

# Preserving pieces of history

Capitola will consider several sites for designation as historic

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**CAPITOLA** — Nine features believed to be distinctive traces of Capitola's past will be considered for historic site designation under a 17-year-old city ordinance that would protect them.

More than a year's worth of research into the historic remnants will be presented to the Capitola City Council and Planning Commission at the public hearing.

If approved, a public hearing for a conditional use permit or council approval will be required before the sites can be modified.

"More and more (the planning commission) will be getting applications that will involve these sites," said Planning Commissioner Marybeth Varcados. "The community might want to preserve them or have some say in the matter rather than see things disappear or be altered significantly."

Though the ordinance was adopted in 1982, the city just last month selected the first historic feature, the Cherry Avenue retaining wall built in the 1890s.

That decision, said Varcados, and the subsequent push by the city to identify other historic locations, was prompted by a Cherry Avenue homeowner who in 1996 submitted a construction application that required a section of the fossilized shell rock wall be permanently removed. The planning commission denied the original plan, but approved a scaled-back version in December.

"Residents wanted to lift their house up, excavate a garage and make the rest a driveway," said Associate Planner Eric Marlatt. The commission approved replacing the foundation on the condition that the shell rock be replaced, but nixed the garage and driveway, Marlatt said.

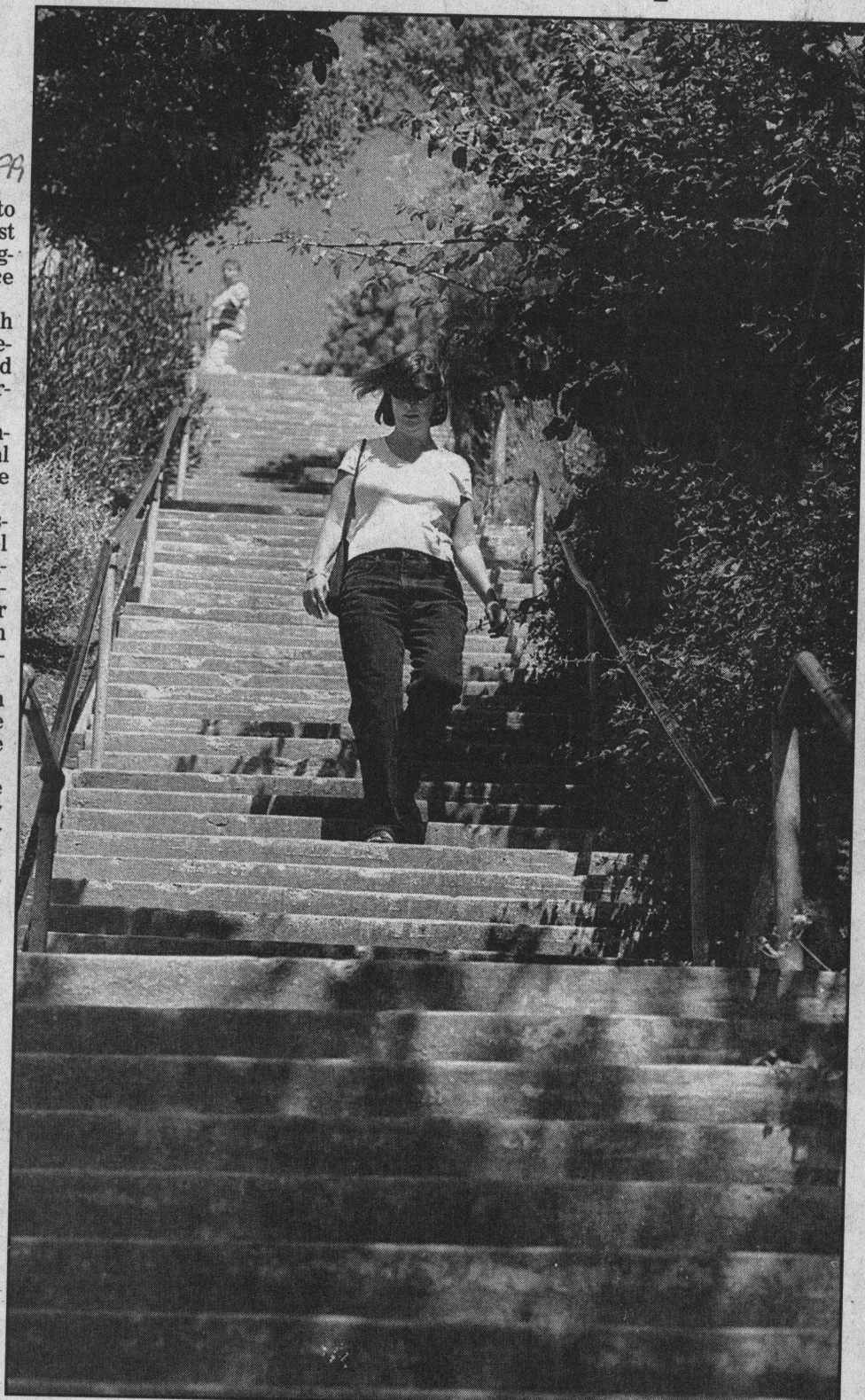
According to city documents, the Cherry Avenue wall appears on a 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map and, along with the Monterey Avenue wall, is believed to be part of the boundary to the original Camp Capitola, a riverside village of cottages, tents, a small hotel and a livery stable founded by F.A. Hihn in 1869.

Capitola historian Carolyn Swift evaluated the list of proposed locations, which was compiled by the Planning Commission Historic Resources Subcommittee over nearly a year and a half. The proposed historic features are:

- Retaining wall staircase to Hihn Park
- Monterey Avenue retaining wall
- Cliff Drive staircase
- Capitola trestle
- Stockton Street bridge
- Capitola Wharf
- Capitola Esplanade Boathouse Lagoon pool
- Monterey Avenue Palm
- West Hill path above the Southern Pacific Railroad track

To qualify as historic features, the sites must have one of eleven qualities, including:

- Represent of a distinct historic peri-



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

An unidentified women descends the steps to Cliff Avenue in Capitola. The steps are one of nine sites to be considered for historical designation.

od, style, or way of life.

- Be a rare example of a once-common type of building.
- Be older than other features serving the same function.
- The architect or builder is historically important.
- The site is the location of an important historic event.

The panel must also determine that the designation will not deprive the property owner of reasonable use of his property, and that the designation is worthwhile

when its value to the public interest is considered.

Before the ordinance was passed, the city in 1979 and 1980 designated four structures as historically significant. They are located at 304 San Jose Avenue, 211 Cherry Avenue, 314 Capitola Avenue and 131 Monterey Avenue.

The special joint meeting of the Capitola City Council and Planning Commission will be at 7 p.m. in the Capitola City Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Ave.