

UNIT 327

WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE STATE HISTORIC PARK

GENERAL PLAN

March 1980

Woodland Opera House State Historic Park

PRELIMINARY

General Plan



State of California The Resource Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
January 1980

WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
STATE HISTORIC PARK

Preliminary
GENERAL PLAN

January 1980

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WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE STATE HISTORIC PARK
GENERAL PLAN

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SUMMARY

The Woodland Opera House, owned by the Yolo County Historical Society, is located in downtown Woodland. The original building, constructed in 1885, was partially destroyed by fire in 1892. Four years later, the three remaining walls were used to construct the current structure.

The opera house was a center for northern California theater activities until its closure in 1913. This historic site is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The General Plan provides guidelines for management, development, and operation of Woodland Opera House State Historic Park. The plan identifies the unit's resources, current and future problems, and proposes solutions to these problems.

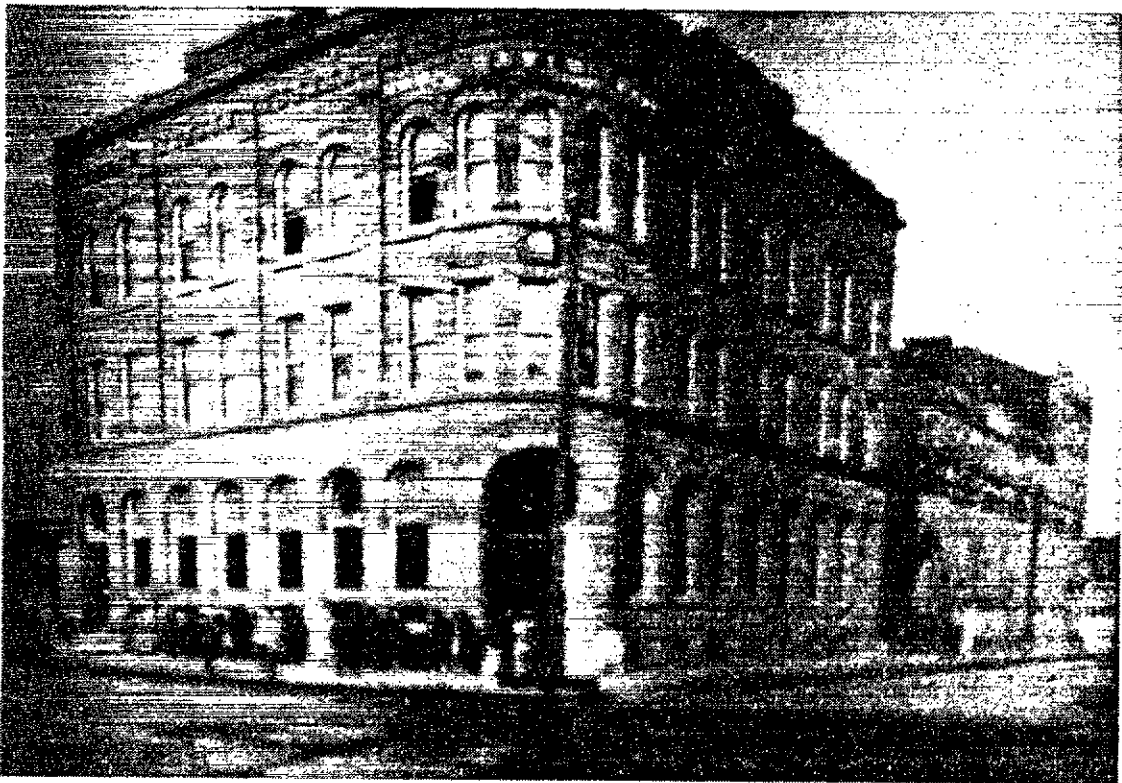
During the planning process, many local citizens and groups provided help and advice.

Planners considered three alternatives: (1) restoration of the original 1885 opera house; (2) restoration of the opera house to the 1896 period, including the Elliott Building; and, (3) restoration of the opera house to the 1896 period, with a new annex and plaza.

This plan proposes implementation of the third alternative. This proposal best meets the planning criteria (the existing research base, proposed uses, the need for facilities, time constraints, the possible loss of federal funds, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects). Alternative #3 is also preferred by local individuals and organizations.



Engraving of the First Opera House, showing its architectural features clearly. From Pacific Coast Commercial Record, Yolo County Edition, February 1, 1889.



Elliot-Richardson Building

Yolo County Historical Society

WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE STATE HISTORIC PARK
GENERAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Plan

A comprehensive plan for the Woodland Opera House is needed for the following reasons:

To ensure that the existing historical structure is properly protected and preserved.

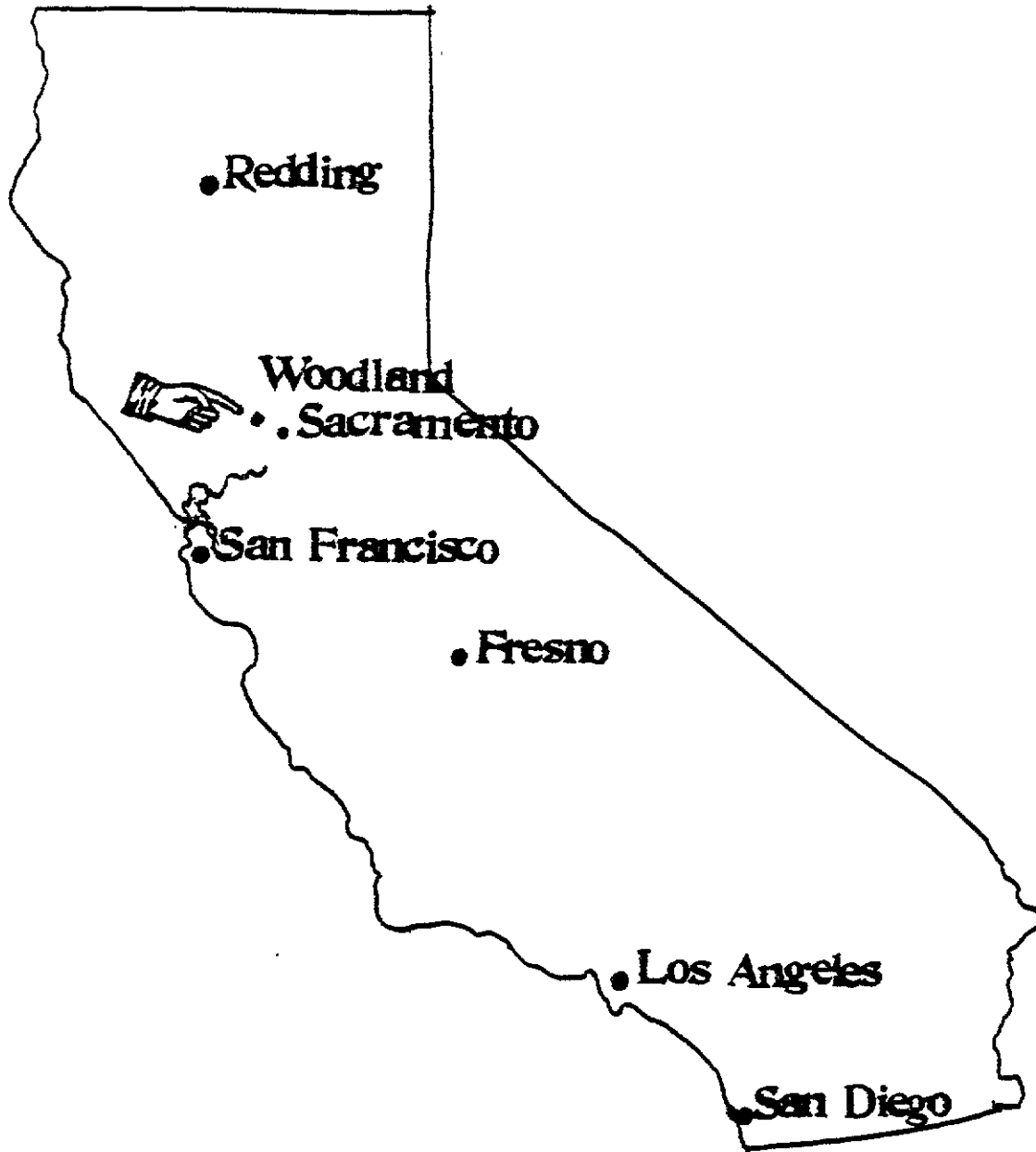
To ensure that visitors will have a meaningful experience in terms of learning about early theatrics in California, and how they fit into the nationwide entertainment picture.

This plan provides general guidelines for management and development of Woodland Opera House State Historic Park, in accordance with its classification and accepted Declaration of Purpose. While the plan is a comprehensive planning document, it must also be a flexible planning tool. These recommendations are guidelines, to be continually evaluated.

Goals

1. To identify the cultural resources of the unit.
2. To identify existing and future problems, and to provide solutions.
3. To establish policies for maintenance, operation, protection, preservation, and interpretation of the resources.
4. To establish guidelines for the sequence of unit development.
5. To provide an information document for the public, the legislature, department personnel, and other agencies.

Figure 1
STATEWIDE LOCATION



Project Description

The City of Woodland is in the Sacramento Valley, 20 miles northwest of Sacramento and 90 miles northeast of San Francisco (Fig. 1). The Woodland Opera House is located in the downtown business section of the City of Woodland in Yolo County (Fig. 2).

Public access is from Interstate 80 by way of State Highway 113, or from Interstate 5 by way of State Highway 16. The opera house is on the west side of Second Street, between Main Street (State Highway 16) and Dead Cat Alley (Fig. 3). It is within five blocks of the railroad.

Structure

The present opera house, erected in 1895-1896, is a spacious, simple, two-story, red brick structure. It is 104 feet long and 60 feet wide; its roof is about 30 feet above street level, and its brick walls are 20 inches thick. A stage house on top of the north end of the opera house (destroyed by fire in the 1930s) rose to a height of 60 feet above street level. The dressing rooms were located in the basement below the stage.

The building has a partial common wall with buildings to the west. Between Main Street and the opera house is a vacant lot.

The exterior of the opera house is architecturally rather plain. Its interior is an example of 19th century American playhouses. It combines the parterre (dress circle) and horseshoe balcony with an uninterrupted circular seating arrangement and large orchestra seating area, common in Italian Renaissance-Revival theaters.

A fire damaged the balcony, roof, and stage house area in 1937. Water caused extensive damage to the plaster and woodwork. After the fire, the stage house superstructure was removed, and a new trussed roof was installed. The damage to the plaster and the balcony still exists, although some restoration has occurred in recent years.

The brick walls and foundation show no signs of foundation failure, and appear to be in good condition for the existing load.

The building originally seated 644 persons. The orchestra section seated 88; the boxes seated 16 patrons on each side of the orchestra; and behind the orchestra, there were 224 individual seats in the dress circle. Directly above, in the balcony, 300 persons were accommodated on wooden benches.

Some of the original interior features still exist. These include the gas lighting fixtures, approximately 75 percent of parterre seats, and the drop curtain, containing local advertising of the period.

Historical Background

The first opera house in Woodland opened in 1885, with a performance of the Merchant of Venice, by Shakespeare. This opera house, along with its associated building containing businesses, was destroyed by fire in 1892. The site was finally cleared in October 1895. Contracts were let in November and December; scenery was procured the following April; and the present opera house opened on June 15, 1896, with the company of Mr. Walter Hodges, in Bronson Howard's Saratoga.

Figure 2
REGIONAL MAP

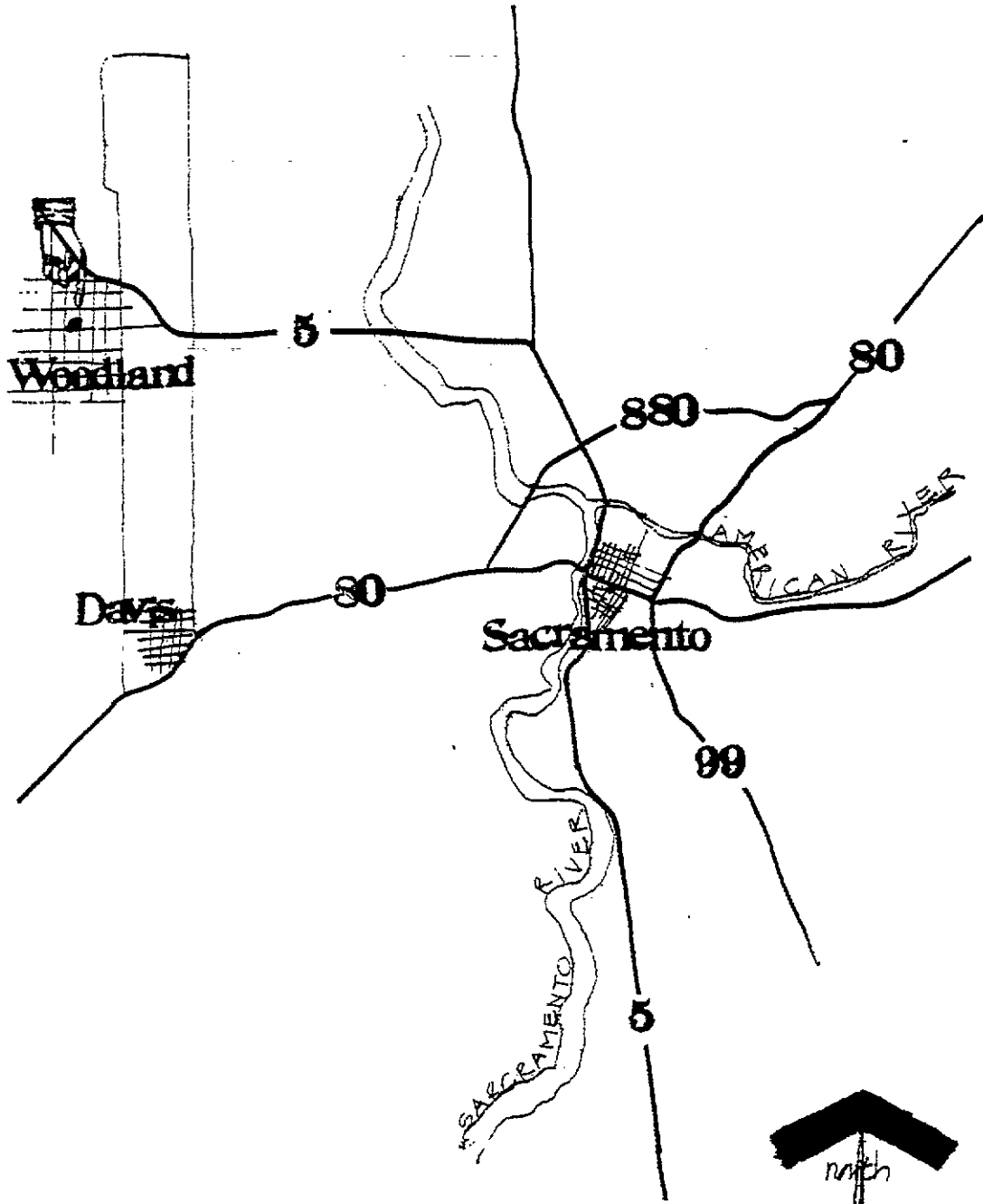


Figure 3
VICINITY MAP

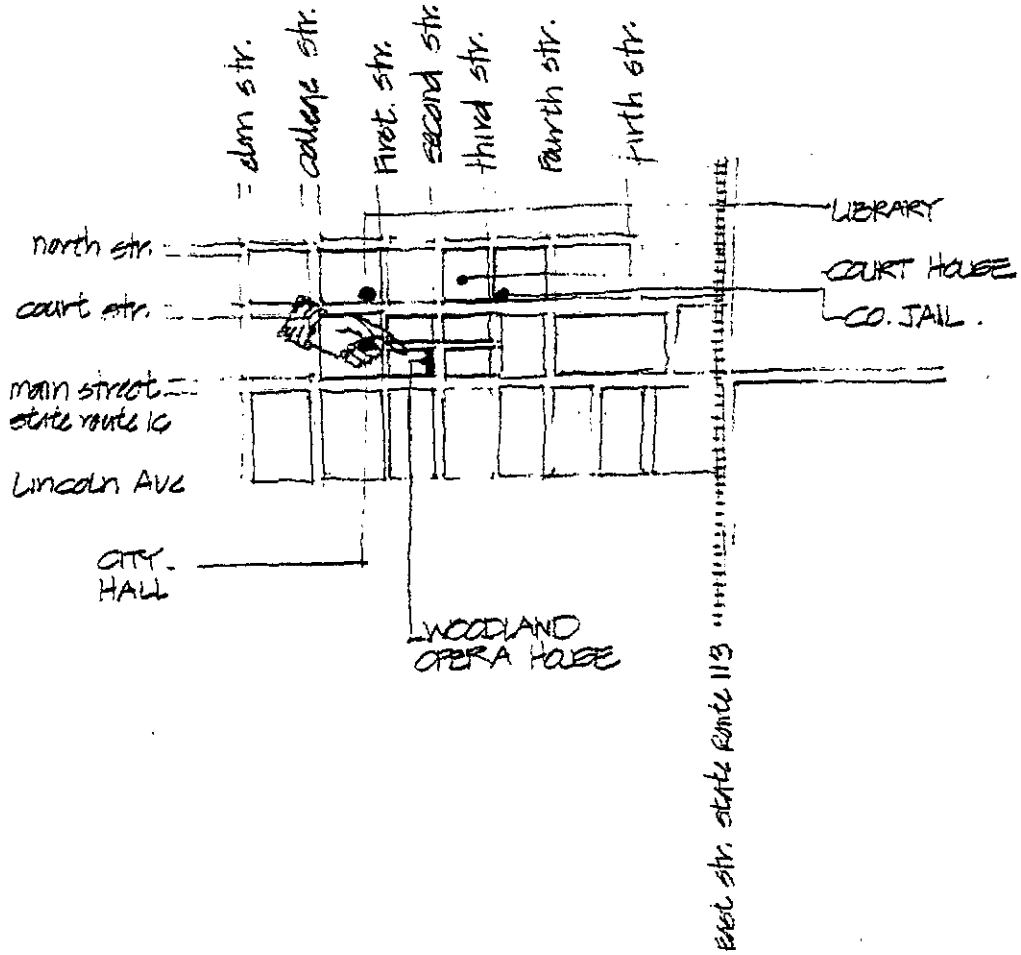
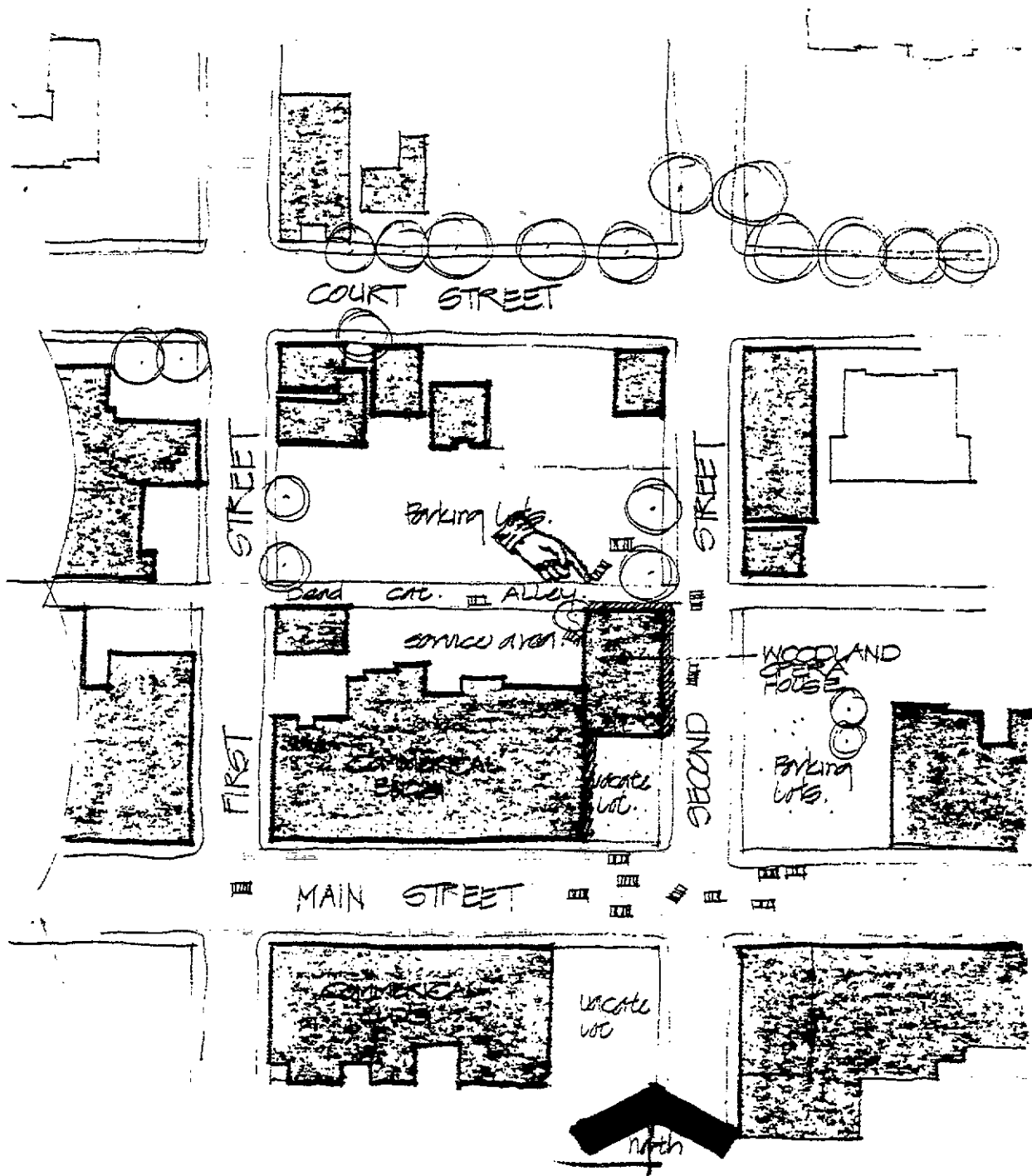


Figure 4
SITE LOCATION



Construction was made possible by the financial backing of D.N. Hershey, an agricultural pioneer, lawmaker, and civic and cultural benefactor of Yolo County.

From October to May, the opera house was hardly ever dark. It averaged two to four productions per month. In seventeen years, more than 300 touring companies played in the theater. Some of the most significant plays of the time were acted here: The Great Divide; Shore Acres; Secret Service; Hazel Kirke; Uncle Tom's Cabin; The Runaways; and many others, including Shakespearean plays, minstrels, and melodrama. In addition, the opera house was used for benefits, and for Woodland's high school commencement exercises.

Yolo County residents were entertained by excellent touring theatrical companies. As a cultural center for the community, the opera house served as a focal point for religious and political meetings, and as a vehicle for local talent and school functions. Near the railroad, it was on the tour circuits of many theatrical companies.

In 1912, a lady fractured her left elbow in a fall at the close of the Woodland High School commencement exercises. She sued the "Hershey estate" and the lessee of the opera house. For this reason (and, more importantly, because of the advent of motion pictures), the opera house closed in 1913, never to reopen.

Between 1913 and 1971, the Woodland Opera House remained closed; it was used as a storage warehouse. The most eventful occurrence during this period was the 1937 fire.

In 1971, the Yolo County Historical Society acquired the opera house from the Hershey estate. Under direction of the Yolo County Historical Society's Woodland Opera House Executive Committee, a tremendous amount of volunteer effort has been directed to restoration of the opera house.

The historic value of the Woodland Opera House has been recognized by the local, state, and federal governments. The opera house is within a historic zone established by Woodland that includes twenty other buildings in the city. In 1971, it was entered on the National Register of Historic Places; on April 28, 1973, it was recognized as California Historical Landmark No. 851.

A parcel of land immediately adjacent to the site has been purchased by the Yolo County Historical Society, preventing construction of any structure inconsistent with the historical nature of the opera house.

The Department of Dramatic Arts at the University of California's Davis campus has acted as advisor for the Yolo County Historical Society, and also had possession of the original scenery from the opera house. Unfortunately, the building that housed this scenery burnt down; the scenery from the opera house was destroyed.

Public Involvement

A program of public involvement was initiated to identify and analyze local concerns. Because of the time frame, citizens statewide were not contacted.

This program consisted of one meeting in the Woodland City Hall Council Chambers on October 15, 1979. In addition, department staff made many contacts with various interested groups throughout the planning process.

The public's general reaction was that exploration of the plan's alternatives is an excellent idea, provided that preservation is of first priority. Several suggestions were made as to specific designs for Alternative 3.

RESOURCE ELEMENT

Evaluation

To be included in the State Park System, a historical building or site must preserve and interpret some highly significant evidence of California's history. Historic preservation projects should contain the best examples of the aspect of history they are to portray, and should not duplicate similar examples already protected in the system. Furthermore, they should be located where they will receive the greatest public exposure. Where possible, the building preserved should be in its historical setting. All these requirements are fulfilled by Woodland Opera House State Historic Park.

The theater was a leading form of entertainment in the days before motion pictures. Opera houses were essentially synonymous with theaters. They played an important role in community life during the development of California in the 19th century. The Woodland Opera House was typical of such theaters, which were sources of civic pride in towns throughout the state.

The first theatrical performance in California reportedly took place about 1847 in Monterey, in a converted lodging house known today as the First Theater. The first structure actually intended for theatrics was the Eagle Theatre in Sacramento (1849). Both the Eagle Theatre and the First Theater are in the State Park System, and cover California theaters through the mid-1800s. Other old theaters in state historic parks include the Fallon Theater in Columbia (1886) and the Merced Theater in El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park (1870).

The Woodland Opera House operated during a period not fully represented in the State Park System's representation of historical entertainment centers. This period, the late 1800s - early 1900s, was perhaps the apex of theatrical groups that traveled the railroad circuit throughout the country.

The Italian Renaissance-Revival interior added further interest to the Woodland Opera House. Although the theater is not in one of the old towns the department is attempting to preserve, it is located in the urban core of Woodland, an area shared with other historic structures.

Some of the best theaters contemporary to the Woodland Opera House have disappeared. Wade's Opera House and the Baldwin Academy of Music, for example, were destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Other fine opera houses in many communities have been razed or converted to motion picture houses. Opera houses of this era, nevertheless, are still standing in San Francisco, Napa, Riverside, and Nevada City; others yet unidentified in the State Inventory of Historic Resources may exist in other towns. Restoration of some of these opera houses is being done by local groups. Still, the Woodland Opera House is the only one of its period in the State Park System.

Cultural Resources

On-Site and Adjacent Setting

Typical land use in the latter 1800s for downtown areas consisted of buildings with first-floor businesses and second-floor residential or hotel facilities. Such was the case in 19th-century Woodland.

When the Woodland fire of 1892 destroyed the building containing Woodland's first opera house (Fig. 6), only the portion containing the present opera house was rebuilt (in 1895-96). In the 1890s, a new structure, the Elliott Building, located on the corner of Main and Second, was built (Fig. 7). It served as a bank and offices. At present, only a vacant lot exists at this location (Fig. 5); this example of the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival aspect of Victorian architecture was demolished in 1970.

Property to the south of Main Street once contained the Sacramento Transportation Company's terminal. It was a rail service which provided transportation to the town's interior. This was a vital link in transportation and was closely aligned with the theater, because it brought the entertainers and participants to the opera.

Site History

The building containing the Woodland Opera House was first constructed in 1885. The entire site from Main Street to Dead Cat Alley contained this building. After the fire of 1892, which destroyed this building, only the northern half of the property was developed as the Woodland Opera House. The southerly portion of the property was developed as the Elliott Building, a bank. In 1970, however, the Elliott Building was razed, and now, the land is vacant.

Natural Resources

Geology

The Woodland Opera House sits on a thick sequence of sedimentary deposits. At the surface are undifferentiated Modesto and Riverbank formations, Pleistocene in age (Jennings, et al. 1979). Total thickness of these sediments is about 15,000 feet (Calif. Div. of Mines and Geology, 1962).

Seismic Conditions

Helley and Herd (1977) described geomorphic evidence that led them to conclude that an active fault (one that has had displacement along it during the last 10,000 years) exists about 3 miles southwest of the Woodland Opera House. They also recognized another active fault, located about 8 miles northwest of Woodland. Both faults are probably primarily dip-slip faults; the probable maximum expectable earthquake magnitude and associated ground accelerations have not yet been studied. The potential for ground failure due to seismic shaking has not been assessed.

Vegetation

The land on the west side of the Sacramento River, which includes Woodland, was composed of a complex mixture of tule swamps and valley prairie, often very muddy and impassable during periods of stream overflow after heavy winter rains. Intermixed between marshes and prairie were valley oak groves, often associated with elevated spots that had better drainage. However, such native vegetation now is found only in very small pockets and areas preserved in parks. Most of the land has been converted to agricultural uses.

At the time of Woodland's founding, a belt of oak woodland, with grassland, extended from a slight rise in the Woodland area. Since that time, much of the native vegetation has been replaced by non-native trees and shrubs. Attempts have been made to preserve small groves of native oaks in community parklands. There are a few ornamental shrubs and trees in the lot next to the opera house.

Climate

Woodland lies in the Sacramento Valley, bounded by the Coast Range to the west and the Sierra Nevada to the east. A sea-level gap in the Coast Range, the Carquinez Straits, is located about 40 miles southwest, with intervening terrain very flat.

Summers are warm and dry, with the mean temperature near 95°F. The proximity of the Carquinez Straits has a moderating effect on temperatures; cooler marine air spreads inland from this gap.

Winters are mainly rainy and cool, and the midday temperature range is approximately 55° F.

Precipitation averages nearly 17 inches annually, with more than 90 percent occurring from November through April.

Summer sunshine is abundant, averaging 95 percent of the possible hours of sunshine. During the winter, the sun shines about 40 percent of the time. During stagnant air periods in the winter, radiation or tule fog may persist for several days to a week at a time, while temperature inversions during the summer can create smog.

The prevailing wind direction in Woodland is southerly, resulting from the marine breeze turning northward after passing through the Carquinez Straits. During the winter, when the sea breezes diminish, northerly winds occur, but southerly winds predominate.

Management

Statutory Objectives

The Woodland Opera House was classified as a state historic park by the State Park and Recreation Commission in late 1979, under authorization found in Section 5019.50 of the Public Resources Code.

The Public Resources Code, Section 5019.59, identifies and describes state historic parks, and delineates the parameters concerning their use and development. According to the law, historical units are to be named individually and appropriately. They are to "...consist of areas established primarily to preserve objects of historical, archaeological, and scientific interest, and archaeological sites and places commemorating important persons or historical events." Such units are ideally of sufficient size to encompass a significant part of the landscape associated with the historic objects and events. The only facilities permitted are those required for the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of visitors.

On approval by the commission, lands outside the primary historic zone may be identified and acquired, developed, or operated to provide camping and recreational facilities in appropriate historical units. Historical units shall be named to perpetuate the primary historical themes of the individual units.

Declaration of Purpose

The purpose of Woodland Opera House State Historic Park is to provide visitors with a facility in which they can learn about and enjoy activities associated with professional and amateur theatrical productions, symphonies, public staged events, ballets, operas, and related cultural activities, as well as public functions such as town meetings and political, civic, and professional conferences that are harmonic with similar historic events held in the building in the past.

The opera house should be a monument to local theatrical history, set in its historic context. A regular museum exhibit is to be provided, but more importantly, production of plays in the restored theater will occur. In essence, the past will live again as part of the present.

Declaration of Management Policy

In addition to preservation of the historic fabric of the opera house, which is the first priority, a prime function of this historic park is to provide visitors with historic information about performing arts in the early days, and about how they relate to the present. An environment will be provided to visitors so as to create a feeling of participation in the past.

Management of this unit will be designed to preserve the historic fabric as the first objective, then to restore the building (with appropriate contemporary additions) so as to provide visitors with a historic environment. To provide information on early performing arts, interpretive displays will be created, and historic plays, operas, etc., may be performed.

LAND USE AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Existing Land Use

The Woodland Opera House is now used for limited theatrical productions. In addition, the Yolo County Historical Society provides guided tours through the facilities during specific times of the year.

Proposed Land Use

The proposed use for the Woodland Opera House would be, for the most part, the same as its present use. However, an increase in space and activities is needed. This includes areas for stage prop storage, interpretive displays, and offices.

Proposed Development

In addition to preservation and restoration of the existing structure and reconstruction of the stage house, more space must be provided to house facilities needed for complete operation of Woodland Opera House State Historic Park. These facilities consist of an interpretive museum, restrooms, offices, and storage space. Also, emergency exits and facilities for the disabled are required to meet current building codes.

As a state historical landmark, the Woodland Opera House must continue as a monument to turn-of-the-century theater. Self-guided and directed interpretive services must be provided. Because this is a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places, modifications and operations that may affect the historic fabric must get prior approval from the State Historic Preservation Officer.

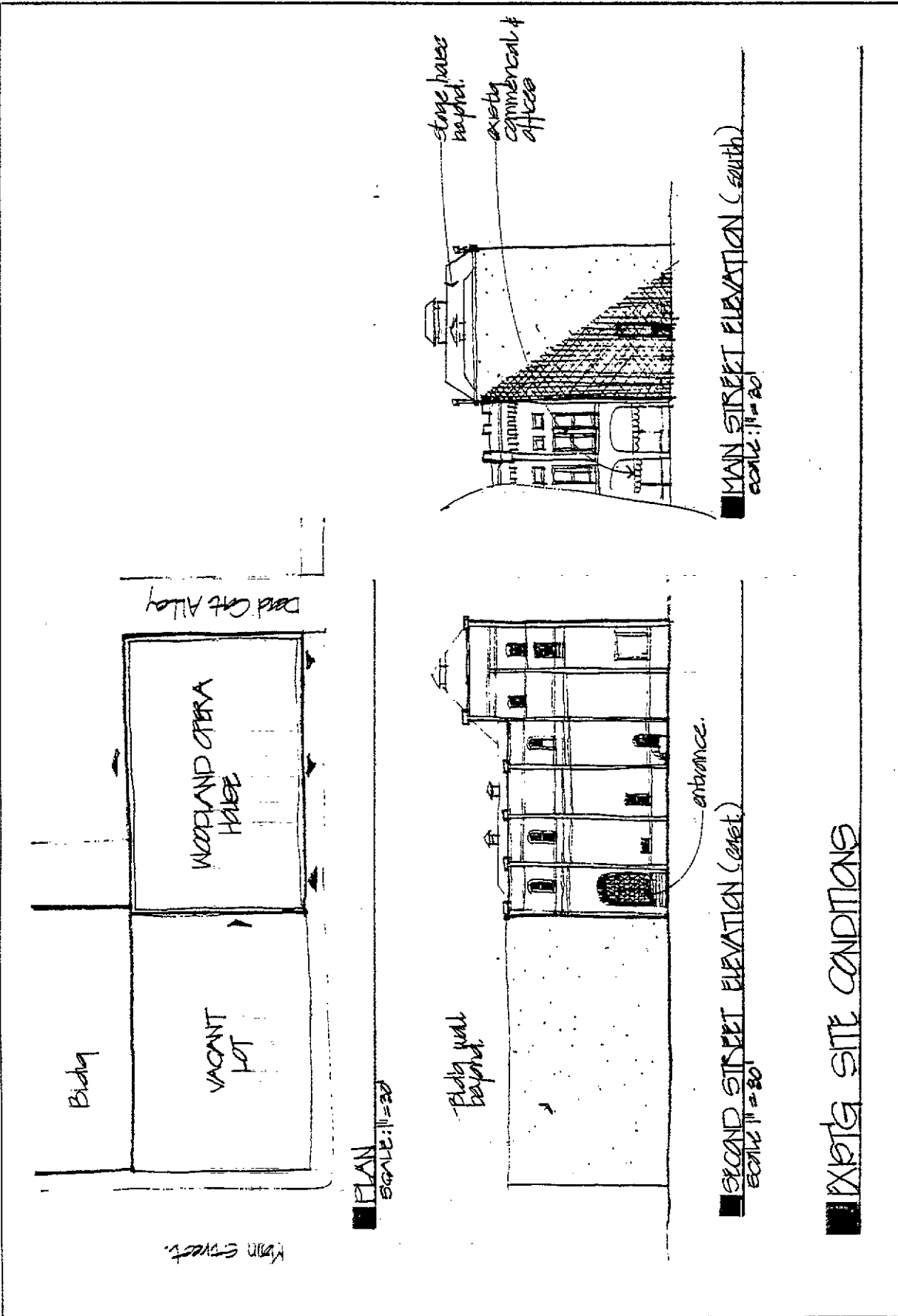
The theater should be an outlet for local talent, a meeting place for civic and similar functions, and possibly a place for touring performing artists, all in keeping with historic uses of the building. It could become an exhibition facility for general public use.

Development Alternatives

Alternative Plans

This plan includes three major alternatives for development of Woodland Opera House State Historic Park: 1) restore the original opera house of 1885; 2) restore the opera house to the 1896 period, and include the Elliott Building; and, 3) restore the opera house to the 1896 period, with an annex and plaza at the corner of Second and Main, or next to the building. These alternatives were developed using the following criteria: 1) the existing research base; 2) proposed uses related to the state historic park; 3) needed facilities; 4) time constraints; 5) the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic preservation projects; and 6) the possible loss of federal funds.

Figure 5
WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
EXISTING CONDITIONS



A discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of each alternative follows.

1885 Plan (Fig. 6)

To reconstruct the first opera house, one must rely solely on photographs of the earlier building. No floor plans are known for the first opera house and the surrounding building, although historical research may reveal them, as it would the building functions. Historical and archeological work would be required.

Federal funds currently allocated for restoration and rehabilitation would not be available if the existing structure were to be demolished, although demolition would not necessarily be required for restoration-reconstruction to 1885 period.

1896 Plan with Elliott Building Reconstruction (Fig. 7)

There are no known floor plans of the Elliott Building, although historical research could discover them. There was no functional relationship of this building with the opera house, since the building was used as a bank and office structure. This was a three-story building with basement.

1896 Plan with Proposed New Annex and Courtyard (Figs. 8-9)

This plan also includes restoration of the opera house; the complete floor plan and original interior appointments are available. The proposed annex would be a support facility that would provide offices, museum space, and storage facilities needed for the opera house to function as a present-day theater. It does not affect the historic nature of the opera house, although it would affect its own site, which contains evidence of historic structures. There is also some local opinion that any additional construction on this site would result in aesthetic detraction. The proposed courtyard would become an integral part of the opera house and annex facility. Small theatrical productions could be held here, and the plaza would provide an assembly area and intermission zone for audiences at the theater (Figs. 8 and 9).

The public has made several suggestions for placement of this annex, which range from next to the opera house to next to Main Street, so a courtyard can be created between the buildings to improve circulation. Fencing has been suggested for security reasons. Several designs were mentioned - one is a replication of arches of the first floor of the razed Elliot Building, but in brick, with wrought iron filling the arched spaces.

This alternative plan provides for all the functional needs of the theater, as well as preserving the historical integrity of the facilities and providing amenities needed for visitors. There would still be historical and archeological research required, due to the department's Resource Management Directives and federal law.

Figure 6
WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
ALTERNATIVE NO. 1.

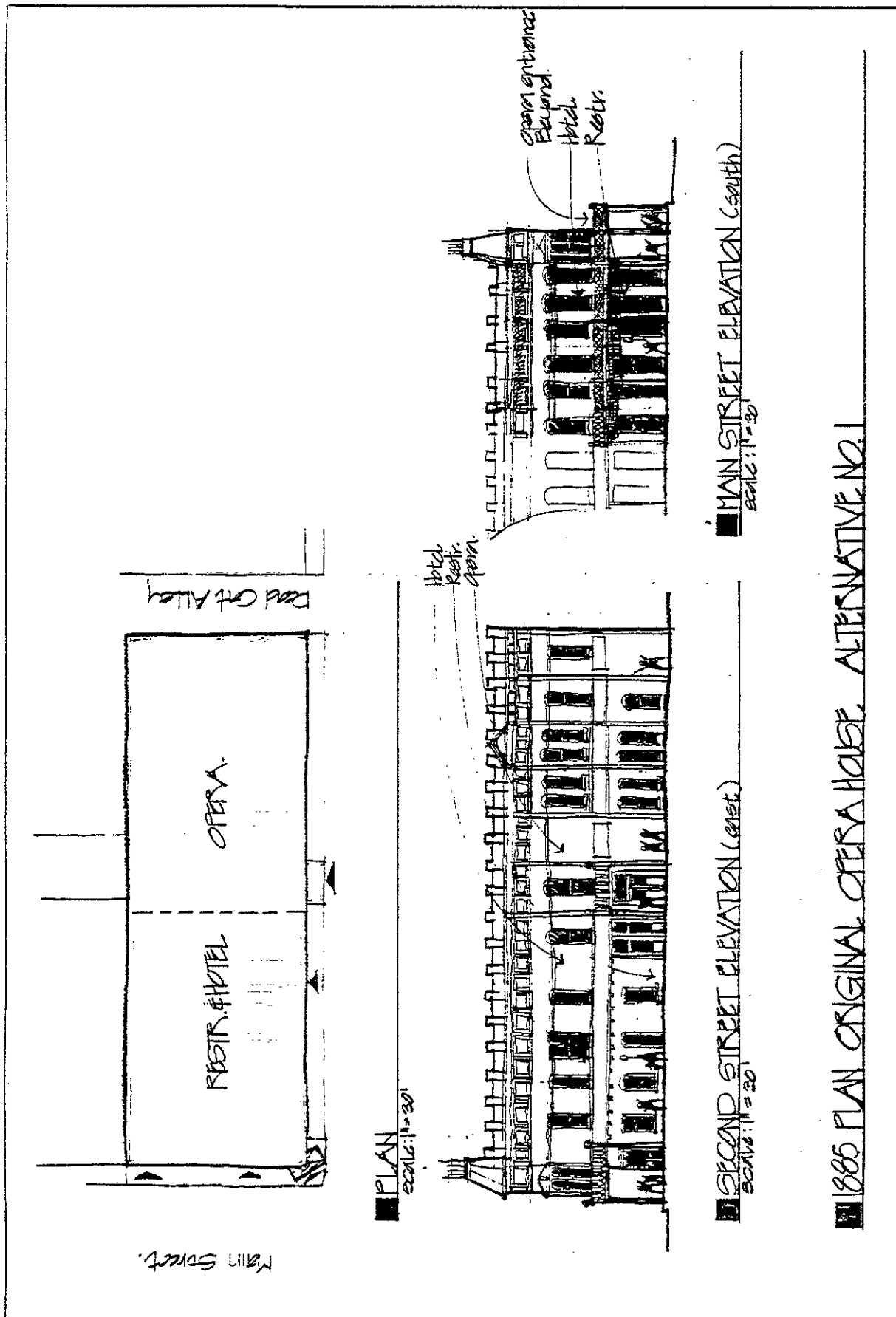
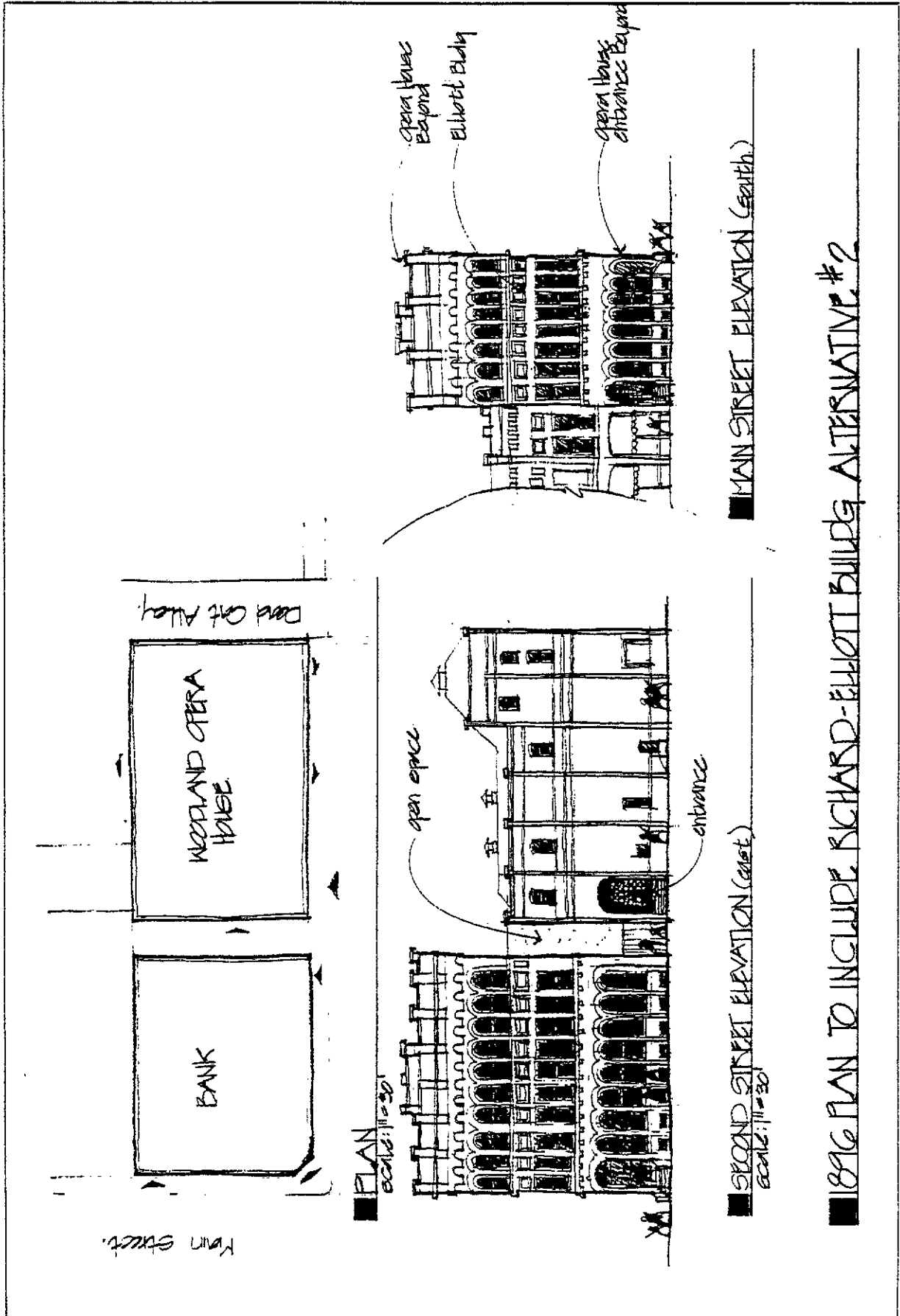
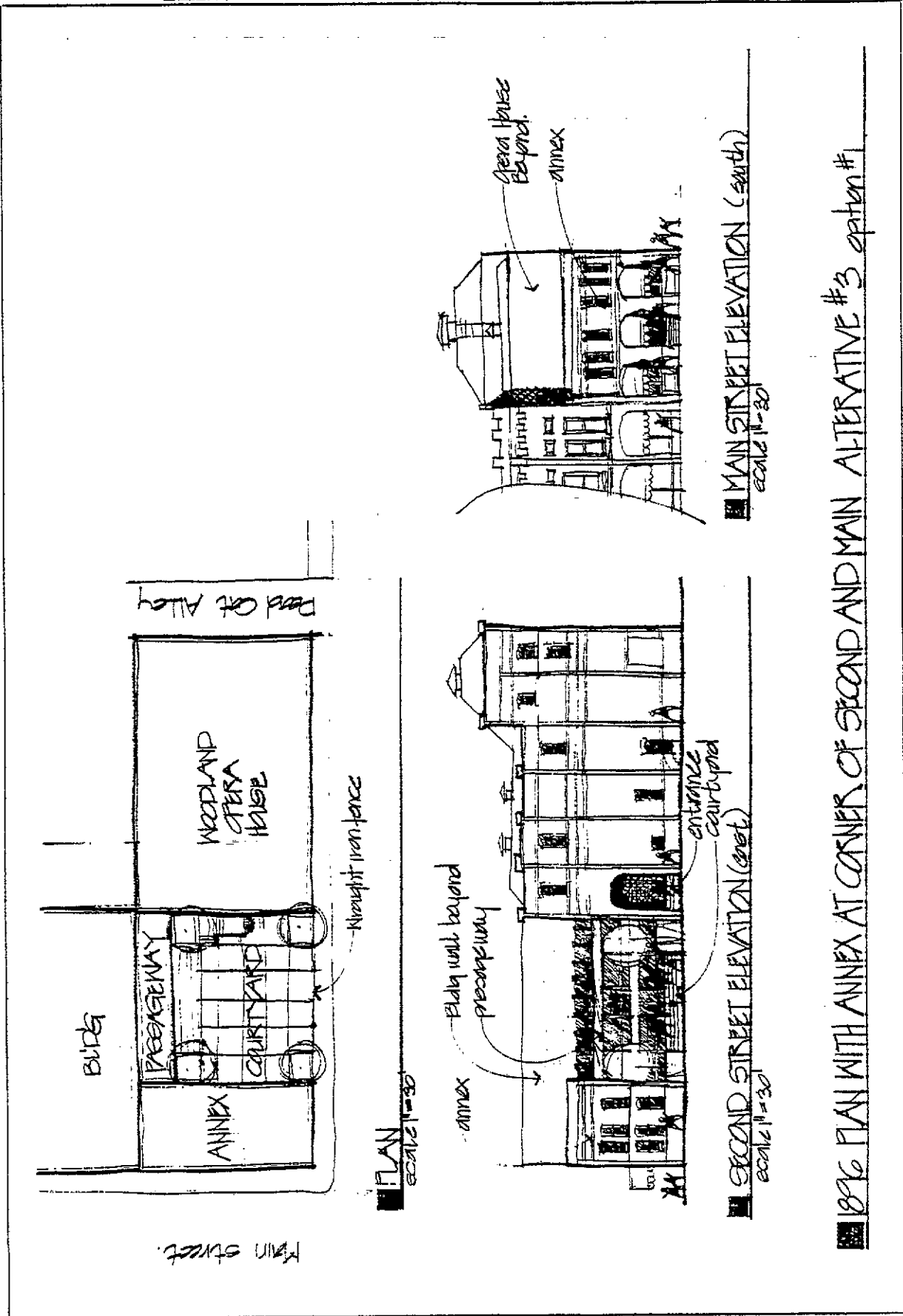


Figure 7
 WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
 ALTERNATIVE NO. 2



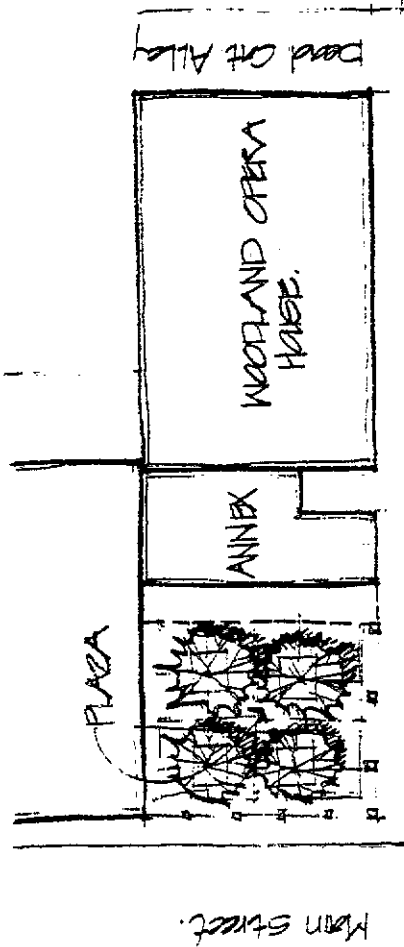
1896 PLAN TO INCLUDE RICHARD-ELLIOTT BUILDING ALTERNATIVE #2

Figure 8
 WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
 ALTERNATIVE NO. 3
 OPTION #1

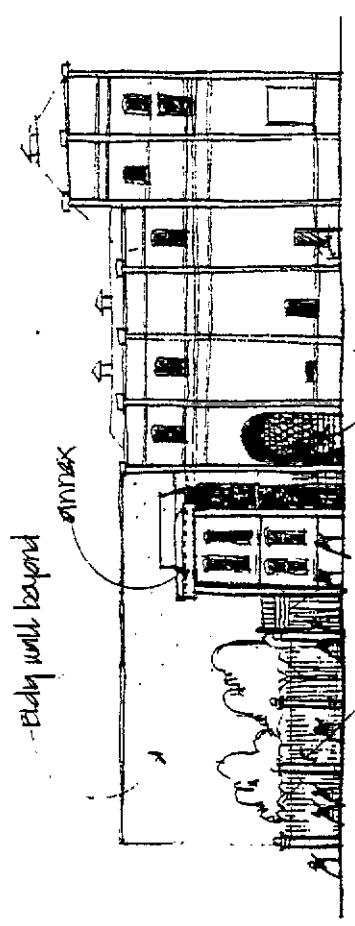


1896 PLAN WITH ANNEX AT CORNER OF SECOND AND MAIN ALTERNATIVE #3 option #1

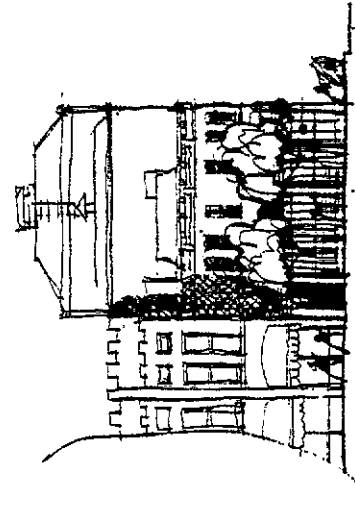
Figure 9
 WOODLAND OPERA HOUSE
 ALTERNATIVE NO. 3
 OPTION #2



PLAN
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



SECOND STREET ELEVATION (east)
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



MAIN STREET ELEVATION (south)

1896 PLAN WITH ANNEX ADJACENT TO OPERA HOUSE ALTERNATIVE #3 OPTION #2

Discussion

Often, restoration and reconstruction work is done by a commercial developer--e.g., the success of nearby Sacramento in its Old Town area; or, farther away, Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. It is possible that the Woodland Opera House could be restored as part of a total commercial development, and that the opera house, whether run by the developer or as a sublease to a non-profit organization, would act as an attraction that could assist the success of businesses in the reconstructed building to the south. Similar interpretive concessions have been employed successfully in historic parks like Columbia, Old Town San Diego, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles. With the projected growth of Woodland, such a development concession may be very practical, both to a concessionaire and the department (which could save more than \$2 million through a concession contract).

Whichever plan is implemented, it is the department's intent to set up a concession agreement for operation of this historic park. If alternative 1 or 2 is implemented, the concessionaire will both reconstruct/restore the facilities and operate the unit. If the third plan is implemented, the concessionaire will only operate the unit, while the department will restore the building and construct the required facilities.

Furthermore, preservation and restoration of the opera house will occur first, while reconstruction of historic buildings or the construction of the annex and courtyard will follow as a second phase.

Recommendations

This General Plan recommends that such a concession arrangement, for the first or second alternative, be investigated; but it further recommends, due to the preservation needs, that this investigation be completed and acted on by no more than six months from the date of commission approval of the plan. If a concession contract for the first or second alternative is impractical within this time, it is recommended that the third alternative, using the annex and courtyard, be followed, and an operations concession contract be let. If the third plan is followed, extensive historical and archeological work will be required to mitigate the impacts of the construction.

Because the area is a unit of the State Park System, and because the annex and plaza development would disturb the underground cultural resources of the unit (which includes a National Register site), the following resource management directives would apply to this third plan (as they would to the other plans):

Resource Management Directive 58--Cultural resources...shall be protected against damaging or degrading influences, including deterioration or adverse modification...evidence...shall be investigated by qualified personnel...before any restoration, reconstruction, or development is begun....

Resource Management Directive 59--No underground work...may be undertaken ...until clearance is given by a department archeologist...

Resource Management Directive 71--Professional standards...involving archeological and historical values...shall be the same as those applied by the State Historic Preservation Officer...to...other...agencies.

OPERATIONS ELEMENT

This unit will be operated by a concessionaire, in accordance with the department's Resource Management Directives and federal guidelines for National Register sites.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ELEMENT

Explanatory Note

In accordance with SB1892, Chapter 615, this General Plan (including the Environmental Impact Element) is a report on the project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act. The General Plan lists the management policies and development plans proposed for Woodland Opera House State Historic Park. The Environmental Impact Element (Draft Environmental Impact Report) analyzes the potential environmental impact of these policies and plans.

The purpose of this element is to assess and report the impacts of the proposed development and management plans on the environment. Because the elements of this General Plan are broad in nature, the Draft EIE is a broad general assessment. Should specific plans be budgeted and proposed for implementation, more detailed environmental assessments will be prepared, and documentation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act will be presented. The degree of detail in this Draft Environmental Impact Element corresponds to the degree of detail in the development plan (California Administrative Code, Section 15147).

The Draft Environmental Impact Element has been prepared according to the amended mandates of the California Environmental Quality Act, which call for an objective description of the proposed project and its environmental consequences.

Pursuant to the Public Resources Code, Section 5002.2.a., and the California Administrative Code, Section 15147, and to avoid needless repetition, this Environmental Impact Element incorporates by reference all information contained in the preceding elements of this plan. Additionally, published documents such as county general plans and comprehensive city plans are incorporated by reference in this report.

An inventory of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources has been made for this State Park System unit. This Inventory of Features was critically analyzed in terms of the purpose, philosophy, and objectives of the unit. Specific policies for management of the unit's resources were then formulated into the Resource Element. The Inventory of Features is on file at the Resource Preservation and Interpretation Division, Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.

State Park System planners, historians, and archeologists have worked within the framework of the Resource Element, developing appropriate land and facility uses. The character of the development proposed for this unit reflects the policies set forth in the Resource Element. User facilities were selected that will promote public use and encourage enjoyment of the unit, without impairing cultural values.

Throughout the planning process, a continuing analysis of possible impacts was made. These suggested the alternative plans. The alternative plans were designed into the General Plan to provide use of the Opera House that will enhance and preserve this valuable state resource.

Project Description

The project description and location are contained in the Introduction (page 1) and in the Land Use and Facilities Element (page 13). Please refer to the "Proposed Land Use" and "Proposed Development" sections of the Land Use and Facilities Element for the description of the department's preferred plan, and suggested alternatives.

Description of the Environmental Setting

Geology

Please refer to the Resource Element (page 9) for the explanation of geology and seismic conditions.

Soils

There are 15 agricultural soil types in the Woodland area. These soils generally have a moderate to high shrink/swell potential. Most of these soils have been classified as Class I and II (prime) agricultural soils.

The soil type in the vicinity of the Woodland Opera House is the Yolo soil type. Yolo soils typically have a moderate shrink/swell potential and a moderate to very moderate stability record.

Climate

Please refer to the Resource Element (page 11) for the explanation of climate.

Hydrology and Drainage

The area west of Route 113, including the vicinity of the Woodland Opera House, is served by a piped drainage system. The water from this piped system drains through a gravity flow system into Willow Slough and Cache Creek, south of Woodland.

The area east of Route 113 is served by an open ditch drainage system. Storm runoff flows in open ditches to the corner of River Road and Road 103. Runoff is then pumped into a settling basin, and eventually into the Yolo Bypass.

The existing storm sewer systems, both piped and open, are reaching capacity, and are in need of expansion.

Vegetation

Please refer to the Resources Element (page 10) for the explanation of vegetation.

Air Quality

Woodland is located in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. The Yolo-Solano Air Pollution Control District, a sub-unit within the Basin, operates an air quality monitoring site in Woodland. The pollutants measured at this site are ozone and carbon monoxide levels, and total suspended particulates. (Hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides combine in a photochemical process forming smog; photochemical oxidants smog contains up to 90 percent ozone, an allotrope of oxygen.)

The most severe air quality problem in Woodland is an elevated photochemical oxidant level. Photochemical oxidants are most prevalent in late summer and fall when warm temperatures, long hours of sunlight, and light winds occur. The Yolo-Solano Air Pollution Control District has been classified as a non-attainment area for ozone. The level of ozone concentration exceeded the federal standard (1.12 ppm) one day in 1979, to date (12-01-79). This federal standard was not applicable during 1977 and 1978. The level of ozone concentration exceeded the state standard (0.10 ppm) 16 days in 1979, 25 days in 1978, and 4 days in 1977.

The district is also classified as violating the federal Secondary Standard for total suspended particulates (150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ -24 hour sample) and the annual geometric mean (60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), as well as the state standard (100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ - 24 hour sample).

Inversions, which are present throughout the year, increase Woodland's pollution problems. An inversion is an extremely stable atmosphere, in which temperature increases with height. Pollutants are suspended; trapped nearer to the ground, and not diluted within the ambience.

Currently, levels of carbon monoxide have never exceeded Federal or State ambient air quality standards. Carbon monoxide in the ambience is almost exclusively related to vehicular exhaust.

Traffic volume projections for Woodland indicate a dramatic increase in traffic. Since carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and hydrocarbon concentrations are proportionate to vehicular exhaust and relative to traffic volumes, an increase of these pollution levels can be expected. Although it is not known whether future levels of auto-related pollutants will exceed federal and/or state standards, the Woodland General Plan states that future exceeding of these standards is unlikely because of the continued reduction in per mile emissions resulting from improved emission control in vehicles.

Noise

Ambient noise levels in the Woodland area is caused by vehicles, railroads, and construction activities, and recreational and industrial facilities. Vehicular traffic is the major intrusive noise in Woodland.

Ambient noise levels in the Woodland area range from 45 to 68 dB(A) during the daytime. Nighttime ambient noise levels range from 45 to 50 dB(A). The lower levels were recorded in residential areas, and in the outlying areas of the community. The higher levels were recorded in commercial areas, and along the major streets and highways.

Noise near railways and major trafficways exceeds health and welfare criteria for noise exposures in relation to residential use. However, Woodland is not considered by the City of Woodland Planning Department to have a major noise pollution problem, because the railroad noise is greatest in the industrial areas, and the vehicular noise is greatest in the commercial areas.

Calculations for the Day-Night Average Sound Levels (Ldn), respective of traffic counts and single-event noise levels, indicate that the intersection of Second Street between Court and Main has an Ldn of approximately 60 dB(A). This level is not considered by the City of Woodland Planning Department to have detrimental effects on hearing.

Future noise levels for Woodland are difficult to predict. By doubling the traffic volumes, the Ldn would increase by three dB(A). The intersection of Second Street between Court and Main would then have an Ldn of about 60 to 65 dB(A).

Land Use

The Woodland Opera House is located within one block of Main Street, in the downtown area of Woodland. As part of the downtown commercial area, the Opera House is zoned General Commercial.

Human Community Factors

The 1975 Special Census indicated that Woodland is a community of 25,389 persons. The average family size in Woodland is 2.84 persons per housing unit. The proportion of the population under 18 years has decreased, and the proportion of the population 18 to 65 years has increased. The median age has dropped slightly, from 28.2 to 28.0 years of age. This may indicate an increased demand for housing and public services for young singles and married couples.

The median family income in 1970 was \$9,635. The median family income in 1975 showed an increase of about 20 percent, or about \$2,000.

The employment statistics indicate that about 23 percent of the population are not in the labor force. This figure included unemployed, retired, and disabled persons.

The percent of principal wage earners in the various occupations in Woodland are as follows: professional - 13 percent; management - 13 percent; clerical - 6 percent; sales - 4 percent; craftsmen - 13 percent; operatives - 11 percent; services - 10 percent; laborers - 7 percent; unemployed - 23 percent.

The highest level of education completed by the head of the household is as follows: no response - 10.11 percent; less than 8th grade - 7.22 percent; 8th grade or more - 16.69 percent; high school diploma - 29.85 percent; high school and vocational training - 5.68 percent; some college without a degree - 11.09 percent; junior college degree - 3.04 percent; three years of college without a degree - 2.71 percent; college or university degree - 7.76 percent; graduate work, master's degree, or doctorate - 5.85 percent. This may indicate an increased demand for public services and activities that cater to higher-than-average educated people.

The previous information is the data base from which the following demographic trends are derived.

The average population increase is about 2.06 percent each year, for a 25 year period. Initially, the population is projected to increase at a rate of 2.6 percent, slowing to a rate of 1.5 percent toward the end of the century.

This indicates a trend toward smaller families and declining household size. More young adults are living alone or as couples, families are having fewer children, older adults are living in their own units separately from their children, and people are living longer. The State Department of Finance suggests that changing lifestyles, economic factors, and the availability of birth control have affected this trend.

Public Services

Lifestyles and land use patterns of Woodland have developed around motor vehicles. These vehicles are Woodland's primary mode of transportation.

Circulation in the downtown area is of particular concern to Woodland city planners. The streets have remained basically unchanged, while the city continues to grow. Congestion is becoming a more frequent occurrence. The City of Woodland recognizes the need to plan ahead to alleviate congestion before it becomes a serious problem.

It is recommended in the Woodland General Plan that an in-depth study be made of the downtown circulation system: its users; their origin and destination; the adequacy of parking facilities; existing and projected traffic volumes; street capacities; and expansion possibilities. The circulation system should complement and enhance the character of the downtown area, as defined in the city's Land Use Element.

The role of public transit in Woodland is emerging. This is evidenced by the recent initiation of regional transit service to Sacramento and Davis, the continuation of the county mini-trans systems, and the increasing acceptance and use of these systems.

Bicycle use is becoming more popular in Woodland for commuter and recreational uses. Bicycles are a practical alternate mode for in-town transportation, especially because of the flat topography and mild climate of Woodland.

Woodland's circulation system should continue to provide for pedestrian traffic. Primary concerns are pedestrian safety, ease of movement and access, physical comfort, adequate handicapped facilities, and pleasant visual effects. An area of special emphasis for pedestrian traffic is the downtown/commercial area. The walking tour of historic Woodland should be maintained, and pedestrian traffic should be encouraged.

Woodland's major water source, for both urban and agricultural use, is groundwater. Cache Creek is the only major natural surface water source. Cache Creek flows from Clear Lake (at the Indian Valley Reservoir) east to the Cache Creek Settling Basin and the Yolo Bypass, before reaching the Sacramento River. Water flow is usually limited to winter and spring months. The creek is crossed by numerous irrigation canals and ditches, which provide water to agricultural lands. The creek also supplies surface water for Woodland's sewage pond.

Woodland's water service is dependent on a continued supply of groundwater, and an adequate well and transmission system. The current system is designed for expansion to meet the community's increasing water demand.

As long as groundwater aquifers persist, the sewage transmission system presents the greatest service limitation to growth in Woodland. The system has an overall capacity to serve a population of about 58,000 people, and the ponding system east of Woodland has adequate land area to expand far beyond the system. Therefore, any future growth proposals must recognize the capacities of the sewage transmission system.

The current situation and projected demographic trends indicate an increase in community development. The feasibility and advantages of restoring the Woodland Opera House are enhanced, as population increases and community development expand. As downtown Woodland expands commercially, the potential for successful operation of the Opera House is increased.

Local dramatic groups have already expressed an interest in using the Opera House for their productions.

Significant Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project

There are no significant adverse environmental effects that could occur if the preferred plan or its alternatives are implemented. The following discussion indicates the reasons that various, possibly significant effects of the plan were determined not to be significant, and are therefore not mentioned in detail.

This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Sections 15101, 15102, and 15103 of the California Administrative Code.

Increased use of the Opera House will cause an increase of traffic to the project site area. Circulation and congestion problems, such as vehicle lines into and out of parking facilities and lines at the arterial and signaled stops, will occur just before and after performances in the immediate vicinity of the Opera House. However, since most Opera House events are scheduled for evening and weekends, the city's circulation, congestion, and parking problems (which occur on weekdays during the noon hour and at 5:00 p.m.) will not be increased.

Adequate parking is available for events that do not occur during normal weekday congestion periods.

Any increase in traffic causes an increase of vehicular emissions, which increase the amounts of hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide released into the air. There will be no measurable effects on air quality as a result of the additional vehicular exhaust emissions.

Reconstruction and construction activities will cause temporary congestion and circulation problems of a non-significant nature. These activities will not cause a significant increase in air pollution, consumption of fuels, erosion of the landscape/topography, loss of vegetation, or alteration of the soil profile.

Any recreational facility is a periodic noise source. Public address systems, spectator applause, and vehicle noise intrude on background noise for the duration of a given event. Expanded use of the Opera House will increase the noise level in the immediate area. While such events may be annoying to the few nearby residents, the noise level and its duration is not a significant impact, and does not have detrimental health and hearing effects.

Similarly, reconstruction and construction activities will not have detrimental impacts.

Since the Woodland Opera House is already serviced by piped drainage, sewage, and water systems, implementation of this plan will not create any special demands on the city's public services. Example: restoration of the Opera House will not increase the average wastewater flow of Woodland.

This plan, including the annex building alternative, will not increase the area of impervious surface. Consequently, water runoff will not tax the limited capacity of the drainage system.

No animal or plant will be significantly affected by restoration of the Opera House.

The City of Woodland General Plan proposes to use the Opera House in a similar capacity as exists today. To date, no contradictory land use plans for the Opera House or site exist. No land use conflicts exist between the city, the county, or the state.

Implementation of this plan will have a significant beneficial effect on cultural resources and community development. The restored Opera House will provide a cultural center for the community, and will preserve an historically significant site. Restoration and use of the Opera House will provide downtown Woodland with more exposure, and will probably increase commercial activity.

Significant Environmental Effects Which Cannot
Be Avoided if the Proposal is Implemented

There are no significant, unavoidable environmental effects should this plan be implemented.

Mitigation Measures Proposed to Eliminate
or Minimize the Significant Effects

There are no significant environmental effects that warrant minimizing and mitigating.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The "no project" alternative would continue the level of operation and maintenance of the Opera House as it now exists. This alternative will not provide for preservation of this historical site.

Three alternative development options are discussed in the Land Use and Facilities Element, on page 9.

The Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's
Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of
Long-term Productivity

The relationship between the local short-term uses of the Opera House and its proposed long-term productivity is complementary. The productive long-term use proposed in this General Plan is the same as the present use. Restoration provides for the long-term productivity of the Opera House by enhancing its short-term use.

Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which
Would be Involved in the Proposed Action
Should it be Implemented

There are no significant irreversible environmental changes that would occur if the preferred plan or its alternatives are implemented. If future demands or environmental priorities change, and this site is deemed more suitable for some other use, the site and its resources will not have been significantly altered by implementing the general plan.

Growth-inducing Impacts of the Proposed Project

Implementation of the plan will not cause any growth-inducing impacts.

Organizations and Persons Consulted

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Development Division
Resource Preservation and Interpretation Division
Office of Historic Preservation

California Air Resources Board

City of Woodland
Planning Department

Yolo-Solano Air Pollution Control District

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