



Old St. George Hotel Sign Lies In The Mall

St. George Hotel Sign Gives Way To 'Progress'

The signs of "progress" are sometimes less than pleasing to the eye, as city residents who walked the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall may have noticed Wednesday.

On orders from the city, the management of the St. George Hotel removed the venerable Art Deco hotel sign and replaced it with a modern one.

"It was sickening," said Addie Petersen, business manager of the hotel. She said the city is also after the St. George to black out its marquee.

Owner for the past 14 years has been Robert Shepard of San Francisco. Karl Uthman now manages the St. George, with a 15-year lease, according to a clerk.

"We all hated to see it come down," the clerk said of the faded but still handsome old sign. He said it went up some-

time in the 1930s.

Problem was, the 1880-vintage hotel is only entitled to a projecting sign of 43 square feet, based on its street frontage. The old sign takes up 70-80 square feet, according to Dick Emigh, deputy zoning administrator with the city planning department.

Emigh said the hotel was put on notice in 1971 that it would have to replace its oversize sign. In 1973 the city attorney was told an injunction might be needed to gain compliance with the city sign ordinance.

The hotel management was made aware that the sign could qualify for an exception based on historical significance, Emigh told The Sentinel.

"No way!" responded Addie. "There was never any suggestion made to us that the sign could be saved, no mention of any exception based on its historical significance."

Passers-by glanced at the old sign as it lay in the street, a victim of progress.

Addie said she and other business people along the north end of Pacific Avenue fought the idea of a mall there, fearing it would be a detriment to commerce. Now, she thinks the mall is quite beautiful.

Perhaps a little less beautiful without the old sign. It depends on your point of view.

After all, that's what the sign ordinance is for — beautification.