

6

E Street

The Geographical Center

E Street forms the east-west geographical midpoint of the Old North. Indeed, the intersection of Sixth and E is the central point of the neighborhood.

If traffic allows, stand in the middle of that intersection and look down each street emanating from you in four directions. This vantage point provides a clear-cut image of the neighborhood's compactness and its physically clear boundaries. You see that it is terminated by the railroad track to the east, Fifth Street to the south, Civic Center Park to the west, and the end of E Street to the north.

Parades On E Street

Perhaps because of its geographical centrality, local parades tend to use E Street. Among them is the fall Davis High School homecoming parade, which begins downtown and winds its way to the high school, often along E Street (Fig. 6.1).

6.1. Float in the 1997 Davis High School homecoming parade. 522 and 516 E are in the background.



In 1997, a "Cyclebration" of "human-power" in the sense of human-powered transportation formed at the Civic Center

Park on B, moved east along Sixth and turned toward the

E Street Residences, Residents, Rentals

This is E Street's profile of population and housing.

1. RESIDENCES. Compared to other streets, E Street:

- 1) has the largest percentage of all Old North residential units (80 of 128 or 28%, as compared to C in second place with 62 units, which is 22%),
- 2) ranks second in its percentage of signature homes (30 of 146 or 20%), and
- 3) ties with F Street for the largest number of lot-dominant structures (40, which is 22% of the total).

E Street's high residential units rank is due to the apartment buildings fronting Seventh Street (a situation that also elevates the number of units for C and F).

2. TINY/HIDDEN ABODES. E Street has an unusually large 38 (23 of 60) of Old North "tiny and/or hidden abodes" because of the peculiarity of Pomegranate Place, an 11-cottage complex behind the house at 521 Seventh Street (described below in this chapter). Otherwise, this street is not notably out of line in such structures, for which the overall Old North percentage is 22 (60 of 281).

3. RESIDENTS. In having the largest number of residential units, E Street also has the largest number of residents—152 of 609 people, or 25%.

4. RESIDENTS IN SIGNATURE HOMES. Because of the apartment houses just mentioned, a relatively low 59% of E Street residents live in a signature home or in an ancillary abode on the same property, typically a converted garage or an apartment unit behind the lot-dominant signature home (89 of 152). This percentage ranks it fifth among streets, above C at 41%, and considerably below most other streets.

5. OWNER-OCCUPIED SIGNATURE HOMES AND ALL RESIDENCES. Along with F and C streets, E ranks low on the percentage of all its residential units that are owner-occupied signature homes (20% for E and 18% each for C and F).

6. OWNER-OCCUPIED VERSUS RENTAL SIGNATURE HOMES. However, if we look at owner-occupancy as a percentage of all signature homes rather than of all residential units, E Street ranks much higher among streets. It is now second (16 of 30 or 53%), behind B with 88%. Stated in the reverse: *E Street ranks fifth in the percentage of its signature homes that are renter occupied (47%), which is not far behind G at fourth with 52%, and C and D at 56% and 57%, respectively.*

7. ABSENTEE LANDLORDS OF RENTED SIGNATURE HOMES. E Street ranks fourth in the percentage of its rented signature homes with owners who give out-of-Davis addresses on the county tax roll (4 of 14, which is 29%).

Downtown on E Street (Fig. 6.2). (This event also celebrated “the bicycle as art” [DE, 5-9-97].)

6.2. A unit in the 1997 “human power” parade promoting non-automobile transport and celebrating the bicycle. 522 E is in the background.



Bungalows on E Street

E street is “bungalow-challenged” with only three of the Old North’s 32 bungalows (9%). These are at 516, 517 and 616. 516 and 616 are included in the city’s inventory of historical resources (and are described below).

502 E Street (The Tingus Home)[†]

502 E (Fig. 6.3) was built in 1936 for George and Constance Tingus. Still owned by the Tingus family, the widowed Mrs. Tingus lived here into the 1990s. The house is now a rental.

6.3. 502 E Street (The Tingus Home).



The 1996 historical surveyors dub this home a “Spanish inspired stucco house” that has a “gable roof running parallel to the street” and “two cross gables [that] intersect the main gabled roof. A small gable covers the porch which has an arched entry. A second larger gable has a decorative, arched attic vent. Two large multipaned windows are present on either side of the entry” (ARG, 301).

508 E Street (The Granucci Home)[†]

508 E (Fig. 6.4) was built in 1936 and for the family of J. F. and Annie Granucci. Like Mrs. Tingus next door, the widowed Mrs. Granucci lived in this house into the 1990s. Indeed, through the 1970s and 1980s, the two women often sat in front of their respective homes or visited together in one or the other’s front porches or yards.

The 1996 historical surveyors felt that “this is a particularly charming Medieval or Tudor Revival brick home. The brick work consists of a well executed arch at the front window and intermittent darker glazed brick within the front facade. A gable roof with a long sweeping southern end dominates the front facade and intersects the gable of the main portion of the house . . . ” (ARG, 303).

6.4. 508 E Street (The Granucci Home).



The ARG surveyors also thought this home “is a strong contributor to the overall character of the neighborhood . . . It is one of only a few brick homes in this neighborhood” (ARG, 304).

Early 1950s E Street Streetscape

The background of the photograph of Wayne Wooden reproduced in Fig. 6.5 helps us form a sense of E Street in the early

1950s. He is standing in front of his home at 512 E, with 516 E in the right background.

His mother, Kay Wooden, reports the large palm tree behind Wayne in the front yard of 516 E was a spot where neighbors gathered to chat.

The palm is no longer there because a resident of 516 E who was learning to operate an automobile knocked it down in a driving mishap.

6.5. Wayne Wooden in his front yard at 512 E Street, with the early 1950s E Street streetscape behind him. (Courtesy Kay and Wes Wooden)



513 E Street (The Miller Home)

513 E was the home of Danne and Effie Miller from 1933 to the 1990s. During the 1920s and 1930s, Mr. Miller worked throughout Northern California on construction of the PG&E electric line system, including, in 1928, the overhead electric lines that run down the 500 and 600 blocks of E Street. He estimated that 513 E was constructed in 1928 for \$2,000. He bought it in 1933 for \$2,500, in the days, he says, when one was paid \$3.25 a day.

516 E Street (The Peña Home)[†]

516 E Street (Fig. 6.6) is one of the “eight little bungalows” described in Ch. 3 as having been built by A. R. Pedder in the 1910s. The family of Galvina Peña lived in this house in the 1920s.

The 1996 historical surveyors describe it as “a well crafted, stucco, one story bungalow. The overall composition of the house is symmetrical except for an off-center front door The porch roof gable is perpendicular to the street and is an echo of the main roofline of the house . . . The porch consists of two canted piers supporting the low arch of the porch span” (ARG, 305).

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The Grecian Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) spreading over the roof of this home is one of about 100 official *Davis Landmark Trees* (Core Area Specific Plan Task Force 1994, 66-70).

6.6. 516 E Street
(The Peña
Home).



517 E Street

517 E looks much older than records suggest it can be and it was likely built in the late 1920s. In local lore, though, it is the original farm house located in an almond orchard, now gone. (Fig. 7.2 shows that orchard.)

522 E Street (The Wright Home)

522 E was the home of Thomas and Hilda Wright from the 1940s. When housing was in short supply during World War II, the rooms of this house were brought in on trailers and bolted together on the foundation as a temporary measure that would last only a year or so. As is often said, there is nothing more permanent than a temporary structure.

523 E Street (The Bagley Home)

523 E was the home of the Floyd and Dorothy Bagley family from its construction in 1939 until 1974. In the 1930s and '40s, Floyd Bagley operated Davis' main grocery store, which was housed at the southwest corner of Third and G.

523 E was originally a one-story home. The two-bedroom and bath second story was added in the late 1950s in order to create more space for the three Bagley children.

The two-car garage building behind 523 E is original and was among the first and few two car garages in the Old North

before World War II. One resident of the 1930s reports that the Bagleys were seen by neighbors as ostentatious in constructing such a large garage.

In 1992, the present owners removed the casement window in the living room facing the street and replaced it with French doors opening onto the deck that was also added. (This house is an example of how some people will not leave well enough alone and fail to keep faith with the original architecture.)

524 E Street

524 E Street is a good example of faith-to-the-original remodeling. It has the appearance of late-1930s construction, as the main body is, but the porch and the extended front room are in fact 1980s extensions performed with great care, as a labor of love, by the father of the then owner.

The Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) at the rear is an official *Davis Landmark Tree* (Core Area Specific Plan Task Force 1994, 66-70).

6.7. 524 E Street, including a glimpse of the Coast Redwood Davis Landmark Tree towering behind it.



527 E Street

Unlike the many E Street homes that have been occupied by only one family for many years, 527 E Street has had a great many owners (seven since 1974 alone). Most made few improvements and skimped on maintenance, but, happily, the second most recent owners undertook wide-ranging upgrading and maintenance. The current owner-occupant has likewise treated this home affectionately.

533 E Street (The Arnold Home)

Built in the middle 1930s, the modest house at 533 E (Fig. 6.8) was, from the late 1940s to his death at age 82 in 1994, the home of Hubert Arnold, a multi-talented and wealthy eccentric and UC Davis professor of mathematics.

6. 8. 533 E Street (The Arnold Home).



Among other endeavors, over a period of 65 years he collected some 1,800 artistically-crafted ceramic pieces from almost 200 artists in many countries. Kept mostly in boxes and paper bags, these works of art (together with his large antique camera and other collections) were stuffed into this house and garage.

A few years before his death, he gave the ceramic collection, valued at several million dollars, to the Crocker Art Museum of Sacramento, where in 1989 it was featured as a major exhibit titled “One Man’s Collection” (Creative Arts League, 1989).

Arnold believed that Davis landscaping should be native and natural and his actions based on this belief explain why there is no Hackberry city street tree in front of 533 E. Once there was, but over the years he treated it in ways that resulted in its death. The trees now in the planting strip are those he thought were more appropriate and that he planted as replacement for the Hackberry.

Arnold was wealthy, but he spent little money on 533 E. The family who bought the house from his estate have engaged in major renovations and it is now an historic preservation gem.

600 Sixth Street (The Smalley Home)

In a 1996 interview with Marie LaCroix (who then resided at 600 Sixth), Mrs. Fay Smalley, then age 90, reported that she and her first husband, William Williams, built 600 Sixth themselves, assisted by relatives and friends, over a period of months in 1932 and 1933 (Fig. 6.9).

The couple paid \$750 for the lot and had to buy the construction materials, but they spent only \$8.50 for outside labor, Mrs. Smalley proudly reported. All the other labor was their own or that of relatives and friends. (Modern “sweat equity” looks anemic by comparison.)

6.9. 600 Sixth Street (The Smalley Home).



615 and 617 Sixth Street: “Storybook Primitivism”†

The twin cottages at 615 and 617 Sixth (Fig. 6.10) were built sometime in the late 1930s. Historical resource surveyors describe them as “topped by gabled roofs with their ridges parallel to the street The wood frame structures are sheathed with siding rounded to imitate logs. Stepping stones lead to the public sidewalk” (HEC, 171-172, ARG, 279-280).

6.10. 615 Sixth Street, the western of the twin “storybook primitive” cabins.



In addition, the HEC surveyors offer this marvelous interpretive text for understanding these houses:

They are wonderful examples of the urge to storybook primitivism, related to the desire to return to nature which recurs cyclically in American culture. It is a visual result of the same interests which caused the creation of the great public parks and forests in the 19th century, the Craftsman movement in the early 20th century, and the recent ecological enthusiasms. The mature trees complete the illusion of the forest primevae [sic] (HEC, 172).

607 E Street (The Lyda Williams Home)

607 E Street was the long-time home of Lyda Williams, whose front yard was for many years a magnificent flower garden. In 1991, at age 88, she was killed by a pick-up truck while crossing at the corner of Seventh and F. Because she was beloved by neighbors and at their initiative, the city well lot at 617 E was established as the Lyda Williams Memorial Garden.

607 E was likely built in the late 1940s and appears on the 1953 Sanborn map, but without the garage we now see in front, which was added sometime after 1953.

616 E Street[†]

The historical surveyors describe 616 E (Fig. 6.11) as a “stucco clad Craftsman style Bungalow [that] has a prominent dormer in its gable roof. Running parallel to the street the gable roof is intersected by a double window dormer with a shed-like roof. . . . The slope of the gable roof covers the porch and is supported on either side by squat piers set on masonry bases. A parapet wall is punctured by the centered stairway with masonry bases for planters on either side” (ARG, 307).

The kitchen walls of this home were opened in a 1995 remodel of that room and, the owners report, printing was seen on the studs and other wood. From this the owners infer that this may have been a mail-order “pre-cut” house such as was rather common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; that is, the house may have arrived as a kit and been assembled on the site.

Date of construction/assembly is uncertain, but it appears on the 1921 Sanborn map and is one of only four houses on E Street in that year.

The ARG surveyors comment that this home adds “to the overall character of the neighborhood . . . [and] is one of the finer examples of a pattern book bungalow in the area” (ARG, 308).

6.11. 616 E Street.



617 E Street: The Lyda Williams Memorial Garden[†]

The 617 E property is an example of the kind of inventive, multiple uses that can be devised for a site when people have a little will, imagination, and tolerance (Fig. 6.12).

Currently, three compatible functions take place on this lot. The **first** and historic function is pumping water for the city. This lot is the site of the first city water well and its official name is therefore “Well 1.” The current pump is behind the hedge. Water pumping is all that happened in this location until two other uses were added in recent years.

6.12. 617 E Street, benches in the Lyda Williams Memorial Garden.



The **second** use is as the Lyda Williams Memorial Garden, created in 1991. As mentioned, Lyda Williams lived at 607 E Street, two doors to the south of this property, and cultivated a magnificent flower garden in her front and rear yards. It was greatly appreciated by E Street residents and by many others who walked through the neighborhood or were lovers of flowers and regularly came from around the city to admire her work.

Following her death in 1991, a memorial gathering of several dozen people was held on this site and it led to the creation of the memorial garden (Fig. 6.13).

The 1996 historical surveyors list this memorial as a cultural resource site and describe it as a “pleasant sitting area” that is “well landscaped and is a strong contributor to the block” (ARG, 310).

The **third** use of this property is the gardening that a local resident now does on the open land behind the city water pump.

6.13. Plaque in the Lyda Williams Memorial Garden.



618 E Street

Like a number of other Old North homes, 618 E has a mobile and complex history. It began life as a vernacular cottage, built in the 1920s, in the block that is now Central Park. Development of that park in the mid-1930s necessitated its removal. It was purchased, moved (Fig. 6.14), and remodeled in 1936 by Helen and Gray Rowe (Fig. 6.15).

6.14. The original 618 E being moved, in the mid-1930s, from the block that will become Central Park. (Courtesy Helen Rowe)



6.15. The moved house established at 618 E Street, 1936. (Courtesy Helen Rowe)



It was remodeled again in 1997 and is a handsome neo-Craftsman cottage home (Fig. 6.16).

6.16. 618 E after its 1997 remodel.



630 E Street

630 E has also undergone considerable remodeling. It began as a small cottage much like the two next to it at 642 and 650 E and all three of them appear to have been built in the early 1930s.

In Fig. 6.17, we see 630 E in the 1950s, still in its original configuration. As is evident in looking at 630 E today, the architecture has been quite considerably modernized.

6.17. Kay and Frank Ogasawara in front of their home, 630 E Street, middle 1950s. (Courtesy Frank Ogasawara)



639 E Street†

Constructed in the late 1920s or very early 1930s, 639 E Street is in the Tudor Revival style and features a “prominent street facing chimney” (ARG, 311) (Fig. 6.18).

Sheathed in horizontal siding, this one story house has a raised slab foundation. The windows are double hung and are in pairs along the front facade.

The house is accessed via a recessed porch with a small gable roof. The main roof of the house is gabled with a cross gable on the southern end of the elevation (ARG, 311).

ARG surveyors comment that 639 E is a “significant contributor to the overall character of the neighborhood” (ARG, 312).

6.18 639 E Street.



521 Seventh Street: Pomegranate Place

Looked at from Seventh Street, 521 Seventh appears to be only a 1930s house. It is that, but there is also much more.

Behind that house, to the left and down the surfaced driveway, there are 11 tiny cottages arrayed along a curving cement footpath (Fig. 6.19).

This hidden little enclave arises from the conjunction of (1) a longish strip of land and (2) the availability of the cottages.

(1) The longish strip of land running between Seventh and Eighth streets on which they sit is a remnant of the failed 1913 development called Bowers Acres that was described in Ch. 3. Originally, there were 15 of these Seventh to Eighth Street strips, each one acre in size (thus “Bowers Acres”).

As discussed, the set of these lots along the north side of Seventh were envisioned as a “millionaires’ row.” But it was not to be. The land did not sell to such buyers and Bowers Acres remained vacant or was farmed until after World War II.

(2) Enter a developer who takes note that a number of tiny cottages called Asbill Court, on F Street near First, must be removed to make way for an office building (a structure fronting G Street that is now part of the Hallmark Inn). Relocation was an alternative to demolishing the cottages and 11 of them became Pomegranate Place on Bowers’ failed millionaires’ row.

6.19. Behind 521 Seventh Street, with a view of the pathway and three cottages in Pomegranate Place.



The features of traditional neighborhoods enumerated in Ch. 1 are seen on all Old North streets, of course. E Street, though, has an especially rich concentration of them and is a trove of

historic homes, sites, stories, and streetscapes. In this way, E expresses the essence of the district as a whole.

The street is made all the more appealing by being at the geographic center of the neighborhood and by dead-ending, a feature that provides framing and closure.