

*Heritage Home &
Preservation Awards
2012*

Heritage Home Awards

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~ 746 College Street ~



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The modified Eastlake residence at 746 College Street is notable for having only three owners over a span of more than 130 years. The home was originally constructed in 1874 by Mrs. Minerva H. Briggs, wife of prominent Yolo County farmer R.C. Briggs, on land she purchased for \$500. In 1896 the house was sold to P.N. Ashley, who served as Yolo County Surveyor for 24 years. Immediately following its sale to Mr. Ashley, the house was deeded to his wife, Mamie. The home remained in the Ashley family until it was purchased in 1965 by Kenneth and Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Bigelow.

Recognizing the historic value of their home, the Bigelow's carefully preserved and maintained the original design elements and details of this 2,400 square foot Victorian 'cottage,' including its beautiful parquet floors, original windows, distinctive redwood beams, interior French doors and antique kitchen cabinetry. Notable exterior features include modified Corinthian-order columns with their ornate acanthus-leaf capitals, in addition to distinctive Victorian-era machined trim, sculptured cornice brackets, and cut-out frieze details.

This beautiful home has been featured many times by the Stroll Through History, Woodland Library Rose Club and Dollhouse tours. Lovingly maintained by Mrs. Bigelow and her family, this home is an outstanding example of Victorian period architecture in Woodland. It was featured in the original *Woodland Historic Homes Guide* published in 1971 by the Yolo County Historical Society. The home is included in the current *Walking Tour of Historic Woodland*.

~ 909 College Street ~



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Built in 1928, this house is an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style, and has strong roots in Woodland's history. Builder Joseph Motroni constructed over 200 houses and commercial buildings in Woodland between 1920 and the late 1940s. The house was built for Ross Wilson, owner of Wilson's Funeral Home (now McNary's), who later sold it to William Dahler, one of the founders of the Electric Garage.

Current owners Larry and Jill Plumb have taken great care to maintain the house's original features. The house retains the majority of its original fixtures and hardware; when missing they have been replaced by vintage fixtures similar to what would have originally been in the house.

The repeating, symmetrical porch arches that are a feature of this style are nicely repeated in the arched windows across the front of the house. The spiral porch column with Corinthian capital is another lovely feature characteristic of this style. Inside, coved ceilings and hardwood floors are original features common to many house styles of this era.

The back yard retains its original walled patio, another Mediterranean Revival feature, with a gate built to match the original. An original garden shed also remains.

Most importantly, the house retains its original casement windows, a key feature of the Mediterranean Revival style. Original windows are often removed from older houses under the mistaken impression that they cannot be made energy-efficient, which can reduce the historic integrity of the building. The use of spring bronze weather stripping on these casement windows would be an historically accurate way to improve their efficiency.

It is noteworthy that this house retains many features often missing from many otherwise historically accurate houses: the original bathrooms, garage door, ironing board cabinet, and cement laundry sink. The original kitchen was long gone, so a recent remodel was done in the spirit of what would have existed originally. Details including original door hardware and porch light complete the picture on this charming house.

~ 509 North Street ~



~ 509 North Street ~

The house at 509 North has long been searching for a family to make it a home since its construction in 1893. It has found that family in its current owners Pippin and Laura Mader, who have undertaken a personal rehabilitation effort

The home was originally built for Samuel L. and Julia Anna Randolph who purchased the property in 1892 and had the single story Queen Anne constructed and complete the following year. The typical middle class home of the period looked across the street to the Sacramento Valley Roller Four Mills rather than the pleasant view of the library enjoyed today. The Randolphs left the home only seven years later and moved to Marin County where Samuel became a guard at San Quentin and undertook the task of eliminating drug dealing among the convicts.

Elizabeth Taylor, widow of John Taylor, moved into Woodland in 1900 leaving the farm she had established with her husband in the 1860s. She and her daughter Rosina established housekeeping in the house, but Elizabeth died in less than a year.

The estate was divided between John and Elizabeth's children. Rosina, their remaining unmarried daughter, took the North Street home. Rosina supported herself working as a housekeeper in other Woodland homes returning each night to 509 North Street. In 1920, she married Frank Bender, a plumber, and as the Randolphs before, left the house.

During the 1920s most of the surrounding homes were issued building permits in order to keep them in repair and update them for modern living. However, no permits were issued for 509 North Street. The house was leased to other families until it was purchased by Felix Bachand and his wife Alzida. The Bachands were the first to make the house a home staying in the house until their deaths in 1949 and 1951. Again, after too short a period, the house was left without a family, and was leased for a few years before being purchased by Thomas B. Wohlfrom. Wohlfrom was a rancher from the Arbuckle neighborhood where he was known for his early adoption of mechanized farming equipment and as former director of the Bank of Woodland. He lived in the home from 1955 until his death in 1957, and his wife Alice, a nurse, remained into the 1960s. The house itself remained in the Wohlfrom family until 1998.

After all the years of short tenures and periods of rentals, the house would finally be updated. In 1956 Wohlfrom took out a building permit to do 'repairs and alterations.'

Unfortunately, during the 1950s Queen Anne architecture was not appreciated. This was the period of the open, simple, and airy ranch house. Victorians were felt to be dark, overly ornamented and not in keeping with modern living. Based on conversation with the Maders and the appearance of the house it's doubtful that this permit for \$600 (approximately \$5,000 today) of repairs and alterations in 1956 was responsible for all the changes made to the house. However this is the only documentation in city records. Harold Wohlfrom, one of the sons of Thomas and Alice, was a building contractor and likely had some influence on the alterations to the house. Work on the house during this period changed the house's appearance. The ceilings were dropped interfering with the tall windows. To make the windows fit with the new ceiling, the top half of the double hung windows were removed and boarded over. Careful observation indicates that the front door was moved a few inches. Framing and other details hint at other interior alterations.

In 1998 Gregory and Lisa Sheldon purchased the house. Popular opinion had shifted and the elaborate details of Victorian homes were appreciated. The Sheldon's began the process of bringing back the original appearance.

The process was incomplete when Pippin and Laura Mader purchased the home in 2005 and began a massive rehabilitation effort. The fact that their first project was the construction of a home workshop provides a scale for the scope of their project. After completing the workshop, together they excavated the basement, an opportunity they recommend others pass over. Most recently they have converted the attic to living space, a project made possible by the lowered ceilings on the first floor. Because of the extensive previous alterations a complete restoration is not possible, but the Maders have sought out appropriate materials, and substituted modern replacements when the original could not be located.

Heritage Home Awards are usually given to recognize homes which have survived the years with minimal alterations, however, the work to rehabilitate the house and make it a home for their growing family has garnered the attention of the Historic Preservation Commission and secured the award.

~ 625 Second Street ~



~ 625 Second Street ~

This large (3,600 sq ft) California Bungalow home was built in 1913 in the Craftsman style by John and Minnie Hart, including a large “carriage house”. The house and property has a long history. The property is part of the original 1880 homestead of T.J. and Hester Dexter. In 1901, the property was subdivided into lots and incorporated into the City of Woodland and is known as the “Dexter Addition.” . After changing hands four times the property was finally conveyed to John and Minnie Hart by Charles Beebe, the President of the Woodland Hospital. Mr. Hart was a well-known Sutter-Yolo farmer who died in 1926. His wife, Minnie, continued to live in the home until her death in 1943. Fred and Lydia Schell purchased the home in November of 1943 for \$7,000 dollars, and raised a large family. Eventually converting part of the 1,000 square foot basement into two bedrooms for their children. The huge redwood tree on north-west corner of the lot was planted by Fred Schell.

The current owners, Jim and Carol Lapsley, who owned a smaller home further south on Second St., had admired 625 Second St. for several years before their purchase in 1982. During their three decades in the house they have raised a family, have redone some of the “modernizations” of previous owners and have worked hard to keep the house current but true to its origins. Every room in the home has several windows as well as more than one door. Owner Carol calls it the house of many doors and windows. As is typical of Craftsman homes, the house has built-in bookshelves and window-seats (with storage underneath) downstairs and large closets with built-in dressers in the closets of the 3 upstairs bedrooms. Current exterior paint colors were chosen with both the Craftsman color palate and the redwood trees in mind.

In 1974, Danny Thomas Productions, looking for a city and house with a Mid-West “feel,” choose Woodland and 625 Second. St. to film “Four Stars in the Window”, a made for T.V. movie about life on the home front during W.W. II. For the film, the house was spray-painted white.

This home is featured in the City's Walking Tour of Historic Woodland. The Lapsley's significant efforts in updating and rehabilitating their home are recognized by the Historic Preservation Commission through nomination as a 2012 Heritage Home.

Preservation Award
416-418 First Street



~ 416 – 418 First Street ~

This award is for two restored storefronts, 416-418 First St., within the Hunt building that extends from 414-424 First St. This row building is a 1-story brick commercial structure, The Hunt Block, has been designated a Historic Building within the City of Woodland Downtown Specific Plan. This award recognizes the outstanding restoration effort of the current owner as well as the important role William Gaston Hunt played in the early commercial and civic history of the city.

W.G. Hunt was born in N. Carolina in 1827. He and his siblings left Missouri for California by wagon train in May 1849, and four months later reached Hangtown, now Placerville, where he opened a hotel. He closed the hotel in 1851, and moved to the Cacheville area, now Yolo, where he soon became a very successful rancher on his 800+ acres. He started sheep raising in 1853, and despite losing 1000 head in the floods of the winter of 1861-62, had as many as 10,000-15,000 sheep. By 1861, he discovered he could make more profit from the fleece than the mutton, a new development, and in 1863 he did very well by shipping the sheep to Oregon and Lower California.

He subsequently branched out to general farming and ranching, raising all manner of livestock, particularly cattle and hogs and by 1896, was also recognized as a wealthy local fruit grower. Additionally, he owned a grain brokerage firm that bought and sold wheat, and built and owned several warehouses in Woodland and at other points on the local railroad line.

Hunt also had considerable business and residential properties in town. For example, between 1867-1881 he sold at least 23 properties to other early prominent families, including Byrns, Laugenour, Caldwell, Stephens, Peart, and the railroad, Yolo Grange, and County of Yolo. He was President of the Woodland Winery and a large stockholder in the Bank of Woodland. His homeplace was on the corner of Fisk and Oak avenues in Woodland.

In 1886, the lot of the Hunt Block was owned by Hunt and J.D. Stephens, another prominent early citizen. The 1886 Sanborn Insurance Map shows 5 lots behind the Bank of Woodland in the IOOF Building on the southwest corner of First and Main streets. By 1888 Hunt was the sole owner of the lot bounded on the north by the Bank of Woodland, on the east by First St., on the west by what was called "The Old College Lot", and on the south by an unreadable name in the Assessment Book of 1888.

The value of the real estate was \$2000, there were no improvements, and the tax was \$59.75. On Dec. 19, 1888, Hunt entered into an agreement with the Bank of Woodland to construct a common wall of brick in order to build the 1-story brick row stores on his lot. In 1889, the value of the real estate was still \$2000, but the improvements were valued at \$1000, which was reflected by the increased tax of \$143.49.

The interior walls between 414, 416, and 418 were flexible over the years, that is, there were times when a single business operated out of two of those address. Thus, one of the prominent shops at 416 was the Virginia Lee Ladies Hat Shop that opened in October 1928, at the former quarters of the DeMaria Shoe Shop, that sold and repaired mens and boys shoes. But the 1926 Sanborn Map shows 416-418 occupied as a cobblers shop, which would have been the DeMaria Shoe Shop. The 418 First St. storefront was occupied by a barber shop from about 1907, starting with Roy Kortright, passing to Guy Neal around 1930, and becoming Nichols Barber Shop around 1934 with Kortright working there as an employee.

The City Map of 1892 shows Hunt still the owner, but the 1905 and 1910 maps show the lot was owned by Rowena DePue and L.H. Stephens. By 1932 the lot was in L.H. Stephens name.

The 416-418 storefronts, were according to Sean Denny, the current owner, probably divided into their existing configuration in the 1950s or a little earlier. The Alice Hand Beauty Shop occupied 416 starting around 1953 and Patrick Kalfsbeek Jeweler occupied 418 in the 1990s. Mr. Denny bought 416-418 from Thomas and Charles Gerbi in 2001 and opened Denny Design in the 416 building. His business there specializes in commercial graphics, corporate identity, and packaging.

When Mr. Denny bought the storefronts the structural cast iron columns and pilasters were boxed in with wood covering and finished with stucco. With the help of a Facade Grant to cover the cost of materials, he removed this covering to reveal the hidden cast iron features. It took him several years to remove the 9-10 coats of paint and to determine and replicate the original colors; seven colors and gold leaf in all. Ornate cast iron fluted columns frame the central doorway of 416. The two cast iron pilasters separate 416-418 from the adjoining shops on either side. The columns and pilasters are tied to a steel plate lintel that supports the upper brick street front facade. The base of the pilasters are dated "1889, W. Gutenberger, Sacto. Foundary." This is consistent with the "W.G. Hunt 1889" signage in brick over the central storefront of the block.

Mr. Denny also chiseled off and cleaned the numerous layers of decaying plaster and wallpaper to expose the interior brick walls. He finished the restoration work to its current beautiful facade in 2011. Bigelow and Associates, Antique Restoration and Fine Woodworking, is a recent tenant of Mr. Denny's in the 418 storefront.