

Some stirrings downtown

By KEN McLAUGHLIN

It's hardly a full-scale revitalization, but it is a beginning. To the delight of downtown citizen and merchant groups, as well as Pajaro Valley residents, a significant number of Main St. property owners have been conducting an unofficial spruce-up campaign.

"It's spreading like wildfire," beams Roger Hoffman, chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee for downtown revitalization.

"I think the downtown had reached a pretty low level of disrepair," says

Chamber of Commerce manager Gil Mello. "But the people here are starting to realize that all is not lost. A lot are finding out that they have lovely Victorian buildings."

The improvements go beyond paint. An attractive red-brick building, being renovated by Monterey Savings and Loan, is nearing completion on the southwest corner of Main and Beach Sts. Catty-corner across from that structure, the imposing Lettunich building has been given a new face, with new paint, lights and awnings.

The Chamber of Commerce building has also been refurbished with similar trap-

pings. And next door, Ted Taylor and Tom Wurzbach (of Taylor Office Supply and Goodrich Business Machines) have painted the front of their building, and Taylor has installed a new facade for his store. Structures that have recently received paint jobs include the Derpich (Miramar) building, the Meadow Gold building and the Jefsen building. New paint is now being applied to the Jack Novcich apartment building.

But as Hoffman emphasizes, all is not rosy in the downtown picture. He points to the new anti-crime metal gate Star Surplus found necessary to install at the store on South Main. "Unfortunately, those gates have become signs of a dying city," remarks Hoffman.

Another thing he regrets is the attitude of many property owners who are fearful of making improvements because of the graffiti and vandalism problems.

One such owner is Ted Taylor, who, along with Wurzbach, has spent a good deal of money fixing up the front of their building, but refuses to paint the side that faces the public walkway because of the potential for more graffiti.

"If I painted it, the writing would just be back a week later," laments Taylor, who points to the fancy new lights on the chamber building. "Come and see these things in a few weeks — I know they'll be broken."

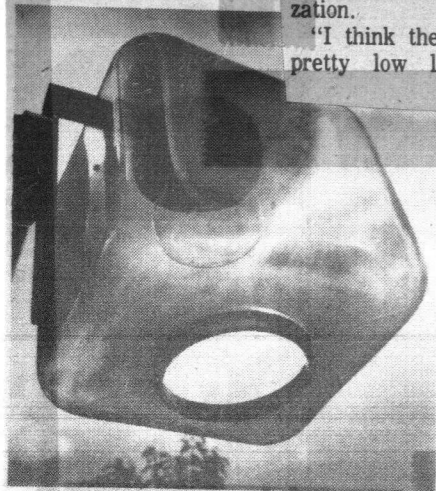
Mello concedes that Taylor's attitude is typical among downtown property owners. "He is saying what a lot of them feel," say Mello.

Still, the chamber manager is essentially optimistic. Adds Mello: "I really feel the downtown is starting to turn around."

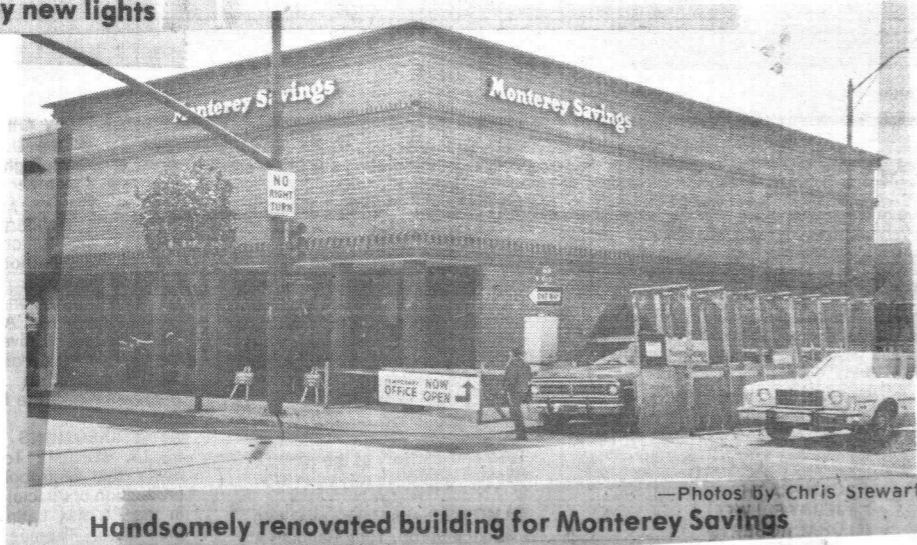


Jack's Apartments is getting a new coat of paint

Victorian movement rubs off on Main St.



Chamber's fancy new lights



Handsomely renovated building for Monterey Savings

—Photos by Chris Stewart



Chamber building, left, and Taylor's Office Supply: Exasperation over graffiti caused one wall of alleyway to be left unpainted



Second-story paint job gave Jefsen Building new life



The central business district is seeing a spate of clean-up activity. Story and pictures page 9.