

P1. Other Identifier: APN 070-065-003

P8. Recorded by:
Sonali Gupta, ESA

***B10. Significance: Theme** World War II and Post-War (1940 – 1958) **Area** University Ave
Period of Significance: 1951 **Property Type** Residential **Applicable Criteria** n/a

Historic Context

In 2015, the Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update was prepared to provide a framework for the evaluation of 20th century resources within the City of Davis. It provided an updated historic context statement focusing on the World War II and post-war periods, evaluation criteria, and significance themes. The significance themes include Native American, Spanish, and Mexican Era (prehistory – 1847); Pioneer and Railroad Era (1848 – 1904); University Farm and University of California Era (1905 – present); Early Twentieth Century and Depression Era (1905 – 1939); World War II and Post-War (1940 – 1958); Explosive Growth (1959 – 1971); and Progressive Visions, Managed Growth (1972 – 2015). The subject property at 240 3rd Street was originally constructed in 1951; therefore, it falls into the World War II and Post-War (1940 – 1958) significance theme established in the 2015 historic context.

The following early history of the City of Davis is taken from the *Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update*.¹

American settler Joseph Chiles bought a portion of the Rancho Laguna de Santos Calle, which he resold to his son-in-law Jerome Davis in 1854. Davis established a dairy and other ventures, and eventually his land holdings grew to 12,000 acres. After California became a state in 1850, other farmers, many of them German immigrants, began to settle in the area. Yolo County quickly became a prosperous farming region focused on grain, livestock and orchard crops.

In the 1860s, a group of five investors sometimes called the “Big Five” began planning a railroad routed through Davis’ ranch, and by 1868 the California Pacific Railroad had built its line to the area, laying out the three-way junction in its present location and alignment, where the Woodland branch line turned north from the main line. The railroad also constructed a depot, and laid out a town around it as a speculative investment.

The arrival of the railroad was a turning point, creating an economic impetus to found a town out of what had previously been a collection of scattered farms. The railroad’s investors laid out the town site adjacent to the depot, and by 1868 Davisville had about 400 residents. The railroad and new population spurred a brief building boom, but by the 1870s local growth had slowed. Davisville during the late nineteenth century was a farm village devoted to processing, storing, and shipping agricultural products. There was also industrial activity along the railroad tracks, some of which, like the lumber-yard, served the town in general. Most of the industry, however, was related to agriculture in one way or another, such as the Schmeiser manufacturing plant, on the east side of the railroad tracks with buildings on both sides of what is now Third street, which built almond hullers.

After the railroad provided an economic impetus for a town, commercial establishments quickly sprang up to serve local residents. In addition to the farming-related businesses that were the community’s *raison d’etre*, blacksmiths, carpenters, livery stables, and wagon-makers established businesses. A post office and express office provided access to the world beyond Davis, and hotels, restaurants, saloons, and boarding houses catered to travelers. Retail businesses such as grocery stores, butchers, liquor stores, and clothing stores opened, as did a doctor’s office and shoe repair shop. With warehouses and industrial services concentrated along the railroad tracks, downtown was clustered between First and Third Streets on G Street, a block west of the depot and tracks. A shortlived weekly newspaper was founded in 1869, and the Davis Enterprise began publishing in 1897. In addition to all the commercial activity, local residents established an Odd Fellows Lodge and Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches.

With the tiny downtown located on G Street, residential development began around F Street just one more block to the west. Individual property owners built houses one at a time, and the availability of land meant that during the nineteenth century many blocks had only one or two houses set on large parcels. The gradual population growth of this area (ten residents a year) meant that residential construction proceeded

¹ Brunzell Historical. *Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update*. November 2015.

at a measured pace. At the turn of the twentieth century, Davis did not have a single residential block that was completely built-out in the modern sense. The original town plat easily accommodated the gradual growth of the little town, and the only major subdivision was Rice's Addition in 1888, which was four small blocks along Rice Lane between the University campus and B Streets [just south of the subject property].

The following excerpts are from the Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update.

World War II/Post-war Era (1940 – 1958) ²

Davis was typical of communities across the United States in that support for the war effort was a collective priority during World War II. In addition to more common volunteer activities, local residents assisted with harvesting crops and unloading railroad cars. After the fall semester in 1942, classes were suspended at the University Farm because so many students (who were almost all male during this era) had enlisted in the military. Professors engaged in agricultural research, however, redoubled their efforts to expand food production. The University also donated a ten-acre parcel south of the Richards underpass for a community garden. In February 1943, the U.S. Army took over the entire campus, which it used as an advanced training facility for its Signal Corps. The Signal Corps returned the campus to the University in fall of 1944, and classes resumed in 1945. Despite the sacrifice and disruptions of wartime, Davis during World War II remained the quiet agricultural community it had been for many years.

Transformation of the University Farm

The end of World War II ushered in changes to California and its university system that would radically transform the little town of Davis. These changes began gradually in the second half of the 1940s, when returning veterans flooded the Davis campus after the war ended, more than quadrupling enrollment between 1946 and 1947. Over two-thirds of students had come directly from military service to the University. This abrupt spike in enrollment led to an on-campus housing crisis that quickly spilled over into the town. Without adequate dormitory or rental housing, students lived in basements, water towers, converted warehouses, and wherever else they could find space.

The G.I. Bill (officially the Serviceman's Readjustment Bill of 1944) made it possible for more people than ever to attend college, and the federal government was also increasing its support for University research during this period. Decisions made by the University Regents to increase investment in the Davis campus caused it to grow even more quickly than other campuses in the system. In 1945, before the war had even ended, the Regents appropriated \$2,700,000 to construct six new buildings on the Davis campus, including new Veterinary College, Plant Science, and Student Health buildings. The University was also in the process of buying 539 acres of farmland adjacent to the campus to prepare for future expansion. In 1951, the University established the College of Letters and Science, a first step toward becoming an institution with a broader focus. By 1956, enrollment had risen to 2,166 students, including over 600 women. This context of growth and new emphasis on education was reflected in the massive expansion of the University of California system in the 1950s.

Residential Development

After World War II, the U.S. population and economy grew at an unprecedented rate. The trends were not uniform nationwide, however, and growth was particularly rapid and strong in California. Hundreds of thousands of people who had relocated to California for military service and wartime work stayed after the war ended, and the state population continued to grow in the 1950s. The exponential growth of UC Davis intensified the broader trends of economic growth and pent-up housing demand after the war. These factors working together meant that the town footprint that had contained Davis's 2,500 prewar residents was woefully inadequate. And the population surge was coupled with factors that put home ownership within reach for millions more Americans than before the war: Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance and G.I. Bill mortgage insurance for veterans. These federal policies, along with the relatively new tax deduction for mortgage interest, made home ownership attractive nationwide, and particularly so in a growing community like Davis.

Davis was attractive for housing construction because of its proximity to Sacramento, a lack of strict local controls on development, and the growth of the University. Without geographical barriers like major river

² Brunzell Historical, *Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update*, 2015, page 11.

systems or mountains, the little town was a developer's paradise. By 1943, Davis leaders had already realized that expansion and growth in California were inevitable after the war, and that Davis would also grow. Elected officials and city staff began planning for enlarging Davis' geographical footprint, developing new areas, and improving infrastructure. The Chamber of Commerce also recognized the challenges Davis was facing, and began planning for the postwar period. By 1944, the group was discussing the need for access roads and overpasses, more housing, and the potential benefits of annexing adjacent areas.

In 1945, Davis' city limits encompassed 220 acres, only marginally larger than the original 24-block Davisville that had been laid out in 1868. The Chamber of Commerce released results of a study of annexation that year. Projecting population growth in Davis resulting from growth of the state and the University, the committee strongly recommended annexation, warning that planning would prevent development on Davis's borders in what they called "a haphazard manner." The proposed annexation would nearly triple the size of the city limits, and include areas such as Robbins and Millers subdivisions adjacent to the University (where development had already begun) as well as portions of north and east Davis that remained primarily agricultural. The Chamber also recommended new sewer lines and the extension of West Eighth and K streets. In November 1945, Davis residents approved the annexation plan in an election.

Local investors and landowners recorded six new subdivisions 1946 and 1948. Although all were small (one had only ten parcels) their number signaled a marked change from the period from 1930 to 1945, when only one new neighborhood was subdivided. The construction was clustered around the high school (currently City Hall), in the area northeast of Downtown, and adjacent to the University. Development in the immediate postwar period was in transition from the traditional gradual expansion of neighborhoods to the industrial-scale housing construction that became the norm in the later decades of the twentieth century. For the most part, these subdivisions followed the traditional pattern, although the rate was somewhat accelerated.

In fact, relatively few houses were actually constructed in the 1940s: most parcels in these neighborhoods were not developed until the early 1950s or later. This pattern was not unusual in California, despite the pent-up demand from decades of depression and war. Building materials, which had been diverted to the war effort for years, did not become available immediately after hostilities ended.

After 1950, housing development in Davis accelerated markedly. Developers recorded 34 new subdivisions between 1950 and 1959, more than triple the number created in the previous two decades. The mostly contiguous new neighborhoods spread out to the north of old Downtown Davis and the University to its west, and in the area east of Downtown and the railroad tracks. By 1960, the developed footprint of Davis had roughly doubled, and a significant amount of infill construction had also occurred.

1950 marked a watershed in the type of neighborhoods developers built in Davis, as well as the pace of growth. 1950s subdivisions began exhibiting the long blocks, gently curving streets, loop streets, and cul-de-sacs that characterize post-war subdivisions throughout California. Although these features have their aesthetic roots in nineteenth-century suburbs, they did not begin to widely replace the traditional urban grid pattern until in the second half of the twentieth century. One reason for the increased popularity of suburban-style neighborhood layout was that the FHA, which controlled the flow of capital to developers, promoted these features. Probably more important, however, was the fact that in an increasingly automobile-dependent culture, this type of design was viewed by the public as a safety feature. Almost all Davis neighborhoods subdivided after 1950 share these features, as well as cost-saving rolled (rather than square) curbs. Most sidewalks lack planting strips and are situated immediately adjacent to the curbs, with city-owned street trees planted in the front yards by developers. Post-war Davis neighborhoods lack alleys, and every property is equipped with a garage or carport.

In addition to the shift in neighborhood design, during the 1950s developers began to utilize standardization and mass-production methods to building the houses. Although the construction of standardized tracts with identical (or very similar) houses would eventually lead to the construction of large subdivisions in Davis, the process when it began was very much in scale with the traditional local construction pattern, which was much more incremental.

The industrialization of housing construction and rise of merchant builders was a trend that began transforming the housing business nationwide even before the end of World War II. In contrast to old-fashioned subdividers, merchant builders acquired large areas of land, prepared streets and utilities, and then built and sold their houses. Inspired by wartime and consumer-goods factories, and responding to the extreme need for housing after the war, industrial-scale builders began constructing houses faster and

*Recorded by: Sonali Gupta, ESA

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Continuation

Update

cheaper than their small-scale competitors as early as the end of the 1940s in California's urban centers. Although the trend was slower to develop in rural Davis, industrialized building was one of the most important factors in the Davis' transformation from a rural railroad junction town to an expanding "University City."

Although the residential landscape of Davis had begun to rapidly transform, city government and infrastructure grew much more slowly. New water mains, domestic wells, and sewer lines were constructed on a piecemeal basis as needed. Davis does not appear to have added new parks, libraries, or recreational facilities during this era. And city government remained headquartered Downtown in its 1938 WPA-built City Hall until 1981.

City officials attempted to both encourage and manage growth during the 1950s. A district map from 1953 shows a town divided into zones for commercial, industrial, single-family dwellings, two family dwellings, and multiple-family dwellings. Fraternities were limited to portions of only 6 blocks along Second and B Streets.²⁵ Both sides of the railroad tracks, as well as the area between Highway 80 and the tracks, were zoned industrial. These areas had housed activities associated with agricultural processing since the nineteenth century. Other businesses in the industrial zone, such as a lumber yard and breweries, had serviced local needs. Almost all commercial development was Downtown on Second, Third, and G streets, although during this period it began spilling over into formerly residential areas. A grocery store at the corner of Russell Boulevard and Anderson Road was the only neighborhood commercial development.

What is most striking about the 1953 map is that the majority of Davis is zoned for two- or multifamily housing. During the late 1940s, the Planning Commission had changed zoning of some subdivisions back and forth from single- to multiple-family. This indecision was apparently at least in part due to pressure from local builders. By the early 1950s, the only areas set aside for single family dwellings were the neighborhoods immediately north of the University, new tracts, and areas that had not yet been developed. All of Downtown-adjacent Old Davis was zoned for two families. Bowers Acres, the area of north-central Davis that had been laid out with extra-large lots in 1913, was zoned for apartments. Davis was still grappling with a housing shortage, and local leaders had decided that redeveloping Old Davis would be the best way to solve the problem. In March, 1955, Davis City Council instituted a six-month moratorium on new building, and requested Yolo County to do the same for the area around Davis. Davis leaders argued that the break from development would allow "orderly growth," with plans for constructing and financing new infrastructure.

Subject Property

The residence at 240 3rd Street was constructed in 1951. This modest Minimalist Traditional house is L-shape in plan. It has a cross-gable, moderately pitched roof with clipped gables and eaves. The projecting wing gable exhibits a molded fascia and a small louvered attic vent. Fenestration consists of double-hung and fixed windows, trimmed with vertical plank shutters. The shutters, along with the clapboard siding, give the house a slightly Colonial Revival appearance, although the form is not standard for that style.

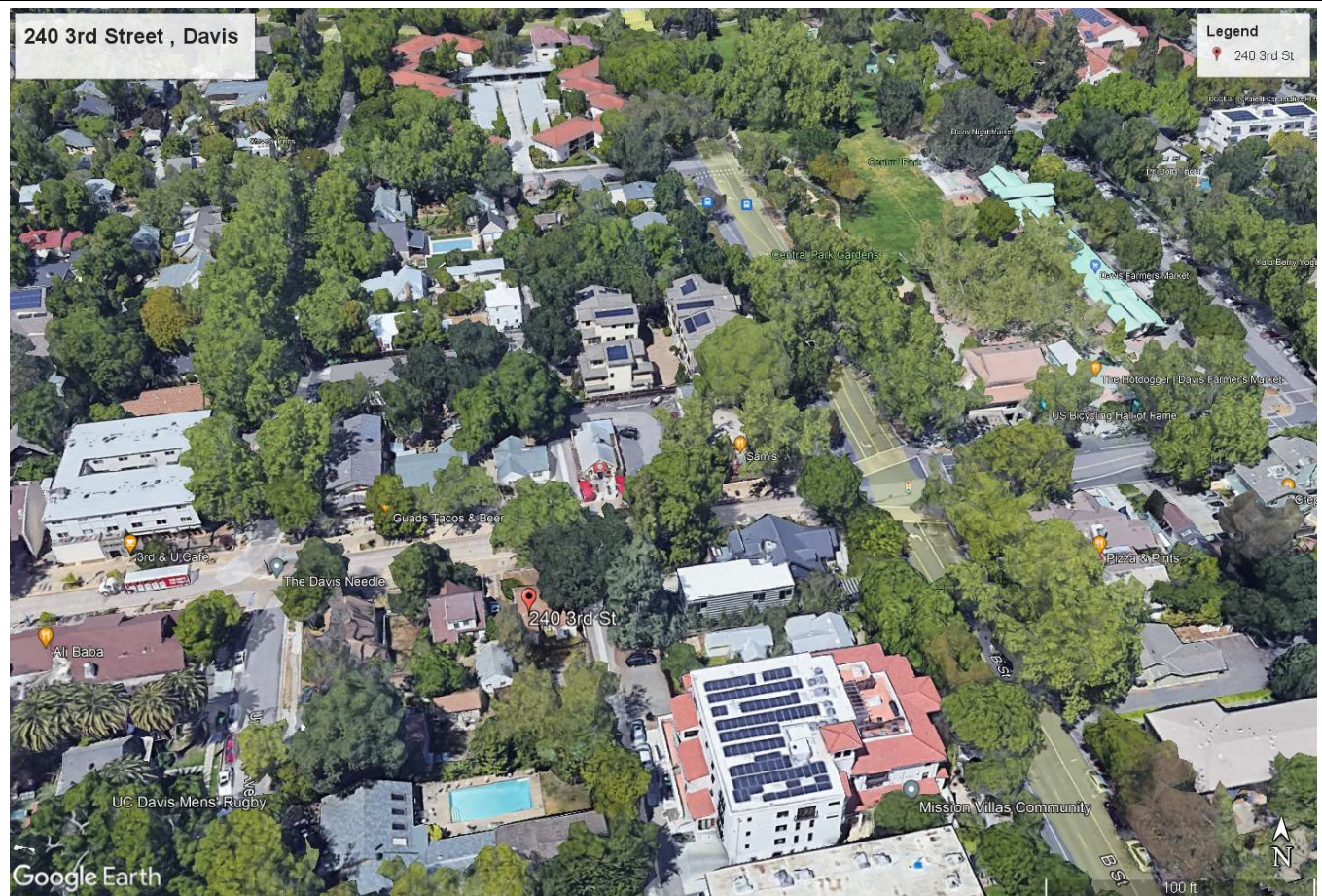


Figure 1 –Aerial View (Google Earth 05/04/2023)

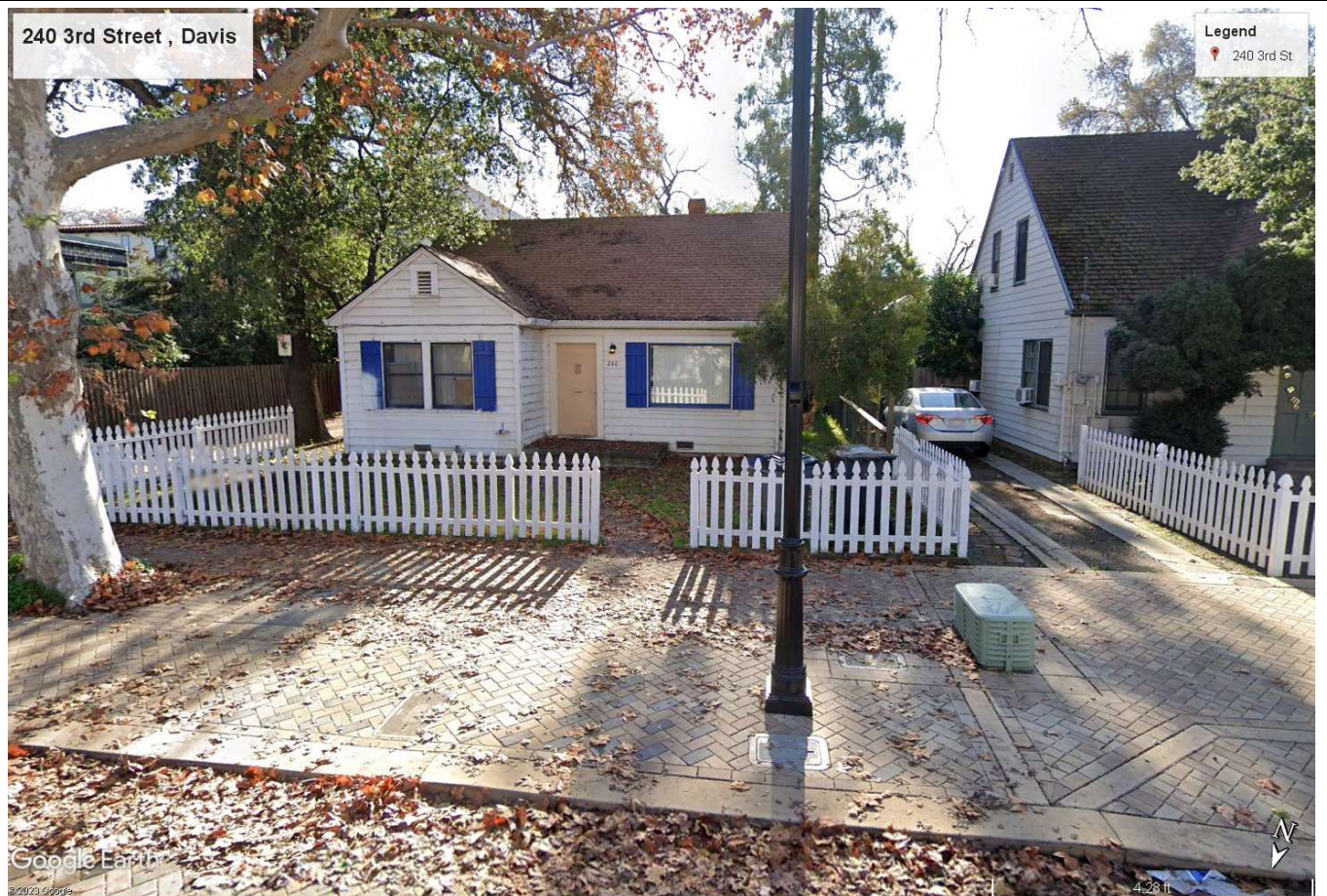


Figure 2 – Front View (Google Earth 05/04/2023)

Regulatory Framework

National Register of Historic Places

A property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) if it meets the National Register listing criteria at 36 CFR 60.4, as stated below:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and that:

- A) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, or
- B) Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or
- C) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, or
- D) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

California Register of Historical Resources

To be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) a historical resource must be significant under one or more of the following criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

City of Davis Landmark Resource

In addition to the National and California registers, the City of Davis provides for the additional designations of Landmark Resource and Merit Resource in their Historical Resources Management Zoning Code (40.23.060). To be eligible as a Landmark a resource must meet at least one of the four criteria at the local, state, or national level of significance and retain a high level of historic integrity.

- (1) Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns in the history of Davis, California, or the nation; or
- (2) Associated with the lives of significant persons in the history of Davis, California, or the nation; or
- (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style or method of construction; or that represents the work of a master designer; or that possesses high artistic values; or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (4) Has yielded or may likely yield archaeological or anthropological information important in the study of history, prehistory, or human culture.

The following factors must also be considered:

- (1) A resource moved from its original location may be designated a landmark if it is significant primarily for its architectural value or it is one of the most important surviving structures associated with an important person or historic event.
- (2) A birthplace or grave may be designated a landmark if it is that of a historical figure of outstanding importance within the history of Davis, the state or the nation and there are no other appropriate sites or resources directly associated with his or her life or achievements.
- (3) A reconstructed building may be designated a landmark if the reconstruction is historically accurate and is based on sound historical documentation, is executed in a suitable environment, and if no other original structure survives that has the same historical association.
- (4) A resource achieving significance within the past fifty years may be designated a landmark if the resource is of exceptional importance within the history of Davis, the state or the nation.

City of Davis Merit Resource

In addition to the National and California registers, the City of Davis provides for the additional designations of Landmark Resource and Merit Resource in their Historical Resources Management Zoning Code (40.23.060). To be eligible as a Merit Resource must meet at least one of the four criteria and retain a high level of historic integrity. The four criteria to qualify as a Merit Resource as nearly identical to those for a Landmark except that Merit Resources only consider local significance.

The following factors must also be considered:

- (1) A resource moved from its original location may be designated a merit resource if it is significant for its architectural value or if an understanding of the associated important person or historic event has not been impaired by the relocation.
- (2) A birthplace or grave may be designated a merit resource if it is that of a historical figure of outstanding importance within the history of Davis and there are no other appropriate sites or resources directly associated with his or her life or achievements.
- (3) A reconstructed building may be designated a merit resource if the reconstruction is historically accurate and is based on sound historical documentation, is executed in a suitable environment, and if no other original structure survives that has the same historical association.
- (4) A resource achieving significance within the past fifty years may be designated a merit resource if it is of exceptional importance within the history of Davis.

Even if a resource is not listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register, the lead agency may consider the resource to be a "historical resource" for the purposes of CEQA provided that the lead agency determination is supported by substantial evidence (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR 15064.5).

Evaluation

The subject property at 240 3rd Street was recorded in 2003 and 2015; however, the previous efforts did not include complete evaluations for the National Register, California Register, or locally as a Davis Landmark or Davis Merit Resource. The following is an evaluation for potential historic significance under National Register Criteria A through D, California Register Criteria 1 through 4, Davis Landmark Criteria 1 through 4, and Davis Merit Resource Criteria 1 through 4. While the wording is slightly different for each of the four criteria for the National Register, California Register, Davis Landmark, and Davis Merit Resource eligibility, they each align to cover the same potential significance criterion. A/1/1/1 covers associations with significant historical events, B/2/2/2 covers significant people, C/3/3/3 covers significant architecture, and D/4/4/4 covers the information potential of a site.

A/1/1/1 - Events

Archival review indicates that 240 3rd Street was constructed in 1951. It was built as a typical single-family dwelling, and it does not appear that there are any significant associations between 240 3rd Street and important events or patterns in history. It does not appear to rise above the typical associations with single-family residential development or the contextual period of development. Therefore, it is recommended ineligible under Criteria A/1/1/1.

B/2/2/2 – Persons/Businesses

Archival review also does not indicate that there are any significant associations between 240 3rd Street and significant persons or businesses. As research does not indicate that 240 3rd Street is significantly associated with the productive life of any significant person or business, it is recommended ineligible under Criteria B/2/2/2.

C/3/3/3 – Design/Engineering

As noted in previous inventories in 1996 and 2003, the subject property at 240 3rd Street was constructed as a Minimal Traditional style building. It does not appear to be significant for its design or engineering. No specific architect, engineer, or designer is associated with the building at 240 3rd Street, nor does it appear to be the work of a master architect. For these reasons, 240 3rd Street is recommended ineligible under Criteria C/3/3/3.

D/4/4/4 – Information Potential

Criterion D/4/4/4 applies to properties that have the potential to inform important research questions about human history. According to National Register Bulletin 15, to qualify for listing, the property must "have or have had information to contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory and the information must be considered important." 240 3rd Street does not meet this criterion and therefore is recommended ineligible under Criteria D/4/4/4.

Integrity

For a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or as Landmark or Merit resources per the City of Davis regulations it must meet one of the eligibility criteria discussed above as well as retain sufficient integrity. However, the subject property does not meet any of the eligibility criteria for significance; therefore, a discussion of integrity is not necessary.

Recommendation

ESA recommends 240 3rd Street ineligible for listing in the National Register, California Register or locally as a Davis Landmark or Merit Resource.

*B12. References:

Archives Sanborn Map. Proquest Digital Sanborn Maps

Brunzell Historical. Davis, California: Citywide Survey and Historic Context Update. 2015.

Yolo County Assessor's Parcel Data. ParcelQuest.com. Accessed May 2023.