

# A 'high-tack' center at City Hall? ✓

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SANTA CRUZ — It wouldn't make the centerfold of Architectural Digest.

It's a quirky mix of neobureaucratic, zoning-nouveau and Municipal Deco with a touch of avant-nothing.

It is the 1930s-vintage City Council Chamber at City Hall, where the wheels of city government constantly and slowly churn.

It's "tacky" and "creepy," says Doni Tunheim of the city Historic Preservation Commission.

It looks like it was decorated in the

1950s "by some mayor's wife," Tunheim says with disgust.

"You deserve better. The city deserves better," Tunheim told the council at its regular meeting Tuesday.

Particularly offensive to Tunheim and Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt are the large wall calendars donated by a tractor company.

Instead of the city seal, there's a large, out-of-date zoning map behind the mayor's chair.

The walls are decorated with Proclamative Art. One prime example is a plaque from the American Automobile Association commending the city

four years ago for its "Outstanding Pedestrian Program Activities."

The plaque bears the official silver seal of the AAA.

The real-leather-covered swivel chairs used by council members, oak floors and half-moon-shaped podium are elegant, but Venetian blinds and brown curtains, rather pedestrian.

Tunheim and Planning Commissioner Cynthia Mathews told The Sentinel the 1909 Picasso reproduction on the wall has the look of Woolworth's art.

The commission recommends replacing the blinds and curtains with wooden shutters, replacing original

wainscot that has been covered by paneling, patch holes, repair sagging acoustical ceiling tiles and rearrange the "cluttered" podium area.

Suggested color schemes from the commission are either pumpkin chiffon, velvet plum and taffy crunch or plum crush, Baja white and green grey.

Also suggested is moving the press table from the side to the front of the podium, but Wormhoudt says she dislikes the idea of staring at the heads of reporters.

The way things are now, the council podium is flanked by seats for city

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## 'Tacky'

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staff and reporters, punctuated by a slide projector.

The planning staff uses the projector to show zoning maps and development plans — a boring entertainment genre with no plot, no special effects and no sexually explicit scenes.

Tunheim told the council much of the renovation could take place with very little money.

The commission's suggestions are not elitist, she said — but "something for everybody."

The chamber was built in the 1930s in a classic Colonial revivalist style, according to Tunheim.

"Look how attractive this is," she said, pointing to the pretty courtyard just outside the chamber, "but how creepy it is (in the chambers)."

The council agreed to the renovation and voted to consider costs at budget time.

Councilwoman Katy Sears-Williams dissented, saying she couldn't justify spending money for the chamber when it is needed elsewhere.