

**EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE RELOCATION OF 311 AND 315 B STREET  
CITY OF DAVIS**

Prepared for  
City of Davis

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In April, 2008, the City of Davis Community Services Department requested Roland-Nawi Associates: Preservation Consultants to evaluate five proposed alternatives for the relocation of properties currently located at 311 AND 315 B Street. One or both of these properties are proposed to be relocated to City/Redevelopment Agency owned parcels located at 3<sup>rd</sup> and J Streets (formerly 233 and 239 J Street). The buildings are located within the Central Davis Historic Conservation District and would remain within the Conservation District boundaries at the proposed relocation site. The two residences are now part of the University neighborhood, while the relocation site lies within the Old East neighborhood, approximately eight blocks east of the current location. All of the proposed alternatives would be carried out at the J and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street location. The proposals involve variations in orientation, siting, and density on the J Street parcel. The proposals are in a concept stage and do not include design information beyond size, massing, form, and building arrangement on the parcels.

The buildings proposed for relocation are single family residences designed in the Period Revival style popular in the 1920s and 1930s. The residence at 311 B Street was constructed in 1931 and the house at 315 was built circa 1935. They are modest one-story houses that continue to exhibit the style and historic character of the period in which they were constructed. The historical status of the two properties and their relationship to the University neighborhood was documented and considered in a report prepared for the City of Davis by Circa: Historic Property Development in 2006.<sup>1</sup> 311 B Street was evaluated as meeting the criteria for listing as a Merit Resource under the local preservation ordinance. In May, 2004, the Historic Resources Management Commission found 315 B Street not eligible for local designation. Both properties were evaluated as contributing to a potential University neighborhood historic district. However, no University area historic district has been designated by the City.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In preparing an evaluation of options, Roland-Nawi Associates reviewed the *Historic Research and Cultural Resource Evaluation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and B Street Area of the City of Davis* prepared by Sheila McElroy in 2006. This report provides the most recent information regarding the historic resource status of 311 and 315 B Street, as well as their original setting within the Conservation District. The 2004 City of Davis Historic Resource Survey update was consulted in regard to the Old East neighborhood and the immediate setting of the proposed relocation site. In addition the Davis Historic Resource Management Ordinance was reviewed. The Community Services Department provided schematic plans and isometric drawings for all of the options under consideration. On April 30, 2008, both the B Street properties and the relocation site in Old East Davis were field inspected.

## **HISTORIC STATUS OF MOVED BUILDINGS**

The City of Davis Historic Resource Management Ordinance provides direction regarding the relocation of Merit Resources and historic district contributors (Section 40.23.120(a)(2)). A Merit Resource and/or historic district contributor can be relocated as an alternative to demolition. In order to retain its status as a historical resource the property must retain its character defining features, the new location must be compatible in orientation and setting and general environment with the original location and setting, and the receiving parcel must be appropriately zoned and sized for the resource. The project should be in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

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<sup>1</sup> McElroy, Sheila, "Historic Research and Cultural Resource Evaluation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and B Street Area of the City of Davis, unpublished report, January, 2006.

These criteria are consistent with the California Register of Historic Resources regulations in regard to moved buildings. The National Register of Historic Places and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards generally permit relocation of a historic property only when the property is significant primarily on architectural grounds. Buildings that are significant due to their association with important events or with a person important in local, regional, or state history must retain integrity of location to sustain eligibility.

## **OLD EAST NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING AND CONTEXT**

The 2004 Historic Resources Survey update developed a historic context for the Old East neighborhood. It found that the area is predominantly residential and is characterized by a wide range of historic building styles from high style Victorian mansions to vernacular working class cottages. Although the Old East did not experience the same rate of growth in the 1920s and 1930s as the Downtown, University, and Old North areas, this was a period of neighborhood development and expansion. Four historically and architecturally significant residences were constructed in the neighborhood between 1911 and 1924. A number of more modest bungalows were constructed in the 1920s and a slightly smaller number of Revival Style and Minimalist Traditional homes were built from the 1930s through the 1950s.

The Old East neighborhood context notes that while Period Revival style residences are present within the Old East neighborhood architectural mix, they are less prominent than in other Downtown Conservation District neighborhoods.

J Street is characterized by single family homes on residential parcels from the 200 through the 400 blocks. The immediate environment around the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> and J consists of several Bungalow and Revival style houses of modest size. 234 J Street, directly across the street from the relocation parcels is a large Craftsman style house that is potentially eligible for historic designation. Third Street presents a less coherent and consistent residential pattern than J Street. Property types are more mixed and the residential building stock is generally associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the Old East area.

## **EVALUATION OF OPTIONS:**

### Option A

This option would move both the 311 and 315 B Street buildings to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and J Street location. The houses would be sited on individual parcels oriented facing east toward J Street. The relocated houses would be set back from the sidewalk and street consistent with other residences on the block. Under this proposal a two car garage with an upper story flat would be constructed at the rear of each lot behind the relocated houses. Access to these rear units would be from the alley.

This option would maintain the physical integrity of both buildings and would place them in a setting consistent with that of their original location. The proposed siting facing J Street would place the buildings in a residential context among other houses of similar size, form and massing. Several houses in the immediate block of J Street are in the Period Revival architectural style. The buildings would remain individual family residences; each occupying a separate parcel with a front yard and landscaping. The original east-facing orientation of the buildings would be maintained. Their siting and orientation to the street would be similar to that on B Street. Their siting within the individual parcel boundaries also is similar.

The proposed new construction at the rear of the lots would be one story higher than the relocated buildings. However, the steep pitch of the roofs on both houses might function to partially obscure the view of the rear buildings from the street. The modest size and placement of the rear buildings helps to minimize their intrusion on the relocated single family homes.

This option would meet the standards set forth in the local ordinance by retaining the character defining features of the houses and providing a compatible orientation and setting in an environment similar to the original. The receiving parcels appear to be properly sized for the resources and the buildings would remain within the Historic Conservation District overlay zone. 311 B Street would retain its Merit Resource potential. However, there is no identified potential historic district within the Old East area. The resources would not be potential contributors to a historic district

#### Option B

This option is similar to Option A except that the proposed rear structures are larger. The relocated houses would be sited on individual parcels oriented east toward J Street. The relocated houses would be set back from the sidewalk and street consistent with other residences on the block. The rear units would occupy a larger footprint than in Option A, covering the full north-south expanse of the parcel. Each unit includes a three car garage with a second floor flat. Access to these units would be from the rear alley.

This option would maintain the physical integrity of both relocated buildings and would place them in a setting consistent with that of their original location. The proposed siting facing J Street would place the buildings in a residential context among other houses of similar size, form and massing. The buildings would remain individual family residences; each occupying a separate parcel with a front yard and landscaping. The original east-facing orientation of the buildings would be maintained. Their siting and orientation to the street would be similar to that on B Street.

The proposed new construction at the rear of the lots would be one story higher than the relocated buildings. While larger than the rear structures proposed under Option A, their massing and form remains smaller than that of the relocated homes. However, their larger size and footprint on a shared lot may intrude on the single family identity of the houses. Because of their size, the rear units may be more visible from J Street and will have a larger presence along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street elevation.

This option would retain the character defining features of the houses. It provides compatible orientation and setting in an environment similar to the original. The receiving parcels appear to be properly sized for the resources, although the size of the rear structures has a potential to compromise the single family residential setting and environment. That previously characterized the B Street properties. The buildings would remain within the Historic Conservation District overlay zone. Under this option 311 B Street would retain its Merit Resource potential. However, there is no identified potential historic district in Old East Davis to which the buildings might contribute.

#### Option C

Option C would relocate only one of the historic residences (311 B Street). The relocated house would be oriented to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street with the center alley running along the west elevation. A front setback for the relocated property would be maintained. An attached two-car garage would be added to the rear of the relocated house. Two new two-story houses with attached garages would face onto J Street.

This option would only partially retain the character defining features of the relocated house. Houses of this period and style rarely had attached garages and this addition, although at the rear, would compromise the historic design of the house. The orientation of the house would be altered from its original east-facing placement on its lot. Contextually it would lose connection with the Bungalow and Revival residences concentrated on J Street that provide a compatible neighborhood environment.

This option would place the two new residences facing onto J Street in a block that is otherwise predominantly historic. The introduction of these new buildings has a potential to disrupt the historic and architectural continuity of the J Street block. Although this block has not been identified as a historic district, the 2004 Historic District Survey update does identify J Street as a corridor that contains a concentration of historic residences representing several decades of development. It concludes that although not eligible for historic designation, this corridor does contribute to the historic character of the Old East neighborhood. The receiving parcel appears to be properly sized for the resource. The buildings would remain within the Historic Conservation District overlay zone.

This option would substantially impair the potential Merit Resource designation of the 311 B Street property. Under this option the integrity of the building would be compromised by the addition of an attached garage. It would not retain its orientation and it would be visually and physically separated from the setting and environment of similar properties on J Street. The introduction of new construction within the J Street corridor would be less appropriate in maintaining the character of the street than relocating the historic buildings to this location within the site. This latter impact could be mitigated through sensitive design that is compatible with the character of the adjacent historic neighborhood.

#### Option D

This option would relocate only one of the residences (311 B Street). The house would be relocated to the southernmost parcel on J Street. The house would be oriented east toward J Street and would be sited with a setback that is consistent with the other residences on the block. A two-car garage with a second story flat would be constructed at the rear of the parcel along the alley. The lot at the corner of J and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets would be occupied by two new detached two-story houses with single car garages. The house on the corner would be oriented toward J Street, while the other house would front on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Under this option the character defining features of the relocated residence would be retained. The house would have the same orientation as it did in its original location and it would be sited in an appropriate setting and environment. Its placement on the southernmost parcel provides linkage and continuity with other similar historic residences on the block.

The two-car garage and second story flat at the rear of the parcel is similar in concept to that proposed under Option A and would have similar impacts. This proposed new construction would be one story higher than the relocated building, although the pitch of the roof on the historic house would function to partially obscure the buildings to the rear. The modest size and placement of the new buildings helps to minimize the intrusion on the relocated single family homes. The size, massing, and scale of the new residences adjacent to the relocated building appear appropriate to the historic resource and neighborhood.

Under Option D the relocated residence would retain its potential to be a Merit Resource.

#### Option E

This option would relocate only one of the residences (311 B Street). The house would be relocated to the southernmost parcel on J Street. The house would be oriented east toward J Street and would be sited with a setback that is consistent with the other residences on the block. A two-car garage with a second story flat would be constructed at the rear of the parcel along the alley. The lot at the corner of J and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets would be occupied by a connected three-story triplex with attached garages. The front elevation of the new building would be oriented to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. A curb cut and driveway would be introduced on J Street to provide access to the rear garage of the east triplex unit.

Under this option the character defining features of the relocated residence would be retained. The house would have the same eastern orientation as it did in its original location. Its placement on the southernmost parcel provides linkage and continuity with other similar historic residences to the south. However, the proposed triplex to the north of the relocated building introduces an element that in size, massing and organization would be inconsistent with the building's former residential context. Although in this option the relocated building remains detached, and the new buildings open to the street, the density and arrangement of the buildings suggests an integrated townhouse complex. In this arrangement the relocated house becomes one among several elements in a grouping of buildings. This type of complex, while common in contemporary urban development, is very different in character from the suburban single family house sited on an individual lot and oriented to the street grid as in the original B Street location. This alteration of context and environment has a strong potential to undermine the significance of the potential Merit Resource and does not meet the criteria of the Resource Management ordinance.

## SUMMARY

The Options that would most comprehensively meet the criteria of the Davis City Cultural Resource Management ordinance are options A and B. These options would relocate both buildings in an orientation, context, and environment similar to that of their current location. The proposed new construction in these options would defer to the historic residences both in siting and in size and massing. Additional compatibility could be achieved through the design process.

The B Street buildings predominantly derive their significance from their architectural characteristics. They are modest, but good examples of the Period Revival style. Under the Standards their significance is not necessarily removed as a result of their relocation. All the proposed options would conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in not making physical alterations to the historic fabric or appearance of the relocated buildings. Options C and E would not conform with the Secretary's Standards since they would substantially alter the setting and orientation of the buildings.

In the case of all the options, sensitive contextual design could further mitigate the effects of relocation.