

A comeback for old Main Street?

It's possible. Here is how Santa Cruz made over its tired old Pacific Avenue

Pacific Avenue, the old main street of Santa Cruz, refused to wither away when all its big stores moved to the outskirts of town. It made itself over into a stroller's paradise, and business is better than ever.

It wasn't really quite that easy, or that quick. There was a long citizen campaign to promote the project, set up an assessment district, and get it moving. And the mall has been working for about five years. But some visitors feel it now rivals the beach as the city's main attraction.

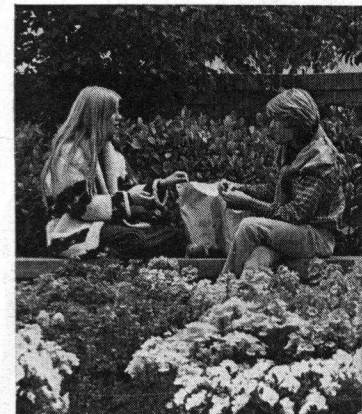
About five blocks of the old street were transformed into the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall by the narrowing and curving of auto lanes, broadening of sidewalks, and—most important—by some remarkably varied plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers. It all hangs together, yet plants, buildings, and stores display a rich variety of styles that matches the variety of

people on the sidewalks—the Santa Cruz mixture includes senior citizens, alternate-culture young people, and tourists.

Few city parks have as many kinds of trees as you'll see along this mall. More than 40 kinds grow there (most of them identified by name labels); many were donated and some are extremely rare. Underplantings—shrubs, ground covers, bedding plants—are equally diverse, and all thrive exceedingly well in the mild, moist climate of Santa Cruz.

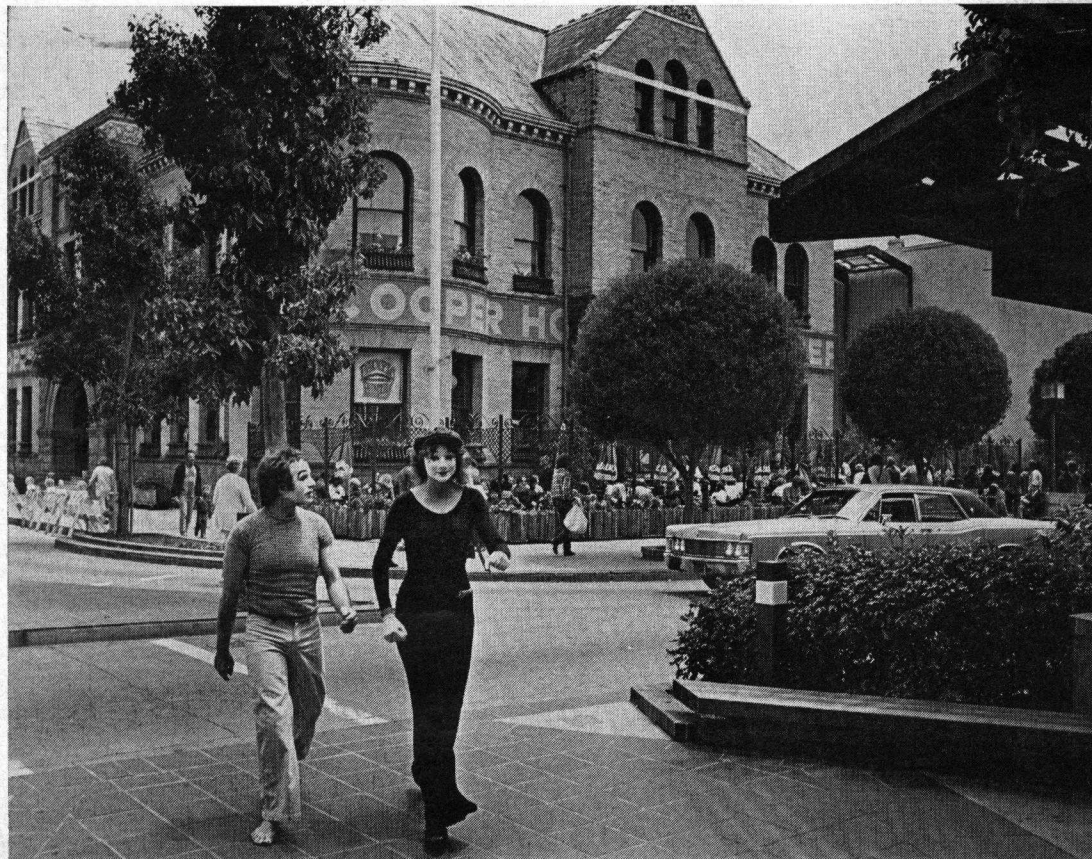
Notable trees are *Magnolia macrophylla*, with pale green leaves up to 2 feet long; golden-flowered, fragrant sweet-shade (*Hymenosporum flavum*); a grove of New Zealand lacebark trees (*Hoheria populnea*) at the north end of the mall; and a *Michelia doltsopa* at the south end.

Architect for the project is Kermit Darrow; landscape architects are Harold Hyde and Roy Rydell. □



Bench near south end of mall
—good for impromptu picnics—
flanked by trees, shrubs, annuals

Mimes have just walked away from Cooper House, the center of much Pacific Avenue action. Once the Santa Cruz County courthouse, it now shelters craft and gift shops, restaurant, sidewalk cafe with live music





PETER O. WHITELEY

View north along Pacific Avenue shows how street gained distinction with its new curves and planting strips. Narrowing the traffic lane has slowed and reduced car traffic, so walking is more pleasant



Lacy foliage of peppermint tree overhangs brick planters holding rosemary, native azalea, and blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glaucua')

Lavish plantings in front of bookstore include ferns, asparagus ferns, Japanese maple. Indoors, more plants enliven the shop

