



This dilapidated balcony . . .

**A Look At Sunset Heights
PAST GRANDEUR WON'T LAST**

By STEVE PETERS

5/14/73

Sunset Heights once was one of El Paso's finest residential areas. Now it is a hodge-podge of fine old homes, dilapidated apartments and ultra-modern high-rises. The following is the second in a five-part series examining the past, present and prospects for the future of Sunset Heights.

"The past . . . is rapidly disappearing . . . " noted a Community Renewal Program re-

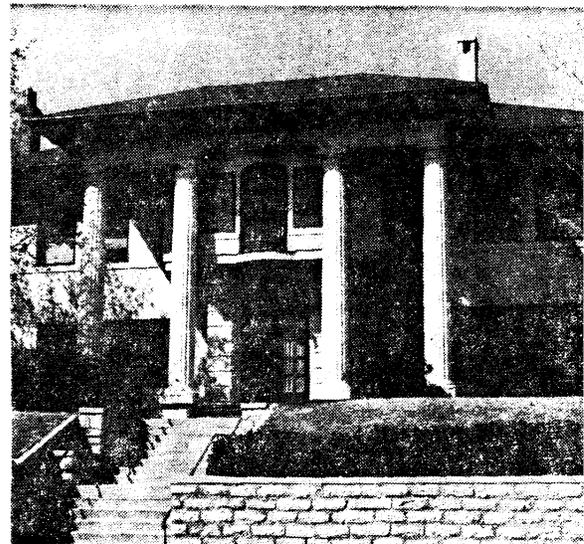
port in 1971. In some cases, the past has already disappeared.

"At the turn of the century Sunset Heights was one of the finest residential neighborhoods in the community. Its elevation offered commanding views of the central City, the Franklin Mountains and Old Mexico.

"Until the past few years," the report continues, "Sunset Heights has remained an attractive residential area, and many handsome or elegant homes are still occupied by the early families."

Victoriano Huerta, the Mexican dictator who assassinated Francisco Madero, died in what was Once a house at 415 W. Yandell. Today, the site is occupied by a high density apartment building. Across the street, a burnt-out neon sign reads "furnished apartments."

The high-density structure is sandwiched on one side by a vacant lot cleared of the rubble of another old building and on the other by another ultramodern apartment complex.



. . . is but a few blocks from the Perrenot mansion

But the apartments across the street are not ultramodern. They are dirty, dim, old, crowded and roach-infested. The lawns are mostly plots of weeds stretching house after house, block after block, punctuated sometimes by a well-cared for yard usually attached to one of the few remaining emblems of the neighborhood's heyday that have neither been parceled into awkwardly divided boarding houses or studio apartments, neglected to the point of decrepitation nor merely left like beer cans to be targets for vandals.

The central section, along W. Yandell, is probably the best-cared-for in the neighborhood. Many of the homes along the boulevard have been fondly curated and their grandeur maintained—here the dilapidated remnant of a fine old house is less common. These were built when the concepts of “disposable production” and “planned obsolescence” were not widely practiced. But they serve as facade. Beneath the skin are tumors, and even along W. Yandell the infection has begun to surface.

Mrs. Jane Burges Perrenot lives at 603 W. Yandell, in the house built by her father, Maj. Richard F. Burges in 1912. Built in “The Age of American Innocence” around Maj. Burges' large library the house has a ceiling eight feet thick separating the first floor from the second.

Though the home has been cared for immaculately, Mrs. Perrenot is skeptical it will survive her by long. The deterioration of the neighborhood, the mercurial price tags on the near-Downtown property and the cost of maintenance seem to confirm her feeling. A water pipe in the ceiling broke and the plumber spent four and a half 8-hour days repairing it. Most of the time was spent drilling through the concrete.

“More than half the area is used for streets and alleys,” says the report. “This is an unusually high portion which extends normal street and alley development averages. This affords the advantages of added convenience, safety, and open space for the average subdivision.”

Up the street from the Perrenot home a once-elegant mansion sits like a deserted fort behind rattling steel gates, windows gouged and courtyards littered. On the weather-beaten wall are faded letters, and those still legible say “State School of Beauty,” but letters before and after it are faded and the inscription is incomplete.

In 1915, it was the home of former Mayor Charles Davis. Today, the house is like a junked car that has been scrapped even by the junk pile.

Across the street, at the intersection of three streets and five corners, a house where Pancho Villa reportedly conferred with Gen. Hugh Scott has a bent up “furnished apartment” sign which seems to mimic the condition of the building itself. Across the street again is a dull brick apartment building and next to that another large old house with a history.

A few years ago it housed a local rock group who unleashed their amplifiers nightly to the chagrin, delight or apathy of their various neighbors. Today it is a Christian study center.

Parts of Sunset Heights are a graveyard for old mansions .

Tuesday: Fallen remnant~ of grand age.

* * *

TECHNOLOGY LOST ON SUNSET HEIGHTS'

By STEVE PETERS

5/16/73

Technology is a wonderful thing. It makes progress possible, simplifies human life and causes the world to go around. But technology can be misused, as in the case of Sunset Heights. The following is the fourth of five stories examining the past, present and future of the once-affluent residential area.

"The present state of much of Sunset Heights reflects misuse and misunderstanding of technology," says Dr. Ed Leonard, chairman of the University of Texas at El Paso political science department who is co-teaching a course this semester on "Technology and Society."

He believes the neighborhood is "the Only area of any size in El Paso with a real special character of its own. I think its amazing that many El Pasoans are unaware of the architectural uniqueness of the area."

Leonard has been in El Paso about eight years, and when he first moved here he lived in Sunset Heights. Since then, he says, he has kept up "very closely" with the district's progress.

"The area has a special charm and importance in that it is not typically Southwestern. Portions look almost as though they were lifted from one of the more distinctive Eastern cities. Yet the Southwestern vegetation and scenery give it a special character.

"I think the whole area was an attempt by early residents to get the best of Eastern culture and Southwestern leisure."

Katherine Blackson: founder, director and president of Metropolitan Historic Landsites of El Paso, thinks Sunset Heights could potentially do for El Paso what the French Quarter has done for New Orleans, regarding tourist trade.

William H. Pearson of the City Planning Department said, "Many other cities have capitalized on their historical assets, but we haven't." He thought it would require money and political pressure to retain the area as an historical place.

Malcolm McGregor, who lives in one of neighborhood's old homes, said he took care of his property and hoped the neighbors did the same.

Dr. Ray Guard, dean of the University of Texas at El Paso School of Engineering lives in Sunset Heights and thinks some of the problem could be solved through tax adjustment for deterioration which would allow maintenance and upkeep without raising taxes and through enforcement of extended family zoning regulations.

Five students who live on the second floor of a dilapidated house on the fringes of Sunset Heights are afraid if the building is restored the rent will increase and they will have to move out.

Mrs. Jane Burges Perrenot, a long-time Sunset Heights resident, thinks the Sunset Heights of the future will probably be covered with high-rise apartments.

Leonard criticized "a willingness to let homes and areas which are technologically superior to almost anything being built today just deteriorate. In the name of progress we are going backward.

"Such neighborhoods tend to become semi-slums. Portions of Sunset Heights are close to that."

"At the same time," he continued, "Many of those who have contributed to its restoration also show a sort of blindness that might tend to contribute to the ultimate demise of the area."

If the present residents try to prevent any change whatever, they will undoubtedly fail and will open the way to hodge-podge development. On the other hand, intelligent planning for the construction of new structures and at the same time the preservation of the finer old places, and equally important the preservation of the trees and the hill, could allow the area to become like some areas of northern San Francisco."

He thinks what is happening in Sunset Heights symptomatic of a larger ailment, one affecting our entire culture. "We are using up natural resources by treating the homes as though they were garbage."

He said if El Pasoans would walk around the district and then go walk around their own neighborhoods, he thought those with the most esthetic sensibility would see that "new isn't always best. But they'll also see how much damage we have done to the old."

"These houses were built to last. They weren't going to be recycled or disposed of. We're doing a disservice to our heritage if we treat this fine old neighborhood as though it were a disposable diaper,"

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SUNSET HEIGHTS CAUGHT UP IN A NEW POPULATION PHILOSOPHY

By STEVE PETERS9

5/17/73

Once "the" residential area of El Paso, Sunset Heights now faces the push of progress. Possibilities of the future are discussed in this, the fifth and final article in a series on El Paso past-the showcase of the City.

Architecture is an art, and art is a receptacle for symbols. What remains of nation are its symbols—they are its only legacy. The deterioration of Sunset Heights may be compared to the fate of one culture at the hands of those that follow it.

The homes in the neighborhood were built under the philosophy that a man's home is his castle and space is a prerequisite of privacy. But a new architectural philosophy accommodating high density population within a single structure seems to be on the rise.

If so, neighborhoods will no longer be built even vaguely resembling Sunset Heights. The neighborhood is an antique in a time when the concept of neighborhoods seems destined to become antique. In deciding the fate of Sunset Heights, these things should be considered.

Basically, the choices available are these:

—Restoration. This could be done through tax incentives, zoning and housing code regulations, or public domain. In the case of public domain, the neighborhood would have to be turned into a park, a library, or a museum. In the case of zoning, a number of high-density buildings would be turned into lower-density apartments; strict housing code regulations would result in some

homeowners and subsistence level landlords being forced to evacuate. Through tax incentives, the City would lose revenue but it is possible that having a scenic “historical area” in relative proximity to the Civic Center would complement El Paso’s faintly budding tourist trade.

—Continued deterioration. Neglected, Sunset Heights may possibly reach a point in its decline where it becomes expedient to property owners to provide a modicum of repair, to avoid condemnation under existing standards. Or the houses that are salvageable may be purchased by connoisseurs of the past and nurtured, reclaimed, restored like antique cars whose novelty supercedes their practical value. Probably, parts of the neighborhood would continue to deteriorate while others were immaculately restored, until the area became a catalog of extremes of affluence and poverty. In fact, much of its present charm is owed to the diversity of lifestyles among denizens. But possibly the area is like a vat of grapes which, allowed to ferment becomes wine, but unless precautions are taken becomes vinegar.

—Condemnation. The area could be bulldozed and turned into a conglomeration of ultra-modern high rise apartments. These could be clean, orderly, useful. Located conveniently to Downtown, the freeway, the University of Texas at El Paso, and boasting a close view of the Juarez periphery, they would fill with young affluents and those who prefer to lease than to own, and to avoid problems of commuting. An added advantage would be that the high rises that would succeed the present residences would probably not present the problems in 50 years presented today by the homes built 50 years ago. They would probably not survive long enough to become historic.

We enter an era of disposable culture. The plastic cup is our sought-after grail. And the cup will be cast onto the center lane of North Mesa to record in tread marks the passage of numerous vehicles before it is collected, recycled, and presented to perhaps the same user. It will be full of artificial root beer and bear a different insignia.

Many of these homes were built aspiring to be “great buildings.” In 1915, most great buildings had stood for centuries. The homes were built to last.

“In the name of progress we are going backward,” said Dr. Ed Leonard of the University of Texas at El Paso political science department regarding Sunset Heights. If the neighborhood were razed and rebuilt according to contemporary theories this would not be the case. The way of the future seems to bear in mind one vital tenet of ecology—minimize the impact of man on nature by building structures that will not outlive the builder.

But in so doing, we abolish art. for art is the cultural message of man. Scientists have concluded that the behavior patterns of rats are determined less by genetic code than by an overt message passed from one generation to another, more or less “by word of mouth.” A colony of rats deprived of its culture for a few generations, became extinct. Destroy Sunset Heights, and we amputate a portion of our cultural heritage.

If the neighborhood is ever torn down there will be no more legends. The legend of the turtle house, for all its preposterousness protects Sunset forever from the sheer horror and impersonal ugliness prevalent in some big-city ghettos, and protects it from charmless monotony.

When legends die, a civilization passes.

* * *



—Times photos by Joe Cavaretta

This Dutch Colonial house at 520 Prospect, owned by John Karr, represents only one of the many architectural styles that can be seen in the Sunset Heights area.

SUNSET HEIGHTS
History In Adobe And Brick
By Doug DesGeorges
Times staff writer
EPT 3/18/64

A historic district designation loosens state and federal purse strings, spilling low-interest loans and tax credits onto a neighborhood.

And, said Martin Rice, the designation is appropriate to the Sunset Heights area because of the diverse architecture found there.

Barring unexpected opposition, Sunset Heights, one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, will become a historic district soon.

El Paso's Historic Landmark Commission has been studying whether the area, lying roughly between the University of Texas at El Paso and Downtown, should get the designation, which also would put controls on renovations and demolitions in the area.

"I think it's one of the outstanding historic districts," Rice, the city's director of historic preservation, said. "It's full of 17 different architectural styles."

Rice is enthused over preserving not only those styles, but others throughout the city. Sunset Heights is one of seven districts being looked at with an eye toward historic preservation. Two already have been designated historic and Sunset Heights takes another step in that direction Tuesday, when the Historic Landmark Commission will have a public hearing on the proposal.



A view across Sunset Heights rooftops shows Mexico in the background. Sunset Heights is up for historical designation.

Sunset Heights roughly is bordered on the south and west by Interstate 10, on the north by Helsing Street and by North El Paso Street on the east. Lying within that area is what Rice called "an elegant residential neighborhood."

And a historic one as well.

In 1915, Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa met with Gen. Hugh Scott at 323 Rio Grande to discuss stopping Mexico's civil

war along the border. About one year later, Villa attacked Columbus, N.M.

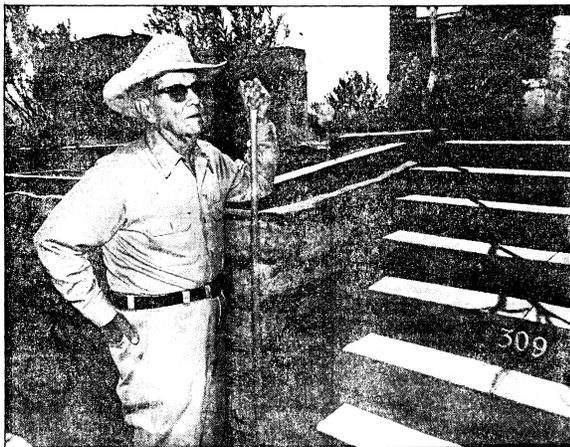
Famed architect Henry Trost designed many of the houses in the area and built his own house there. The area was developed by J. Fisher Satterthwaite, who offered his customers what was then a spectacular view of El Paso and Mexico. Sunset Heights also had water and gas lines by 1884, three years after Satterthwaite bought the land.

"I think (Sunset Heights) is one of the outstanding historic districts. It's full of 17 different architectural styles."

—Martin Rice

Although Rice thinks the Historic Landmark Commission is solidly in favor of naming Sunset Heights a historic district, that is only the first step toward a designation. After Landmark Commission approval, the proposal goes to the City Plan Commission and finally to City Council. Each step is accompanied by public hearings.

But Rice said residents so far have shown little opposition to the plan during hearings. Rice has about 200 letters supporting the plan.



Frank G. Alderete Jr. leans on a rake in front of his home at 309 Lawton .

He doesn't think that's unusual. Homeowners in a historic district, whose houses are on the state's historic register, are eligible for low-interest loans. Those loans have interest rates ranging from nothing to 8 percent, depending on the economic situation of the owner and whether the house is an investment property or a residence. Landlords, Rice said, usually pay the 8 percent rate. The loans are repaid over a 10-year period.

Rice is hoping to raise the interest rate ceiling to 9 percent, but have the loans repaid over a 15-year period.

The federal government also allows those renovating historic houses to claim one-fourth the cost of renovating in tax credits. That money is subtracted from the amount of tax owed and is not a deduction.

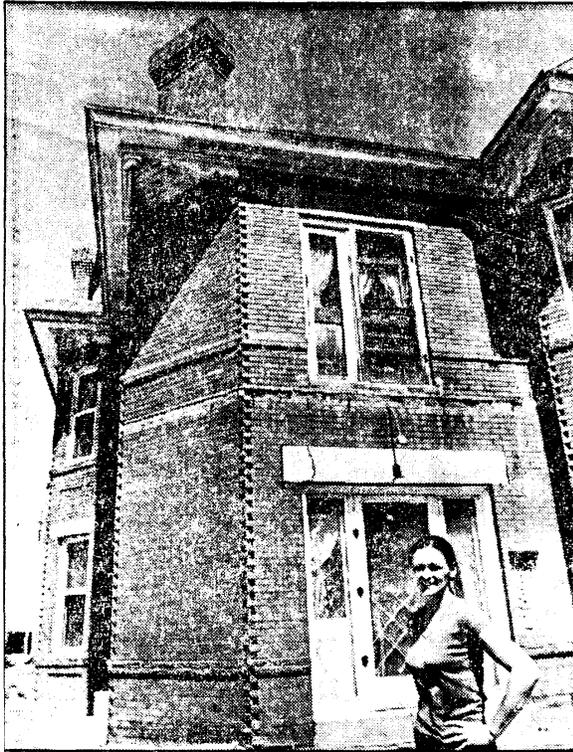


This house at 329 Rio Grande is an example of Mission Revival architecture.

"It's money in the pocket," Rice said.

Also, Rice said, the government allows the owner to depreciate all but 12½ percent of the cost of renovation over a 15-year period. At the end of that time, an owner who spent \$1,000 renovating the house would recoup all but \$125. Sunset Heights property owners can comment at the public hearing Tuesday,

which starts at 3 p.m. in City Council Chambers in City Hall.



Pam Aguirre stands outside her home at 631 Prospect.

* * *

COUPLE BREATHES LIFE, CHARM INTO SUNSET HEIGHTS BUILDING

by Robbie Myrick Villalobos
Business Bridge editor
El Paso Inc June 2-8, 2002

What had been a ramshackle building across from Mundy Park in Sunset Heights now is home to residents with a penchant for history.

The two-story apartment building had a war-torn appearance long before Bob and Nan Schulte began their renovation last fall. The brown brick structure with indigo accents perfectly fits the triangular block it was built

on in the 1940s. Adding to its uniqueness is a small central open courtyard where those who dwelled in the six units would hang their clothes to dry after hauling them up from the washing machines in the underground basement.

“It looked like Italy,” Nan Schulte said as she surveyed the gurgling fountain and foliage that now catch shafts of sunlight pouring in from above.

The Schultes live across the street from the building that has been dubbed the Mundy Heights Apartments and have a fondness for the historic Sunset Heights area. Three years ago, the couple renovated a house built in 1909 on Mundy Avenue for their college-aged daughters to live near UTEP, and Nan’s grandfather Anselm Egger raised his family in a house on Fewel Street.



Nan and Bob Schulte are seeing the fruits of their labor now that five of the six units in the Mundy Heights Apartments have been rented since getting the occupancy permit on May 8.

photo by Christian Chapman

“We had so much fun fixing the house for our daughters, and Sunset Heights is part of our family history, so when we saw this

building, we thought we'd enjoy a bigger project," said Nan Schulte, who works as a medical transcriber.

They bought the building last July for \$146,000 from Tenacio Garcia. Two other partners helped them come up with \$150,000 for renovations. Rental of two 2-bedroom units at \$600 a month and four single-bedroom units at \$550 will bring in \$3,400 monthly.

"That will cover the financing, insurance and utilities we pay so we'll break even in five years," said Bob Schulte, who is principal of Alicia Chacon School.

The survey for asbestos ended up costing more than removal efforts since just one exterior pipe was affected.

They tried to keep much of the original building and furnishings since it's in a historic district, but renovation required a complete overhaul of the electrical, water, sewer, gas and air-conditioning systems. They added a niche for a washer and dryer in each unit and topped it all off with cable TV.

"Meeting the code was a big challenge," Bob Schulte said. "I got registered as a contractor and kept up with all the documents."

John Karr, who lives in and is a leader in the Sunset Heights Historic District, said the building is classified as contributing to the historic value of the area.

"The Schultes are fine people. This is their first venture in apartment ownership and they've done such a good job of transforming it and making it a fine addition to the historic district," Karr said. "If they'd gotten to it sooner, it would have been classified as a landmark."

As the Schultes neared completion, they worried about not finding renters quickly since they didn't gear the project for low-cost housing. But enough potential renters put down deposits by the time the occupancy permit was issued May 8 so that just one 2-bedroom unit remained available at the end of May.

Albert Tovar, a longtime El Paso Electric Co. employee, said he kept an eye on the progress for months as he took his daily walks.

"I saw all the work they put into the building, so the minute a 'for rent' sign went up, I told them I wanted to move in," he said. He decorated the kitchen with his Coca-Cola memorabilia and combined antique tables and chairs with contemporary furnishings in his 2-bedroom unit.

He made his presence known on Memorial Day by wrapping his front door, which faces at an angle onto West Yandell and Upson streets, in Stars and Stripes.

Nan Schulte said she spends little time now in the building, but was glad to see the three upstairs residents in conversation, each seated by his door on the upper level of the courtyard.

UTEP student Jessica Wichmann was impressed at the progress when she stopped in to check on the one available apartment.

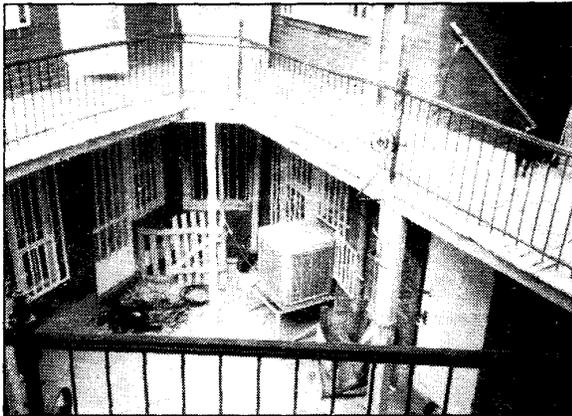
"It was a little trashy before and now it's so nice. I didn't think that so much could be done to improve it," she said. "And there's nothing like this courtyard anywhere."

Bob Schulte said landscaping remains to be done along with the installation of some awnings to block the sun. Groups interested in historic preservation have talked about

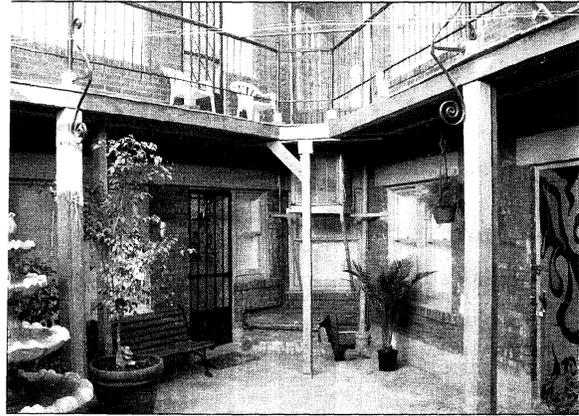
assisting in planting Ash trees and laying bricks in dirt areas.

And resident Frank Licon already is leading a push for a July 4th picnic at Mundy Park for the Sunset Heights neighborhood.

Before renovation



After renovation



Professionals handled overhauling major systems while the Schultes performed much of the renovations themselves.

Left photos courtesy of the Schultes
Above photo by Christian Chapman

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Where Past, Present Meet SUNSET HEIGHTS' TURN-OF- CENTURY CHARM LIVES ON

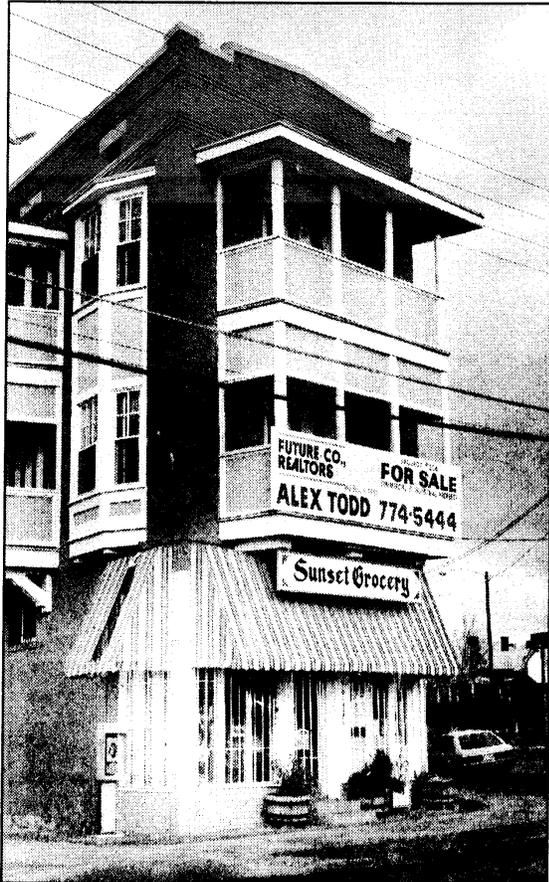
By Donna Weeks
EPT 1/14/93

Sunset Heights offers nostalgia to visitors. About 85 percent of its buildings were constructed between 1895 and 1920 and are still used.

Established in 1884, the neighborhood has 604 buildings and is bounded by Interstate 10, Oregon, Hesig and River streets. It is listed as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

“We like to think of Sunset Heights as the place where the past enriches the present,” said John Karr, founder of the Sunset Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association.

Many of the homes in the neighborhood have been renovated in the last 10 years, said Karr, who with his wife, Joyce, have lived in the neighborhood since 1960 and have provided many of the renovations.



Randy Limbird / El Paso Times

Sunset Grocery is a neighborhood landmark.

Architectural highlights:

- The original home and offices of El Paso's premier architect during the first part of the 20th century, Henry Trost, at 1013 W. Yandell.
- The triangular front of Sunset Grocery, 700 Mundy Drive, has been a familiar sight in the neighborhood since the beginning of Sunset Heights. It was restored by Ann Brand.

- Palmore Apartments, 519 Prospect, formerly was the Palmore Academy, a private boarding school in El Paso operated from 1925 to the 1950s.

- Long-time home of Maurice Schwartz, the founder of The Popular department store, at 1105 Prospect.

- Vilas Elementary School, 222 Lawton Drive, was designed by Henry Trost and built about 75 years ago.

The neighborhood association sponsored its last Sunset Heights Tour of Homes in 1988.

The most recent new construction has occurred on remaining open lots, said Al Telles, executive secretary to the El Paso Historic Landmark Commission.

An example are the four townhomes, owned by Booth, Keirse and Mijares Architects, that recently were completed at 600 Stewart Court.

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PENSIONERS, WEALTHY, MIDDLE CLASS, STUDENTS . . . THEY ALL LIVE HERE

By Steve Peters

3 of 5

5/15/73

Sunset Heights is unique. Some say it has a flexibility, a variety and a texture which may be the only solution to the urban problem. Following is the third of five articles on the past, present and future of one of El Paso's most colorful areas.

Not all of Sunset Heights is a slum, The fall-en-down remnants of an age of grandeur

seem to lean against restored museum antiques, and the restorations themselves which are the elderly actresses who have had face lifts, rest with slight insecurity beside the buildings that have been maintained, never needing restoration.

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Karr moved into the big stone house at 526 Prospect in 1961. The yard was overgrown with weeds and the inside of the house was unfinished. Children in the neighborhood thought it haunted.

It was built by H.D. Slater. He came here in the 1890s and engineered the Chihuahua-Pacifico Railroad, the scenic route from Chihuahua to Toplobompo, Mex. Later he became a reporter for the El Paso Herald and not long afterward bought it.

In World War I he was a U.S. Army captain, serving in France and afterwards spending nearly two years in Europe traveling, collecting and studying the arts.

The house, Karr said, was conceived by Slater as a monument to his position in the community. He later sold out and retired from active journalism.

The granite in the walls was hand cut from a nearby quarry. The house was begun in the early 20s, and Slater lived in a smaller house next door.

At some point he decided not to finish the house. He and his wife continued to live next door and he used the unfinished building as a photography and sculpting studio. The house filled with art objects, statues, paintings . . . he made no attempt to complete the house and never lived there.

Among his friends were Uribe Soler, who sculpted the Mt. Cristo Rey statue, Guizon

Borgium, the Mt. Rushmore sculptor, and Hari Kidd, an artist, said Karr.

In the downstairs "play room" as the architects' plans call it, is a raised hallway facing through an arch into a room large enough to seat 75 people. The Karrs explained the term "play room" was not[synonymous with "game room" when the plans were made and hypothesized the hallway was meant to be a stage and the archway a proscenium. Slater apparently intended to surround himself with every cultural artifact he could conceive.

Mrs. Slater died in 1952 and Slater in 1958. The inside was unfinished and there were no stairs, only a carpenter's ladder. The bottom floor was dirt. The Karl's finished the house in close collaboration with the blueprints, feeling improvement on them was unlikely.

They put in walls, floors and light fixtures, and completed the plumbing. The home would be a jewel in the crown of any neighborhood in the City, but somehow it is not out of place in Sunset Heights. Resting on an elevated lawn shored with the same cut granite as its walls, set back from the street, its bottom floor all but hidden by the front lawn, it does not make a spectacle of its charm.

"What this kind of neighborhood has is a flexibility, a variety and a texture which may be the only solution to the urban problem," Karr said. "All kinds of people live here. Middle class, some wealthy, university students, pensioners, all walks of life.

"It's a fine place to raise a family. But the economic problem here is the inequity of the property tax. Tax is assessed on the value of the land plus improvements. When you restore a house the prices go up. If tax were

assessed only on land there'd be more incentive to improve the property.

"In fact there's a disincentive. If someone had made this into a tenement the taxes would still be low.

"The neighborhood will change physically but we hope its character doesn't change." he continued.

They are not opposed to high rise apartments if they can be esthetic. Said Mrs. Karr, "We were prepared to live here no matter which direction the neighborhood went. We loved the house and weren't all that concerned about the future of the neighborhood. It would be nice if the houses were restored to their fine old loveliness, but if it never happens we'll still stay here."

Peg Macy rented a dilapidated house at 617 Prospect and spent more than two years cleaning, painting and remodeling it.

She is broadcast director of Popular Dry Goods Co. advertising department. But she is also an artist, so she painted the walls to look antique, made a three-room kitchen area into a large kitchen, and hung flower pots on the porch.

Five welfare families lived there before, says Mrs. Macy, and made a wreck of the house. There are three bedrooms upstairs and when she moved in there were stoves in the closet because the house had been sectioned into one-room apartments.

She removed the stoves. She let the yard grow 15-foot high with sunflowers "which my neighbors frowned about because they're weeds but I happen to like them. I have another crop started."

She replaced three broken windows, scraped bubble gum and crayons from the walls and floors, made book cases in the living room and cabinets in the kitchen and "hauled about six pick-up loads of trash out of the back yard."

She also furnished the place with her paintings. She sleeps in one bedroom, uses one for a studio, and rents the third.

The back porch leaks and "the landlord and I are having a stand-off about who's going to fix it." One corner of the dining room has sunk three inches but it is not visible except from a certain angle. She is afraid it will collapse because "there seems to be no support under it." In fact she is entirely distrustful of the foundation.

The landlord raised the rent nearly 20 per cent March 1 and she thinks he may have done so because in remodeling the house she raised the value. She is also suspicious he wanted to again rent to five families so he could receive larger cumulative payments.

She would like to see the old houses repaired and Sunset Heights kept an "affordable apartment area." But, if fixing them up will raise the rent I don't want to see them fixed."

She does not want high-rise apartments in the neighborhood. She thinks Sunset Heights would be a good place for an art colony. "Some of these old houses would make tremendous galleries" she offered.

But the neighborhood may be viewed as the gallery of an enormous museum, containing everything from now-decrepit mansions which could be compared to dinosaurs, for their immense clumsiness and frustrated adaptivity; to the new cube-like high-rises which resemble certain items of pop art.

Wednesday: Not a disposable diaper.

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**COLUMN BRINGS BACK SUNSET
AREA MEMORIES**

June 10, 1979

I read with interest the column about the Sunset Heights landmark.

I am president of the Pioneers Association and know more about the landmark as I have lived here over 60 years. When I was going to the old Sunset School in 1914 I lived at 1413 N. El Paso, which was just in front of the present Sunset Heights reservoir, which was at the head of Los Angeles Street. The store was on Los Angeles between West Missouri and Mundy where they met. I bought candy there and the building was standing there then.

A Mr. Parker and his wife ran the Lamar Confectionary on the site of the old Lamar School on Montana. After I went to Lamar School I became acquainted with them. About 1918 the school board bought the building on the school grounds and forced the Parkers to move.

They bought the Sunset Grocery and operated it for several years.

The delivered groceries and meat all over that end of town with two bicycles that had iron baskets in front and back, and loaded with groceries. The boys walked up all the streets and only rode the bicycles down the hills back to the store. It was the only store in the area and did a thriving business as they also sold kerosene, which was in great demand in those days.

How do I know so much, I was one of the boys who delivered groceries after school and on Saturday for them.

—Harry L. Mathews
El Paso

* * *

**Tom Lea Art Depicts 1913 Building
PAINTING OF E.P. LANDMARK GIV-
EN TO MUSEUM**
EPHP 9/30/74

A Tom Lea painting of the Sunset Grocery & Market was presented to the El Paso Museum of Art at a ceremony in the museum.

The painting, commissioned by the children by the late Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Peterson Sr. was turned over to the board of directors of the Museum.

THE PETERSON children are Mrs. George Woodfin, the former Susan Peterson, Paris, Texas; E.W.F. Peterson, Denver, Colo., and William H. Peterson Jr. of El Paso.

Chris P. Fox, vice president of the State National Bank, traced the chronological street addresses, 'store names and ownership of this El Paso landmark.

IT WAS FOUNDED in 1913 and built at the corner of Gladstone, Putnam and Mundy streets, Mr. Fox said.

“Its first address was 201 Putnam,” Mr. Fox said. “In 1917, Putnam was changed to Los Angeles street, and then the street address became 201 Los Angeles. In 1937, it became 700 Mundy—the address it still has. Gladstone street became Stewart Place.

“In 1913 this location was Eyster’s COD Grocery & Market with the address given as Putnam and Mundy. Mr. Eyster had his main market on Boulevard street and Kansas. Boulevard street is known today as Yandell boulevard.

“**IN 1914** the store became the J.P. McKenna Grocery, with McKenna the proprietor and the address as 201 Putnam. In 1915 it became the Mark P. Gibson Grocery, with Gibson the owner. In 1916 it first became known as the Sunset Grocery and Market, with an address of 201 Los Angeles street and E.H. Cox and P.H. Yoe proprietors.

“In 1917 the Sunset Grocery and Market had Mark C. Jones proprietor . . . in 1918 with the same store, J. Felix Ferguson was proprietor. In 1919 and 20 showed the store had Mrs. J.W. Parker as proprietor.

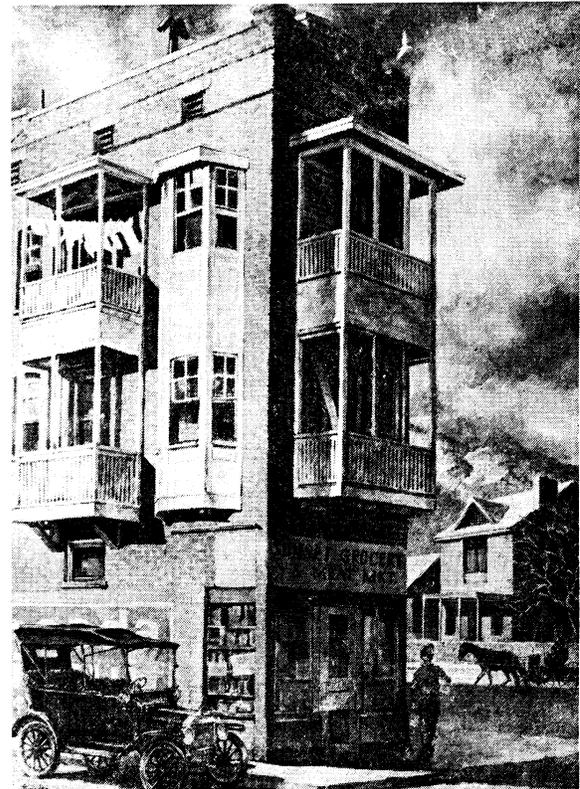
"From 1921 through 1932, the store was called the J. B. McKenna Grocery & Market, at 201 Los Angeles with J. B. McKenna as proprietor. In 1933 the store again became the Sunset Grocery & Market with K.E. Aboud as a proprietor . . . he also operated the store in 1934.

“**IN 1935** the listing shows 201 Los Angeles street as the Sunset Grocery Market but no owner was listed. It is possible that it is either an oversight and/or maybe in 1935 the store didn’t operate.

“In 1936 the Sunset Grocery & Market at 201 Los Angeles listed Isaac Barberry as proprietor . . . but, 1937 to 1941 the Sunset Grocery & Market was listed as 700 Mundy with Isaac Barberry as proprietor. In 1942 and 1943 listings show the Sunset Grocery & Market with J.A. Aleon as proprietor.

The year 1944 was not listed at all in any manner so it is to be assumed that it was an oversight on the part of the directory staff.

"From 1945-1956 the Sunset Grocery & Market at 700 Mundy had Leon .T. Ekery is proprietor . . . this was the second longest period of operations of the dear .old Sunset under one name and proprietor . . . the longest being under J.B. McKenna.



TOM LEA PAINTING—The Sunset Grocery and Meat Market still stands at 700 Mundy drive. It was founded in 1913.

“**IN 1957 AND 1958** the store had Genero Ed Perez as proprietor. The Sunset Grocery & Market for the years of 1959, 1960 and 1961 had Mrs. Estela Trillo as the proprietress, but out of the blue starting in 1962 and continuing to date, September, 1974, comes Herman C. Videla as proprietor of the Sunset Grocery & Market, though 1973 and 1974 it shows the proprietor as being Herman C. Videla Jr.

“There may have been greater stores, larger stores in larger cities, operating in the grocery business for the past 61 years . . . but we feel that the good ol’ Sunset Grocery & Market has a distinction all of its own.

“It started in a booming neighborhood which was further boomed by the Mexico Revolution and it has seen palatial homes being built and prominent El Paso was living in same and raising their families. So it is highly possible that today there are living in El Paso more grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers and mothers and relatives who at one time or another entered the doors of the Sunset Grocery and Market . . . than any other one grocery store in El Paso.

“**OVER THESE** 61 years the Sunset Grocery & Market remaining in exactly the same location has had three different streets as its address though always with the same numbers. This location, known as the Sunset Grocery & Market has also carried four names or three in addition to its established name, Eysters, COD Grocery & Market. The J.B. McKenna Grocery & Market and the Mark P. Gibson Grocery & Market.

“We note that over the span of three score and one years it has had 17 proprietors.

Also, it might be well to note that on October 3, 1907, Dr. F.W. Gallagher filed a deed which showed that he had conveyed the undeveloped property to a William Rosing who retained ownership until February 5, 1925, so it is safe to assume that Mr. Rosing built the famous apartment-grocery store “complex” which will remain as a monument of happiness to thousands of El Pasoans all of whom will be proud in knowing that this modest though famous structure has been preserved by a beautiful painting which came from the hand and heart of El

Paso’s Tom Lea and will be seen in the El Paso Museum of Art because the children of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Peterson Sr. who contributed much to the community of El Paso ordered its commission.”

* * *

OLD. NEW MINGLE COMPATIBLY AT SUNSET HEIGHTS LANDMARK

Barbara Funkhouser.
Editorial Page Editor
EPT 5/27/79

Endless fascination with El Paso is based partly on how the old and the new intermingle compatibly in a town of little planning and much history.

Of the old, Sunset Heights near downtown reflects the more elegant moments of the past when fancy homes and “different” architecture were in vogue. Guarding the southern flank like a stately lion is Sunset Grocery and Meat Market.

Any attempt here to trace its lineage would be pounced upon by history buffs, so suffice to say it is a fine old building colorful up to the bright laundry that often waves from its top floor balcony.

Hortencia Vitela, who was running the store one day recently, said she thought it was about 60 years old, but she didn’t have much time to consider its past.

A child was there with a list and personal check signed by her grandmother. The amount had been left blank so Mrs. Vitela could fill in the cost of the items plus some spending money for the little girl to take home.

A neighbor perched comfortably on a wooden crate, receiving and disseminating neighborhood news. Another had come in to use the phone. A delivery man was enjoying a soda.

Sunset is more than just a market and a south entrance to a district; it is the community center.

While the triangular shaped building has long nestled on its triangular shaped lot, it became more visible to the public when Interstate 10 was constructed. And of the land purchased for the highway, a little patch was left vacant in front of the market. Beer cans and tumbling weeds decorated this spot until recently when the Texas Highway Department began turning it into a little park.

Rock work, large boulders and cacti are being installed in accordance with a landscape design drawn in the state office and executed by local employees of the department.

It is going to be a lovely little park, artistic and appropriate to the El Paso Southwest, much like some of the beautification work being done on the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso.

Folks in the Sunset Grocery already are taking civic pride in this addition to their neighborhood. "It's going to be beautiful," one declared. And it enhances the prominence of the historic landmark.

Yes, the old and new mingle well in El Paso.

* * *



MARIA CORTES GONZALEZ/ EL PASO TIMES

The Holy Family Catholic Church statuary is original to the 100-year-old church.

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH 100 YEARS

Church honors centennial anniversary

Maria Cortes Gonzalez

El Paso Times 9/16/16

With its white Corinthian columns, Holy Family Catholic Church is a bright beauty in the historic Sunset Heights neighborhood.

And if its walls could talk, they would tell of a rich and deep history that dates back to the Mexican Revolution. The church, which is marking its 100th anniversary, was founded in response to the influx of Mexican refugees.

"Holy Family is especially interesting because Padre Carlos Pinto built it specifically for Mexican refugees fleeing the violence and religious persecution of the Mexican Revolution. He chose the location of the church so that the refugees could still see their homeland from Sunset Heights with the thought that they would be able to return there someday," said Janine Young, chief operating officer with the Foundation for the

Diocese. Young wrote about the history of El Paso's Catholic churches in "Centennial History of the Diocese of El Paso."

The congregation led by Deacon Fred Rotchford will celebrate its milestone with a Mass by Bishop Mark J. Seitz on Saturday. It also will have a dinner that is sold out. And plans are in the works for a Centennial Fiesta.



MARIA CORTES GONZALES/EL PASO TIMES

**Holy Family Catholic Church
is celebrating its 100th anniversary
Saturday.**

Holy Family church was one of 14 churches built by the Jesuits between 1892 and 1917 under the leadership of Pinto, Young said. It was dedicated by Bishop Anthony Schuler on Sept. 17, 1916.

Beginning with Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception churches in Downtown El Paso in 1892, the Jesuits and Pinto extended the reach of the Catholic Church to Van Horn, Marfa, Carlsbad, Las Cruces and Juarez.

"These churches became the cornerstones of the Diocese of El Paso," Young said. "The

growth of the city can be traced to where and when these churches were built."

Holy Family was considered a mission of Sacred Heart parish until 1933, when it was elevated to a parish. In 1948, Bishop Sydney Metzger placed the parish under the administration of diocesan priests, ending the administration by the Jesuit priests.

Rotchford said the sanctuary is original and the altar table was added after Vatican II, when priests were asked to face the congregation. The statues of Sacred Heart and the Holy Family are original and were originally at St. Mary's Chapel, the first church in El Paso, on North Oregon.

"This statuary was there and then Father Pinto was able to build this church and it came here," he said. "Prior to that time, most folks in El Paso were going to Mass over in Juarez."

Young said several refugee families contributed to help build the new church and it served them for many years.

This summer, the church also provided temporary shelter for Cuban and Central and South American immigrants.

Many priests have served Holy Family Church and today 12 priests take turns presiding over several Masses at the church. It also serves as the church for the St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Mission with Monsignor Don Sawyer.

The church interior is neat and it is evident that it is meaningful to its community. Parishioners paid for the faux stained-glass treatment on the windows about two years ago.

“We have a very caring parish. We have many people who love this church and who feel a very strong connection. It helps them remember their faith and their heritage,” Rotchford said.

* * *



Fernie Garcia / El Paso Times

The Burges House, headquarters of the El Paso County Historical Society, is in need of restoration. In front is society president Robert M. Kelly.

AREA'S 'GRANDE DAME' NEEDS FACE LIFT

Sunset Heights' Burges House Serves as headquarters for Historical Society

by Donna Weeks

El Paso Times 1/14/93

In her day, the Burges House was the grande dame of Sunset Heights—today but her front porch needs painting and her window frames leak from rotting wood frames.

“She needs spiffing up and the money to do it,” said Barbara Rees, chairman of the Burges House Commission which is attempting to restore the home.

Because the 80-year-old home is in the Sunset Heights Historic District, a city ordi-

nance requires all work on its exterior to meet original design.

The architecture is reminiscent of the Georgian Revival period that ranged from the 1700s to the 1800s.

Repair work and replacement of the home's French leaded glass doors was donated by John Karr, a member of the Sunset Heights Improvement Association.

But the cost to refurbish the home has been a constant worry for Rees since the home was willed to the El Paso Historical Society in 1986 by Jane Burges Perrenot, the daughter of the home's original owner, Richard F. Rurges.

Restrictions on the gift have prevented the society from borrowing money for restoration. Donations and grants have paid for sporadic improvements.

“We're not planning to make the house into a museum. It will be a working place for the society.

Barbara Rees

"The society did not become active in the home's restoration until the last couple of years when we repaired the roof, restored the caretaker's cottage, painted rooms in the house and put in a sprinkler system in the yard so the oak tree (in the front yard) would not die," Rees said.

The oak in the front yard is believed to be the oldest in El Paso—it was planted in 1916 by Burges.

Rees said the house is being rewired to replace 80-year-old wiring. Many original lamps are being replaced with fluorescent lighting.

“We’re not planning to make the house into a museum. It will be a working place for the society,” Rees said.

* * *

The home is open to the public upon request. The society sponsored an open house Dec. 27.

“The Perrenot family always had their open house on Christmas Day, but we decided to break with tradition this year,” said Lea Vail, fundraiser for the Burges House Commission. “All of the Perrenot children and grandchildren were here. It was just like coming home for them. They ran from room to room telling stories of ‘Mamaw.’ It was just a joyous sound throughout the house.”

The Burges residence stands beside the former site of the famous Mesa Garden—originally a beer garden and ice cream parlor. It was constructed in 1880 and used as a gathering place for El Paso’s McGinty Club—a group of musicians and barbershop-style singers. It also housed a gun battery during the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920.

Remnants of the original Mesa Garden still exist in the backyard of the Burges home - surrounded by rosebushes, honeysuckle, jasmine, and pear, fig and pomegranate trees.

Volunteers from El Paso Rose Society, have worked in the rose garden pruning, fertilizing and replanting. Volunteers from Sunset Heights and West Side garden clubs also have helped, Vail said.

“There have been around 27 weddings and receptions in this backyard,” Vail said. “Because of the garden and the view.”

The backyard has spectacular views of the West Side—El Paso High School, Crazy Cat Mountain, and Coronado Hills subdivision.

BURGES HOUSE BUILT TO WITHSTAND FIRE

by Donna Weeks
El Paso Times 1/14/93

El Paso's Burges House serves as the headquarters, library and offices of the El Paso Historical Society.

The society’s collection of old photographs, documents and maps fill the library shelves and file cabinets of the home at 603 W. Yandell.

An alarm system protects the home against vandalism or theft of the archives and few items of furniture inside the home.

The library was added to the back of the home’s first floor in 1927 to accommodate Richard F. Burges’ collection of more than 7,000 books.

"The family wanted it fireproof so they made it completely of concrete," said Barbara Rees, chairman of the Burges House Commission, which is attempting to restore the home. "Even the beams in the ceiling are textured concrete and painted to look like wood."

The first floor is furnished with donated items, including wool rugs from Elizabeth Rempe, a chair that once belonged to Judge James Wilmarth, a 6-foot-tall mirror engraved with the name of R.W. Dietrich and a desk that belonged to Richard Burges.

The only other fully furnished room on the first floor is the society's meeting room, formerly the Burges family living room. The

room is furnished in modern board room-style tables and chairs. One wall of the room is lined with bookshelves and a collection of antique books.

Above the fireplace mantle hangs "The First Thanksgiving," a painting by Cisneros, on loan to the society from Mary Ann Dodson.

On another newly refurbished wall hangs the original charter of the El Paso Historical Society and photos of society Hall of Honor awardees. Recipients include Gertrude Goodman, William Martin Yandell, Felix Martinez, Dorrance D. Roderick, Margaret Schuster Meyer, Elizabeth Hooks, Gen. Anson Mills, William Latham, Guy Hallett-Johnson, Manny Acosta, Williaim H. Burges and Karl O. Wyler.

The kitchen was repainted recently, but looks much the same as it has for 80 years. The original gas stove has been replaced with a contemporary model, but antique glass-front cabinets cover one wall from countertop to ceiling. The countertops are less than a foot wide and little more than three feet tall. One shelf is decorated with a collection of iron skillets. The sink is single-basin, stainless steel variety circa 1950s.

"The family never thought much of adding modern conveniences," said Lea Vail, fund-raised for the Burges House Commission.

The original breakfast room, off the kitchen, now serves as a small commission office.

Both the back-yard cottage and the home's second floor are self-contained apartments, and are occupied.

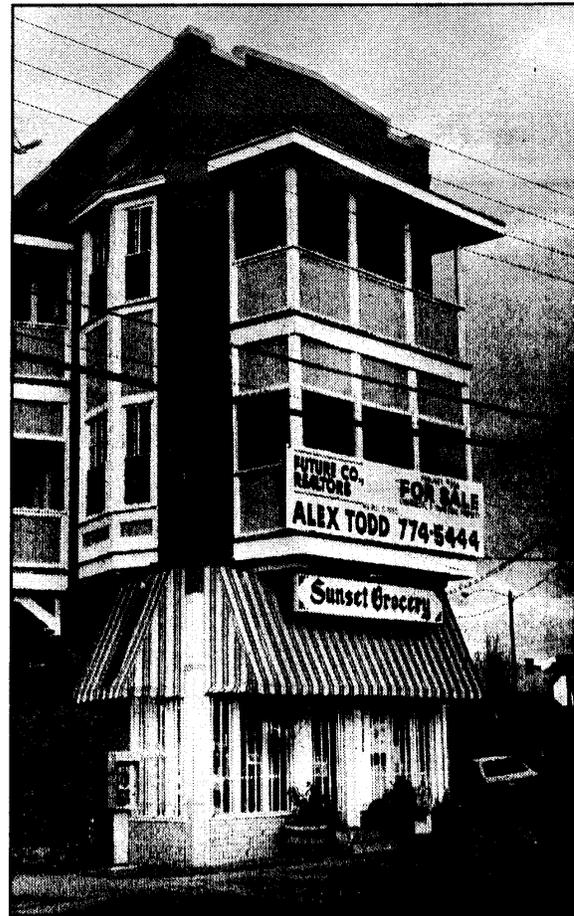
* * *

WHERE PAST, PRESENT MEET Sunset Heights' turn-of-century charm lives on

By Donna Weeks
El Paso Times 1/14/93

Sunset Heights offers nostalgia to visitors. About 85 percent of its buildings were constructed between 1895 and 1920 and are still used.

Established in 1884, the neighborhood has 604 buildings and is bounded by Interstate 10, Oregon, Hesig and River streets. It is listed as a historic district in the National Register of Historic -Places.



Randy Limbird / El Paso

Sunset Grocery is a neighborhood landmark.

"We like to think of Sunset Heights as the place where the past enriches the present," said John Karr, founder of the Sunset Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association.

Many of the homes in the neighborhood have been renovated in the last 10 years, said Karr, who with his wife, Joyce, have lived in the neighborhood since 1960 and have provided many of the renovations.

Architectural highlights:

- The original home and offices of El Paso's premier architect during the first part of the 20th century, Henry Trost, at 1013 W. Yandell.
- The triangular front of Sunset Grocery, 700 Mundy Drive, has been a familiar sight in the neighborhood since the beginning of Sunset Heights. It was restored by Ann Brand.
- Palnore Apartments, 519' Prospect, formerly was the Palmore Academy, a private boarding school in El Paso operated from 1925 to the 1950s.
- Long-time home of Maurice Schwartz, the founder of The Popular department store, at 1105 Prospect.
- Vilas Elementary School, 222 Lawton Drive, was designed by Henry Trost and built about 75 years ago.

The neighborhood association sponsored its last Sunset Heights Tour of Homes in 1988.

The most recent new construction has occurred on remaining open lots, said Al Telles, executive secretary to the El Paso Historic Landmark Commission.

An example are the four townhomes, owned by Booth, Keirse and Mijares Architects, that recently were completed at 600 Stewart Court.

* * *

**BURGES FAMILY TREE
WELL-ROOTED IN CITY**

By Donna Weeks
El Paso Times 1/14/93

Name-dropping among El Paso historians often gets confusing when it comes to the Burges family tree.

Brothers William H. Burges and Richard F. Burges were two of El Paso's most prestigious attorneys and civic leaders at the turn of the century.

Their law firm became Burges, Burges, Scott, Rasberry and Hulse.

William H. Burges died in 1946 and nearly 40 years later, his former law partner, James Frank Hulse, wrote a biography about him. "Texas Lawyer: The Life of William H. Burges," was published by Mangan in 1982.

According to the book, Burges was born in Seguin, Texas, in 1867 and came to El Paso in 1889 for his health.

An East Side street, Burges High School and a dormitory at the University of Texas at El Paso were named after him.

Richard F. Burges was born in 1873 and followed his brother to El Paso in 1896. He died in 1945. His Sun City home, 603 W. Yandell, is now the headquarters of the El Paso [County] Historical Society.

Richard Burges served as city attorney from 1905 to 1907, was a member of the Texas Legislature and one of the founders of the State School of the Mines which is now UTEP. He was instrumental in building Elephant Butte Dam.

He was named to the Hall of Honor by El Paso Historical Society posthumously in 1962. A Northeast library branch was named for him.

His wife, Ethel Sheldon Burges, died before the home was completed in 1912. The couple's only child was Jane Burges who married Preston Perrenot. She lived in the Sunset Heights home until her death in 1986.

Perrenot attended Sunset School, El Paso School For Girls (now Radford School) and Bryn Mawr College, in Bryn Mawr, Pa.

She served as president of the Junior League of El Paso and Planned Parenthood Association and served on El Paso Public Library board of trustees.

Perrenot paid to build the Lea-Hertzog Room. of the Downtown public library.

The Perrenots' children are Mary Austin Roderick Fraser, Ann Georges and Richard' Burges Perrenot, all of El Paso.

* * *

SUNSET HEIGHTS

A Look At Sunset Heights PAST GRANDEUR WON'T LAST

By STEVE PETERS

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TECHNOLOGY LOST ON SUNSET HEIGHTS'

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SUNSET HEIGHTS CAUGHT UP IN A NEW POPULATION PHILOSOPHY

By STEVE PETERS⁹

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SUNSET HEIGHTS History In Adobe And Brick

By Doug DesGeorges

Times staff writer

EPT 3/18/64

COUPLE BREATHES LIFE, CHARM INTO SUNSET HEIGHTS BUILDING

by Robbie Myrick Villalobos

Business Bridge editor

El Paso Inc June 2-8, 2002

PENSIONERS, WEALTHY, MIDDLE CLASS, STUDENTS . . . THEY ALL

LIVE HERE

By Steve Peters

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5/15/73

COLUMN BRINGS BACK SUNSET AREA MEMORIES

June 10, 1979

Tom Lea Art Depicts 1913 Building

PAINTING OF E. P. LANDMARK GIV- EN TO MUSEUM

[Sunset Grocery]

EHPH 9/30/74

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