

*Banks + Banking*

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*11-25-77*

# Opinion

## Sentinel Editorial

### One-Way Decisions

We find it increasingly difficult to understand the majority of the Santa Cruz City Council and its intense approach at preventing the possible development of a new Bank of America building on the Pacific Garden Mall.

The council majority maintains it is their desire to see an urban design study developed by the city before allowing any changes in the central business district.

At issue is the fact that the bank has proposed building a new structure to maintain its headquarters financial institution in the downtown area.

The present building simply isn't adequate to meet the needs of the bank and its customers.

While we can go along with the idea that the council wants another study of the downtown area, it hardly seems correct that the study should gain instant attention when one project is proposed.

Did the council need a study when it was essential to replace the old Carnegie Library with the fine new library it operates today?

Did the council decide the city didn't need an addition to the City Hall when the existing facilities became overcrowded a few years ago?

These are the same types of situations which confront the bank today. The present building simply isn't adequate to meet the needs of its customers.

Certainly The Sentinel couldn't operate today in the old building which it used to have on Church Street before we built our present offices a decade ago.

We would be the first to agree that design is in the eye of the beholder and obviously everyone does not agree on what is beautiful. Nor do they agree on architectural design, especially among the architects themselves.

However, it would be somewhat difficult to set a style on the existing architectural design in the central

business district. Some might claim it is Early Minestrone while others might prefer Hodge-Podge Neapolitan.

It is also rather apparent that the city, itself, has not particularly outdone itself in this field especially in the case of financial institutions constructed in the downtown. Their last effort in design review was an exercise in something resembling a malformed pumpkin.

But the real key to the present issue is whether the city should put roadblocks in the way of improving the capability of the city's financial institutions.

The comparatively central locations of the major financial institutions in the central business district and its adjacent area have been an important factor in the establishment of a viable downtown.

Not only do they provide a great convenience to their customers, they also serve as an all-important employment service to the downtown. The banks and savings institutions are a key factor in the continued improvement of the entire sector.

One of the big hopes of the Garden Mall and the surrounding area is the fact that Santa Cruz has been able to maintain a sizeable labor force working in the downtown, something that hasn't happened in many other communities.

The net result is that with the addition of the mall and the adjacent parking facilities, Santa Cruz has been able to maintain its downtown in direct opposition to what has taken place in so many cities.

So what happens when too many people stand in line too long at a bank? They go someplace else.

The same thing happens to downtowns. When they are no longer useful, the people go someplace else.

We sincerely hope it doesn't happen here.

*Martha Angle and Robert Walters*