.
21. Prevent the use of industrial or commercial building elements and materials in residential areas.
22. Discourage the demolition of single-family homes which exceed 50 years of age. The replacement of any single-family home should be compatible with the neighborhood scale and architectural style.