

For 9 SC Buildings

Historic Preservation Group Recommends 'Historic' Label

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Local history was made by the city historic preservation commission Wednesday when it approved nine dwellings in the metropolitan area for designation as historic landmarks.

The approvals were the first under provisions of the city's historic preservation ordinance, which is intended to safeguard significant buildings and structures from indiscriminate exterior alteration or razing.

The commission action will be translated into a recommendation to the Santa Cruz City Council that the buildings be accorded the historic landmark designation.

Commissioner Willard "Skip" Morris, who long led a citizens' effort to get a historic preservation ordinance adopted by the city, commented on the buildings selected:

"I think we have selected from the best in Santa Cruz."

Ironically, another commissioner who has long been in the forefront of preservation efforts could not vote for the first building proposed for landmark designation.

Commissioner Doni Tunheim and her husband, Ed, are owners of this building, which is now a two-story dwelling at 123 Green St.

This building was the first con-

structed for a Protestant church in the city. It was built in 1850 by the Methodist congregation and originally stood at Green and Mission streets. In 1864, however, the church was bought by William Woolsey Reynolds, who had it moved to the present site and converted into a dwelling for himself and his bride, Mary Simpson.

Tunheim carefully abstained from voting on this designation, but she joined with Commission Chairman Virginia Sharp and Commissioners Margaret Lezin, Bruce Seivertson and Morris in giving unanimous approval to the designations for the other eight dwellings.

Several owners of the historic buildings were present: Gretchen Goldstein, Marge Baron, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gunn and Pete Steen.

Prior to the votes, commissioners heard a pitch by a fire department representative for them to require smoke detectors to be placed in all buildings awarded historic landmark designation.

But while the commissioners and audience agreed that use of smoke detectors to safeguard life and property is an excellent idea, there was disagreement that installation of such devices should be a requirement for awarding landmark status to a building.

Steen told the commissioners: "I protest the requirement for smoke detectors. The designation of a building as a historic landmark should be based upon the structure, not upon artificial criteria. A building is historic even if an owner doesn't like it to be historic."

The commission then bypassed a staff recommendation for the smoke detector requirement.

Buildings awarded the preliminary designation are owned by: Pete and Judy Steen, Patricia Wilder, the Gunns, Jason and Gretchen Goldstein, Steve and Marge Baron, Esther Abbott, Dr. and Mrs. Nick Nivens and the State of California (the Old Adobe) on School Street.

The recommendation to the council for each dwelling is based upon the following official findings:

1. That the proposed landmark has significant esthetic cultural, architectural or engineering interest or value of an historical nature.
2. That the proposed landmark may be designated without imposing an undue hardship on the property owner.
3. That approval or modified approval of the application (of landmark designation) is consistent with the purposes and criteria of the preservation ordinance.

All owners agreed to the landmark designation.