

September 27, 2004

Historical Resources Commission
City of Davis
Davis, CA 95616

RE: BOWERS ADDITION (OLD NORTH DAVIS) HISTORIC SIDEWALKS:

With the support of the Old North Davis Neighborhood Association, I am proposing that Landmark status be conferred on the sidewalks of the west side of the 600 block of G Street portion of the Bowers Addition together with their associated easements and curbs, as shown on the attached Exhibits.

The Old North Neighborhood Association further supports conferring at least Merit Resource status on all the sidewalks in the Bowers Addition which substantially retain their original marking as outlined in the Exhibits.

These markers are literally "Landmarks", evidence of the unique character of the sidewalks and other improvements originally provided during development of the Bowers Addition in 1913. They are a "concrete", durable, unifying portion of the neighborhood streetscape and character that residents have come to value. They are highlighted as significant and unique features of the Old North Neighborhood in John Lofland's book "Old North Davis", and featured in walking tours of this historic district. In addition, the markers are a convenience for residents in locating common lot lines for fences and landscaping.

We are concerned that damage or destruction of some of these unique markings has already occurred through ignorance, inadvertence or carelessness during landscaping, construction, remodeling or conversion of residences.

For example, some of the Arrows and Lot Numbers of the 600 Block of G Street have already been destroyed during construction projects on the block, when the old residences were converted to businesses and new entry sidewalks were installed. Some sidewalk has been destroyed and replaced when replacing water, sewer or sprinkler lines. This should not be necessary in future, as sewer & water are on the alley and sprinkler lines can be jacked. Installation of posts for new front yard fences right next to the sidewalk has resulted in chipping of the sidewalk edge. In one case the Lot Number was lost in the process of constructing a handicap ramp to the front entry of an office conversion, and another when replacing sidewalk broken by construction equipment. A Lot line Arrow was lost during an office conversion when a side lot sidewalk was installed. All of these losses could have been avoided. Most of the remaining original sidewalk pavement on this block is generally in good condition.

Of specific immediate concern is the sidewalk on the west side of the 600 block of G Street, especially the SE corner of the block (along Lot 1, 603 G Street), and extending for several feet west of that corner along 6th street, to include the LOT LINE ARROW on the Sixth Street side of the subdivision corner as well as the ARROW on the G Street side, and the mid-block (Lot 5, 621 G Street) portion containing the Lot 5 mark and the unique "1913" DATE MARK. (See attached diagrams.)

This block contains the almost intact stretch of the original 1913 Bowers Addition's characteristic and unique LOT NUMBERS (centered in front of each lot on the west edge of the sidewalk); the DATE 1913 mid-pavement in front of LOT 5 (623 G); the LOT LINE ARROWS on the west edge of the sidewalk between the LOTS; and the Two BOWERS ADDITION SE CORNER Arrows (SE corner of LOT 1, 603 G).

The SE CORNER DOUBLE ARROWS also indicate that the sidewalk easement or right of way is not at the edge of the sidewalk, but includes an additional area along (inside) the sidewalk. The arrow on the 6th street side is the sole surviving indicator of this fact (on the ground) of the location of the street side lot lines.

Historically, the neighborhood featured open front yards. However, there is a trend now toward front yard fences, and recent front yard fences installed in Old North have been located right adjacent to the sidewalk, while the lot line arrows at the Bowers SE Corner indicated that the public easement is not at the edge of the sidewalk. Earlier

fences on the east side of the 500 block of F Street are set back from the sidewalk, and although that block is not in the Bowers addition, it raises the question of whether, in light of the arrows, these recent fences are not in fact encroachments on the easement.

Digging fence post holes right next to the edge of the sidewalk has resulted in chipping the concrete edge, tends to promote vegetation growth in sidewalk cracks, and accumulation of litter (including volunteer tree seeds) between the sidewalk and the bottom of the fence, and can result in damage, settling, cracks and deterioration of the concrete. Since the sidewalk pavement is also narrower than in newer districts, fences right next to the pavement edge also constrict passing of opposing pedestrian and bicycle traffic, contrary to the historic "open front yard" character of the district. Consequently, the City might consider reviewing the easement and requiring setback of future fences to the indicated easement lines.

With regard to the important SE Corner: there is a utility pole at the corner, so a single ADA ramp at the corner is not feasible, as is done downtown in some places; one on each side is required. Apparently the city currently has settled for just one ramp on most corners in Old North, presumably because of funding constraints. At the Bowers SE Corner, the existing single ramp is on the 6th Street side.

However, because of the commercial activity on the 600 block of G, the shopping mall on the east side, and proximity to apartment complexes to the north and the core area to the south, this block receives considerable pedestrian traffic. If the City decides to make a second ramp on the G Street side of the corner across from the Food COOP, in the past replacement of the full corner of a sidewalk has been the practice, extending for several feet each side of the corner in order to achieve proper ramp slope and match the width of the ramp's rolled sides. This would probably result in full destruction of the important twin arrow marks on the inner edge at the SE corner of the subdivision unless consideration of the historic resource permits some compromise or special treatment.

Staff has pointed out that although the City has a policy regarding retaining and repairing the old sidewalks, and retaining the historic markings, most sidewalk repair projects don't go through a multi-department review process. So we are concerned about a slip up between "policy" and a contractor or sub-contractor; especially if a conflict between ADA requirements and historical resources becomes involved; or if, as has already happened, damage or replacement result from owner, resident or private contractor activity on the adjacent parcel. The current multi-lingual construction and absentee owner environment portends more possibilities for accidents.

We therefore propose that this important surviving part of our dwindling historic infrastructure be afforded additional protection against damage by both public (city) and private activities by granting Landmark and Merit Resource status to the West side G Street sidewalks and Bowers Addition sidewalks respectively.

Sincerely,

Valerie Vann
631 G Street
Davis, CA 95616

Enclosures:

1. Diagram & Photos of Sidewalk Markers
2. Plan of Sidewalk on West Side G Street

Historic Bowers Addition Sidewalk Markers

Mid-Block Date Mark



Missing Markers, West Side G St.

Lot Number, Lot 3
Destroyed in construction of handicap entry ramp during commercial conversion

Lot Number, Lot 4
Destroyed by replacement of sidewalk damaged during commercial conversion

Lot Line Arrow between Lots 3 & 4
Same as preceding

Lot Line Arrow between Lots 7 & 8
Destroyed in construction of new entry sidewalk at south side of Lot 8 during commercial conversion

Lot Number for Lot 1

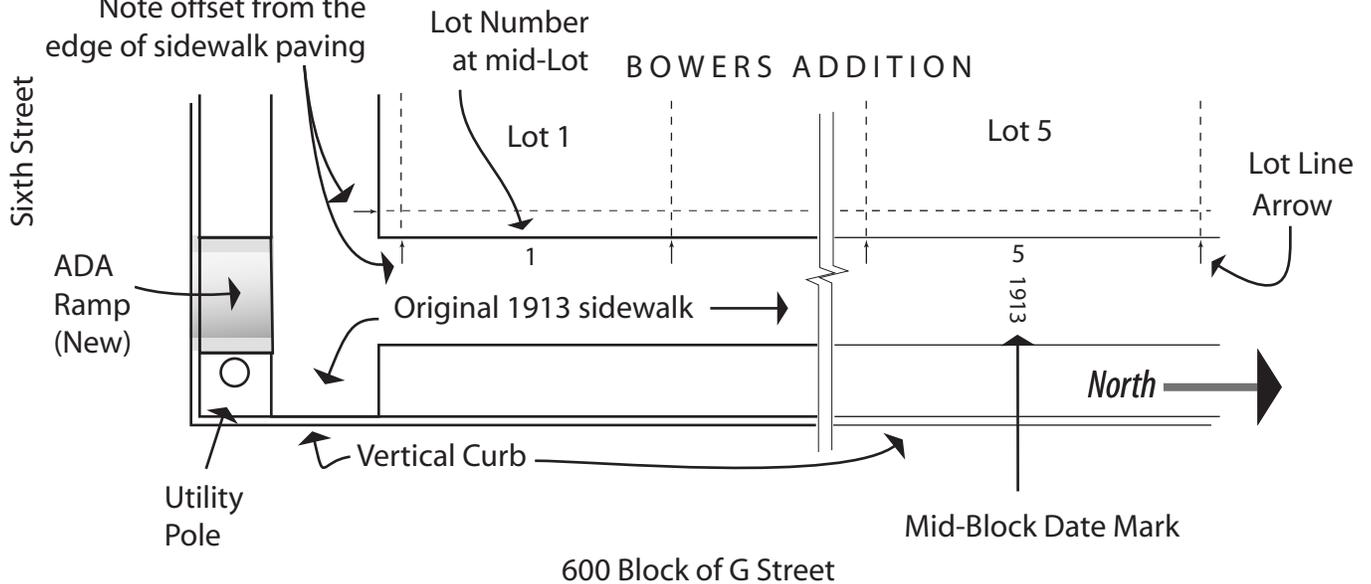


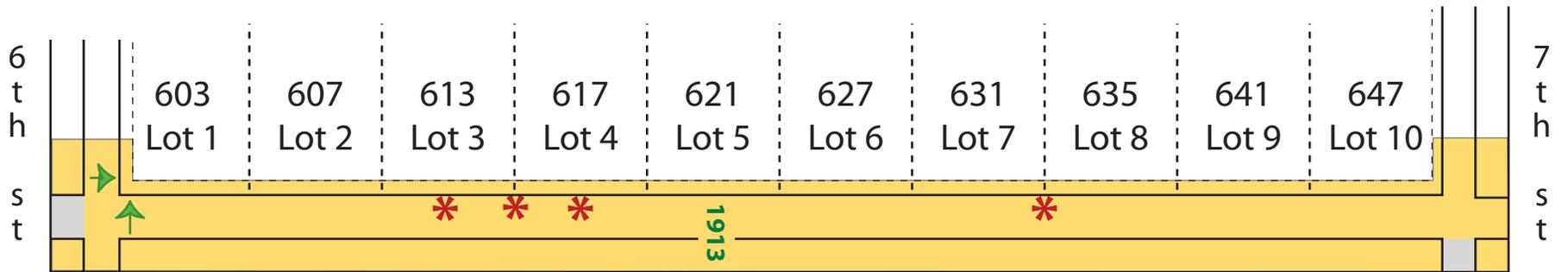
Lot Line Arrow



1913 Bowers Addition Sidewalk Marks
600 Block of G Street (West Side G)
and
Adjacent Part of North Side of 6th Street

Two Arrows at SE Corner of Subdivision marking north & west edge of sidewalk easement
Note offset from the edge of sidewalk paving





600 Block of G Street - West Side of Street



- Area of proposed Landmark Status
- Existing ADA sidewalk Ramps
- * Missing/destroyed markers
- 1913 Location of Important Corner Arrows and mid-block Date Mark

Note: Some Lots currently have more than one address