

**P1. Other Identifier:** 3820 Chiles Road

**\*P2. Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted \*a. County Yolo

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

**\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad** Davis **Date** 2012 **T** T8N ; **R** R2E ; **SESW** ¼ of Sec 12 ; **Diablo** B.M.

c. Address 3820 Chiles Road City Davis Zip 95618

d. UTM: (give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10 ; 612936 mE/ 4267581 mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Assessor Parcel Number 069-070-022-000

**\*P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The two-story New Formalist office building is located in south Davis along a highway frontage road. The rectangular-plan building is approximately 180 x 140 feet and symmetrical in design, with its main entrance on the longer north elevation. The flat-roofed building is completely surrounded on the upper level by a concrete colonnade that rests on a base cantilevered four feet out from the lower level walls. The arches are flush with the heavy flat roof, presenting a flat and smooth exterior. The arch openings of the colonnade, nine each on the building's longer sides and seven on the shorter, are rectangular with rounded corners and are silhouetted against a background of dark tile and tinted windows. The lower level is hidden from street view by a ten-foot high berm that completely surrounds the building with the exception of a narrow opening off the east parking lot (Continued on page 3).

**\*P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP6: 1-3 story commercial building

**\*P4. Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Photograph 1: North façade, camera facing south, photograph taken 1 March 2015.

**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**  
 Historic  Prehistoric  Both  
1966. Davis Enterprise, 30 September 1966.  
Sacramento Bee, 2 October 1966.

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**  
Shepard Family Holdings LLC  
3820 Chiles Road  
Davis, CA 95618

**\*P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, address)  
Kara Brunzell  
1613 B Street  
Napa, California 94559

**\*P9. Date Recorded:** March 1, 2015

**\*P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) Intensive

**\*P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") City of Davis Historic Context Update Survey

**\*Attachments:** NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Archaeological Record  
 District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  Artifact Record  Photograph Record  
 Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 3820 Chiles Road

B1. Historic Name: Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building

B2. Common Name: 3820 Chiles

B3. Original Use: Corporate Headquarters B4. Present Use: University Administration

\*B5. Architectural Style: New Formalism

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) Building with dimensions of 180 x 100 feet completed in September 1966. The lettering on the architecturally-significant company sign in front of the building was changed in 1971. In 1975, an addition was constructed on the rear of the building, changing the buildings dimensions to approximately 180 x 140 feet. The sign and three flagpoles atop the building's promontory were removed at an unknown date, likely post-1989.

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features: \_\_\_\_\_

B9. Architect: Silvio Barovetto of Barovetto & Thomas, Sacramento b. Builder: Campbell Construction Company, Sacramento

\*B10. Significance: Theme Commercial Development Area Davis

Period of Significance 1966-89 Property Type Corporate Headquarters Applicable Criteria History A/1; Architecture C/3  
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The building meets the criteria for listing on the Davis Register of Historical Resources as an individual landmark. It is eligible for its local historical significance and for its architecture. It is an excellent example of an architect-designed New Formalist commercial building, and it is the most ambitious work created by the architect, Silvio Barovetto. Barovetto designed most of the city's public buildings in the 1960s, helping to give Davis a more modern and cosmopolitan identity. Historic Environment Consultants first surveyed this building in 1979 as part of the city of Davis's original cultural resources inventory. They did not nominate the building for historic status at that point, as it was only 13 years old, but they favorably commented on the building as a "suave, elegant version" of 1960's corporate architecture that was "quite sophisticated" in its integration of landscape and architectural design.<sup>1</sup> The building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) under criteria A/1 and C/3.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

\*B12. References:

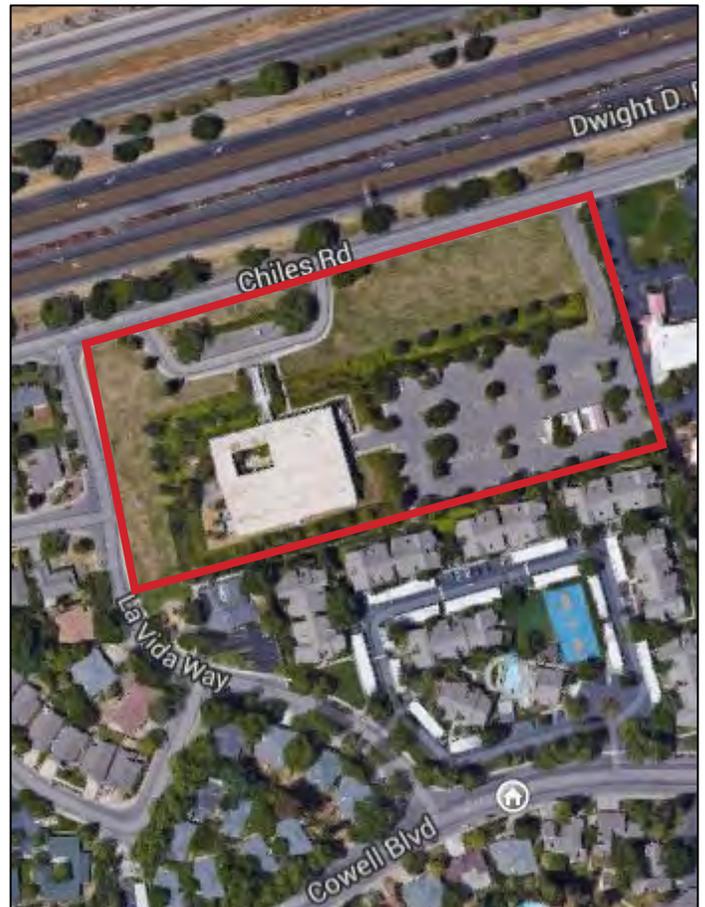
(See Footnotes)

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: David Hickman

\*Date of Evaluation: February 2, 2015

(This space reserved for official comments.)



<sup>1</sup> Historic Environment Consultants, "Cultural Resources Inventory: Final Report," 1980.

**Description (continued):**

Windows on the lower level are smaller and irregularly placed. A single story structure, approximately 50 x 10 feet, projects from the front entrance with flights of stairs on both sides. A 40-foot bridge connects the promontory to the main building's public entrance on the top floor. On top of the promontory, linearly arranged along the long axis, are the bases for three flag poles. The three original 60-foot flag poles are no longer present, having been removed at an unknown date. The promontory is a closed structure with no interior space and no doors or windows, but with a decorative bronze seal on front.

The building sits on a parcel of approximately 15 acres. The building and employee parking lot are set back from the frontage road by about 200 feet, with a large lawn area in front. The berm that surrounds the building extends from the front (north) elevation an additional 600 feet to the east, creating a long, low revetment that conceals the employee parking lot and originally provided a base for the company sign.

**B10. Significance (continued):**

Historic Context of Davis

UC Davis's transformation from agricultural school to full UC campus in 1959 ushered in a period of truly explosive growth in Davis. Developers recorded 56 new subdivisions in the 1960s, and Davis began to sprawl past all its original boundaries. In addition to residential and commercial development, Davis changed culturally from a farm town to a more sophisticated "University City". In 1966, Davis annexed 1.6 square miles of new territory south of Interstate 80 after rancher Bruce Mace's development plans in Yolo County led to fears of a competing city adjacent to Davis. In 1967, Davis established the first dedicated bike lanes in the nation, and by the end of the decade was calling itself, "The City of Bicycles." Growth continued in the 1970s, even after a change in city leadership in 1972 began to an era of controls on development. Although Davis's attempts to slow development were not always successful, the progressive city government of the 1970s created a template that has endured in subsequent decades. Davis has been on the forefront of influential trends such as energy conservation, promotion of solar energy, greenbelt residential development, and investment in bicycle infrastructure.<sup>2</sup>

Property History

The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building at 3820 Chiles Road is now located well within the city boundaries of Davis, but when planning for its construction began in 1964, the site was within the jurisdiction of Yolo County, some two miles east of Davis. Five years prior, in 1959, a local developer, C. Bruce Mace, and his sons, Herbert and Fredland, had begun developing the El Macero Country Club outside of Davis city limits. They intended the development to eventually include several hundred dwellings, a championship-grade golf course, and an extensive commercial district located just off of Interstate 80. The El Macero Country Club would be the first planned golf course community in the Sacramento region and one of the first such developments in California. By July of 1964, construction had begun on a Standard Oil service station, and the Mace family announced plans to convert 23 acres of bean fields into a 250-room motel (the Voyager Inn), and the new home offices for the Intercoast Life Insurance Company.<sup>3</sup>

**(Figure 1)**

The Intercoast Life Insurance Company began business in 1932 as a health insurance provider for employees of Sutter Hospital in Sacramento. The company grew slowly through the Depression but then expanded in the post-war years. In 1947, it purchased a new home office at 3140 J Street in Sacramento and began issuing life insurances policies in addition to its health plans. The firm issued stock in 1961. By 1964, Intercoast was doing business in twelve states and had 250 employees. It had outgrown its Sacramento headquarters and began searching for a new property. The company favored a large site with low land costs that would allow for later development, while also looking to remain closely connected to Sacramento. The Mace family property met these needs and additionally offered high visibility from a heavily traveled interstate which had recently been broadened to six lanes and had much improved access to Sacramento because of a newly expanded causeway. The nearby UC Davis campus also was an attraction as it could provide the sort of skilled employees that an insurance company would require. The president of Intercoast, Homer Martin, sealed the deal by relocating his own home to the El Macero Country Club, purchasing a lot along the 18th fairway.<sup>4</sup>

The architectural firm selected for the design job was Barovetto & Thomas, with Silvio "Slim" Barovetto as lead. The firm was based on Alhambra Blvd in Sacramento, but Barovetto lived in Davis, at 237 Rice Lane, and belonged to a family that has important connections to the history of the city. Silvio

<sup>2</sup> John Lofland, *Davis: Radical Changes, Deep Constants*, Arcadia: Charleston, SC, 2004, p. 123; Ted Buehler and Susan Handy, "Fifty Years of Bicycle Policy in Davis, California," M.A. Thesis, Institute for Transportation Studies, UC Davis, 2007, p. 25; William D. Diemer, *Davis from the Inside Out: A Municipal Almanac. Vol.1: Davis as City*, National Housing Register: Davis, CA, 2000, p. 37 - 39.

<sup>3</sup> "Long Awaited Golf Course for Davis Area is Outlined," *Davis Enterprise*, 8 October 1959; "Ground to Break; El Macero has Growing Pains," *Davis Enterprise*, 23 July 1964; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Aerial Photos of Yolo County*, 1:20,000, Photo #ABB-3EE-171, 18 June 1964.

<sup>4</sup> "Intercoast Grows," *Davis Enterprise*, 29 July 1965; "History of Intercoast Shows Great Growth," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Selection of Davis Came After Careful Study," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Ground to Break; El Macer has Growing Pains," *Davis Enterprise*, 23 July 1964.

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Barovetto's father, Giovanni Barovetto, was an Italian immigrant who arrived in the US in 1907. A viticulturist by training and trade, Barovetto was recruited by Professor Frederic Bioletti to serve as the foreman in the vineyards at the University Farm in Davis. Until his retirement in 1946, Barovetto maintained the vineyards in which Professor Bioletti ran a grape breeding and introduction program. Barovetto was not on the faculty of the university and had no teaching or research responsibilities, but he served as a long-term and highly-skilled agricultural supervisor in a field critical to the university's early success. His death on 18 September 1948 was treated as the lead news article in that week's *Davis Enterprise*, where he was hailed as "one of the foremost authorities in his line of work" and "a substantial citizen" of the town. Through most of Silvio Barovetto's childhood, the family lived near the corner of 2nd and A streets, a block from the university, in a former water tank tower that his father had converted into a residence. That property has since been designated as a Merit Resource by the City of Davis as 209 and 209½ - 213 2nd Street.<sup>5</sup>

After growing up in Davis, Silvio Barovetto attended UC Berkeley to study architecture. He graduated in 1931, near the depths of the Depression, and chose initially to travel rather than seeking work. Booking steerage passage across the world, he traveled for a year through Europe and the Middle East with a sketchbook in hand. When he returned to California, he found work with the Federal Housing Administration as an architect. He married Madelyn Doran in 1936 and relocated for a time to Coalinga before returning to Davis for good in 1941. He spent the war years designing housing for military families, doing such work as converting medical buildings into residential apartments at a Salt Lake City airbase.<sup>6</sup>

After the war, in 1946, he co-founded the architectural firm of Barovetto & Thomas. The firm's initial work in Davis included the State Market (now demolished) on 2d Street in a Streamline Moderne style, and an addition to the town's first contemporary house at 535 Oak Street, which was designed in the 1930s by Otto Winkler. By the early 1950s, Barovetto & Thomas were receiving regular commissions for work on the UC Davis campus. The first assignments were for small-scale agricultural buildings, including a Beef Barn and Shelter (1953), Sheep Field Laboratory (1953), and Vegetable Crops Machinery Shed (1959). The first large commission was for Hoagland Hall (1959), home of the Soils and Plant Nutrition departments, followed by Titus Residence Hall (1959), the Young Hall Addition (1962), and the Hickey Gym addition (1963). The firm also devised a 1956 Master Plan for the UC campus. By the early 1960s, the firm was receiving commissions for various commercial and educational buildings throughout the greater Sacramento area. These projects included at least three branch banking buildings in an International style in Sacramento, and the complete design of American River College. Later projects included the Sacramento Community Center, the expansion of the Sacramento Medical Center (later UC Davis Medical Center), and the remodeling of the Senator Hotel and the Weinstocks building in Sacramento.<sup>7</sup>

It was in Davis during the 1960s that the firm made its greatest impact. Barovetto & Thomas received the commission for nearly every public facility built within the city during the decade. These included Davis High School (1960); Holmes Junior High School (1966); the elementary schools of North Davis (1957), Birch Lane (1962), and Pioneer (1966); the Davis Branch of the Yolo County Library (1968); and several buildings in the Davis Community Park (1966). Through these buildings, Barovetto left a legacy of Modern architecture in the city that is an essential element of Davis's optimistic identity through the decade. It was in the midst of this era that Barovetto received the commission for the Intercoast Life Insurance Building, the only large corporate project that he completed in Davis.<sup>8</sup> (Figures 2 - 5)

It was also during these years that the Barovetto family made another large impact on the Davis community. Silvio's son, John Barovetto, the oldest of his four children, has come to be recognized as a hometown hero for Davis and is commemorated today with a public park near the eastern edge of the city. A 1956 graduate of Davis High School, John Barovetto served two combat tours as a cavalry officer in Vietnam. With the assistance of his parents, he organized "Operation Helping Hands," which collected several thousand pounds of food, clothing, and other essential goods from Davis residents to be distributed to Vietnamese refugees. In January of 1968, Captain Barovetto was killed in action, and for the second time, the death of a Barovetto made the front page of the *Davis Enterprise*. In his honor, Davis High School annually awards a John Barovetto Memorial scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> G. T. Barovetto obituary: "Well Known Davis Resident Passes Away in Sacramento," *Davis Enterprise*, 24 September 1948; "Regents Increase Faculty," *San Francisco Call*, 14 June 1912; Historical Resource Associates, "Historical Resource Analysis Study of 201 2nd Street/200 A Street and 209/209½-213 2nd Street, Davis, Yolo County, California 95616," November 2014 (Revised February 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Silvio Barovetto obituaries: "Silvio Barovetto Designed Dozens of Area Landmarks," *Sacramento Bee*, 17 October 1996, and "Silvio 'Slim' Barovetto," *Davis Enterprise*, 15 October 1996; "Work Begins at S.L. Air Base," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 May 1946.

<sup>7</sup> Silvio Barovetto obituaries; Historic Environment Consultants, "Cultural Resource Inventory: Final Report," 1980; Verne Stadtman ed., *The Centennial Record of the University of California, 1868-1968*, Regents of the University of California: Oakland, CA, 1967, p. 157-67; EDAW, "UC Davis Landscape Heritage Plan: Vol. 2. Cultural Landscapes Inventory," April 2009, p. 2-11; Sacramento bank information from the *Sacramento Bee* Photo Morgue accessed through the Center for Sacramento History.

<sup>8</sup> Silvio Barovetto obituaries; Construction dates: Lofland, *Davis: Radical Changes, Deep Constants*, p. 129-30.

<sup>9</sup> "Capt. Barovetto Dies in Vietnam," *Davis Enterprise*, 10 January 1968; "Captain John Barovetto was a Hero Long before He Paid the Ultimate Price," *Davis Enterprise*, 20 September 2009; Rich Rifkin, "Let's Not Delete Giovanni Barovetto from Davis History," *Davis Enterprise*, 4 March 2015.

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The firm of Barovetto & Thomas continues to the current day, though its name has changed several times. The firm was known as Barovetto & Thomas from 1946-67; then Barovetto, Carissimi and Rohrer from 1967-69; Carissimi · Rohrer · Associates from 1969 until a date after 1994; and is now known as CRM Architects & Planners, still based in Sacramento. Over the years that he ran the firm, Silvio Barovetto gave many new architects a first start. His obituary in the *Sacramento Bee* credited him with launching the careers of at least six of Sacramento's premier architects, including James Dodd, Sacramento's first licensed African American architect. Silvio Barovetto was remembered as a highly personable figure who cultivated life-long relationships with those he had mentored. He was a member of the Faculty Club at UC Davis and the Sutter Club in Sacramento. A devoted golfer, he was a charter member of the El Macero Country Club, a connection that might have helped land him the Intercoast Life Insurance Company contract.<sup>10</sup>

For the Intercoast Building, Silvio Barovetto produced perhaps his boldest design. His earlier buildings for the University campus were large scale projects (Hoagland Hall was budgeted at \$1.7 million), and they proudly exhibited the Modernism that inspired their designer. Barovetto often worked in the International Style, composing buildings in strong horizontal forms and lacking applied ornamentation. Yet, they were still primarily functional buildings, designed to provide lab and classroom space for agricultural science departments. They needed to fit into a larger campus design and could not showcase themselves in the same way that the Intercoast Building would allow. When work on designing the Intercoast Building began, it seemed initially that it too would be a more modestly functional building than the one that eventually resulted. The company's directions to the architects called for a "Dignified, Functional, Economical building that would create an aesthetically pleasing visual symbol for their Company." In July of 1964, a year before groundbreaking, the Intercoast president reported that he had been reviewing designs and was "pretty sure it will be a one story building." There was little in those comments that suggested a building as boldly unique as what Barovetto was planning.<sup>11</sup>

Barovetto's inspiration for the Intercoast Building drew primarily from works of New Formalism that rejected the stark minimalism of the International Style and welcomed the return of classical forms, albeit in a more abstract, less decorative manner than in traditional architecture. Common distinctive features of the style were a symmetrical plan; the prominent use of arches and colonnades; the setting of the building upon a podium; use of large screens of concrete or metal. Like most works of Modern architecture, New Formalist designs were also characterized by clarity and simplicity of form; smooth surfaces; restrained use of ornamentation; and the exuberant use of new building materials and techniques. Architectural histories credit Edward Durell Stone's New Delhi American Embassy (1954) as being the first work in of New Formalism, and the lines of continuity between that work and Barovetto's Intercoast Building are clear at a glance. The style also was used regularly in high-profile cultural centers such as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. and the Lincoln Center in New York. It appeared frequently on college campuses for use in libraries, auditoriums, and museums. In smaller cities, it was used occasionally for major public buildings and banks, but it was rarely used for smaller commercial buildings or residences. In selecting a style associated with some of the most significant recent cultural and institutional architecture, Barovetto was making a strong claim for the importance, strength, and longevity of the Intercoast Company.<sup>12</sup>

Barovetto's design cast the building site in a series of long, low lines. This was done cleverly in the building itself by surrounding the lower level, (which housed a print shop and storage rooms), with a ten foot high berm that all but concealed it from street view. The building thus seemed to have only a single story that appeared to float free above an earthen podium. The continuation of the revetment across the site, topped with the large individual letters of the company sign, further enhanced the horizontal site design. These features were crafted with the freeway in mind so as to establish "maximum visual contact" with travelers as they passed parallel to the building and its sign. In its length and low profile, the building also paid tribute to the geography of the Central Valley and the seemingly endless fields of beans and sugar beets that had last occupied the location. The linearity of the plan was interrupted only by the promontory at the front of the building. The vertical element here was highlighted by the three 60 foot tall flag poles that provided a dramatic centerpiece for the building. Because the length of the building is difficult to capture effectively in photographs, the promontory and flag poles provided the stage for the publicity photos used in the building's unveiling in 1966.<sup>13</sup> (Figures 6 & 7)

In its black and white coloring, simple forms, and contemporary design—all of which were emphasized when the building was floodlit at night—Barovetto's final design presented the company with a somewhat different vision than that with which the planning started. Intercoast embraced the new concept and declared the final result to be a "Bold and Dignified Architectural Expression" that was "ultra modern in appearance." Publicity surrounding the building's grand opening in early October 1966 emphasized the cutting-edge elements in the building's design, which included a glass-

<sup>10</sup> Carissimi · Rohrer · Associates, "Statement of Qualifications to Provide Architectural Services for the Alumni Center, CSUS Campus," 9 May 1994, pg. 1; Silvio Barovetto obituaries; James C. Dodd obituary, *Sacramento Bee*, 10 February 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Stadtman ed., *The Centennial Record of the University of California*, pg. 160; "Dignified, Functional, Economical . . . Architect's Aim," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Intercoast President Say Firm will be Ready to Move to Davis," *Davis Enterprise*, 23 July 1964.

<sup>12</sup> Planning Resource Associates, "Mid-Century Modernism, Fresno Historical Context," September 2008, pg. 78; "Edward Durell Stone" in Paul Heyer, *Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America*, Walker and Company: New York, NY, 1966, p. 172-83.

<sup>13</sup> "Dignified, Functional, Economical . . . Architect's Aim," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Gateway to Intercoast" and "Intercoast Dedication," photo captions, *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966 and 1 October 1966; Historic Environment Consultants, "Cultural Resources Inventory: Final Report," 1980.

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walled room off the reception area that hosted banks of Minneapolis Honeywell computers and data processors. That Barovetto's work inspired such a futuristic reading is made clear by a caption that the *Davis Enterprise* affixed to a photograph of similar arches under construction at the Barovetto-designed branch library. "Avant Garde Sculpture?," the writer asked rhetorically, before reassuring readers that the new library's final lines would be "clean and straight and not as far-out as it might look now."<sup>14</sup> (Figures 8 & 9)

At the building's opening, the implied connection to the future was made explicit by burying a time capsule at the site (presumably in the promontory, though this cannot be definitively established) that was to be opened in the year 2032, which would have marked the 100th anniversary of Intercoast's founding. State and local officials, along with leaders of industry, particularly from the aerospace field, deposited items in the time capsule and a color guard from McClellan Air Force Base performed at the ceremony. Later in the week, Intercoast sponsored a symposium at Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium on California life in the year 2032. Presenters included the UC Davis chancellor, the dean of the UC Berkeley school of medicine, the publisher of the *Sacramento Union*, and an executive of Douglas Aircraft Company. They predicted, among other things, that all future Californians would live on a guaranteed income while few would work; the common cold would be cured; there would be permanent bases on the moon and manned trips to Mars; and the daily newspaper would come packed with enough embedded calories and vitamins for readers to subsist off its pages.<sup>15</sup>

For four years, the 3820 Chiles Road building served as company headquarters for the Intercoast Life Insurance Company and provided a place of employment for more than 100 people. During that time, the City of Davis annexed the site from Yolo County in order to better regulate its own growth and to prevent El Macero from developing as an independent, rival city. In 1970, Intercoast merged with a larger firm, Pacific Standard Life Insurance Company, and took the latter's name. The headquarters building was still attractive, well-situated, and had room to expand, so Pacific Standard elected to relocate its own national headquarters to Davis. The following year, the firm submitted plans to the city to alter the lettering on the business sign out front to change it from reading INTERCOAST LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY to PACIFIC STANDARD LIFE INSURANCE CO. Both signs would retain the same number of letters (30), the same font, and the same design. The request, however, touched off a conflict between the company and the city's planning department that spoke to Davis's conflicted attitude towards continued growth at the start of the 1970s. At issue was a city ordinance that limited signs in front of a business to 30 square feet, a figure vastly exceeded by the roughly 500 square feet of the original Intercoast sign. Yolo County, which had jurisdiction when the sign was first erected, had approved the original design, but now the city planning department sought to assert its authority by rejecting what it called a substantial alteration to the original plan. Architect Ron Carissimi, part of the original design team, testified before the planning commission that the sign was "architecturally integrated into the building and site plan." The president of Pacific Standard argued that the site owed much of its appeal to its visibility to interstate travelers and an inability to alter the sign would negate that, effectively forcing a loss of \$300,000 on the company, the cost of relocating their headquarters. A city commissioner, however, countered that the county had "botched" development in the area near the El Macero Country Club and it was now the city's obligation to fix the problems.<sup>16</sup> (Figure 10)

Public opinion, as recorded in the *Davis Enterprise* and through Chamber of Commerce votes, appeared to strongly favor Pacific Standard's request. The Chamber unanimously voted support for the company, and the *Davis Enterprise* editorialized that the sign was "shaping up as a symbol for the difficulty people see in getting clean, light, educated, rich and generally classy industry into Davis." The debate, the paper argued, was over how to ensure "we don't degenerate into a trashy neon strip community," versus "how in the world are we going to attract industry into Davis that would pay a lot of taxes and not drive the individual property owners into the poorhouse." In the end, the planning commission authorized the sign change. The city effectively sanctioned the building site plan as it was, making its peace with at least some of the commercial development that had already occurred in south Davis.<sup>17</sup>

In 1975, Pacific Standard ordered an expansion to the building to increase the floor space from 35,000 to 50,000 square feet, and built a 40 foot wide addition across the rear of the building. Two new concrete arches, identical to the original design, were added to both the east and west sides of the building to cover the new depth.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> First quote: "Dignified, Functional, Economical . . . Architect's Aim," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966. Second quote: "Ground Breaking for Intercoast Set," *Davis Enterprise*, 20 July 1965; "Data Processing," photo caption, *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Avant Garde Sculpture?," photo caption, *Davis Enterprise*, 25 January 1968.

<sup>15</sup> "Capsule Ceremony is Today," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Intercoast Dedication," photo caption, *Davis Enterprise*, 1 October 1966; "Sacramentans to Hear about Life in Year 2032," *Davis Enterprise*, 30 September 1966; "Man of the Future will Live on Guaranteed Income, Newspaper Food," *Sacramento Bee*, 7 October 1966.

<sup>16</sup> "The Intercoast Sign: An Editorial," *Davis Enterprise*, 26 June 1971; "Intercoast Sign Request Denied," *Davis Enterprise*, 3 June 1971; "Appeal on Intercoast Sign Denial," *Davis Enterprise*, 21 June 1971.

<sup>17</sup> "Chamber Supports Sign," *Davis Enterprise*, 22 June 1971; First quote: "Clamor to Tackle the Sign," *Davis Enterprise*, 23 June 1971; Second quote: "Clamor Clarifies the Sign," *Davis Enterprise*, 25 June 1971; "Denial Reversed," *Davis Enterprise*, 1 July 1971.

<sup>18</sup> Historic Environment Consultants, "Cultural Resources Inventory: Final Report," 1980.

Pacific Standard's eventual demise came as a result of national-level changes that swept through the financial industry during the 1980s. In 1983, at the start of the Savings & Loan and junk bond heyday, a Texas real estate maven and corporate raider, Gene Phillips, purchased Pacific Standard for \$30 million. Pacific Standard then had more than \$700 million in assets and employed 225 people at its headquarters. Six years later the company was insolvent—\$43 million in the hole—and had laid off nearly all its staff. Published reports suggested that Phillips never intended to run Pacific Standard as an ordinary insurance company, but merely desired to plunder its assets for use in a larger, very risky investment strategy in collaboration with such figures as Charles Keating, head of Lincoln Savings and Loan of Irving, California, and Michael Milken, who ran the high-yield junk bond department for Drexel Burnham Lambert. After the takeover, Phillips immediately fired Pacific Standard's investment officers and installed himself as the sole member of the investment committee. His use of the company's resources for his own gain led state investigators to refer to his actions as a classic example of corporate looting.<sup>19</sup>

On 11 December 1989, the California Department of Insurance took over management of the company and placed it in a conservatorship. For four and a half years the state tried to salvage the company, but ultimately admitted the task was hopeless in April of 1994. What remained of Pacific Standard was transferred to a receivership and its final assets were liquidated. The Barovetto headquarters building on Chiles road had sat largely vacant since the company's demise, and executive office phone lines had been inoperable since at least October 1990. As part of the company's final unwinding, before it was formally declared closed on 30 Dec 1999, the headquarters building was sold to four local investors, one of whom, Lor Shepard, now owns 3820 Chiles Road alone. Since the summer of 1999, UC Davis has leased the property. The building's top floor houses 40% of the university's IT staff and the Repro Graphics division operates out of the old first floor print shops. These two units continue to occupy the building, though their presence is notably low-key, with little obvious sign that the building is still in use. The flag poles and former company signs have all been removed, and in general, the site's external facilities and landscaping have fallen into a state of lightly maintained disrepair. The building itself remains fully intact with strong integrity with the exception of the loss of the original signage and flagpoles.<sup>20</sup>

#### Evaluation:

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), require that a significance criterion from A-D or 1-4 be met for a resource to be eligible. The Davis Register of Historical Resources is based on similar criteria.

Criterion A/1: The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building is significant under the NRHP, CRHR, and Davis Register of Historical Resources Criterion A/1 for its association with the broad patterns of the history of Davis, the state of California, and the nation. The building was the first corporate headquarters constructed in Davis and one of the first major buildings sited in what is now east Davis. Initially located on county lands beyond city limits, this building represents a postwar model of sprawling growth that the City of Davis ultimately rejected. Shortly after the Intercoast Building was completed, the city's leaders annexed the site and its surrounding lands, indicating their desire for greater control over developments along the I-80 corridor. The 1970's fight over the corporate sign best typified the city's desire to regulate growth beyond the downtown core, and while the city approved the signage changes in that particular case, the overall pattern in Davis's development through the remainder of the century was such as to prevent the creation of any other similar corporate buildings on the city's periphery. The building is thus associated with both an early-1960s boom in California corporate development and the subsequent slow-growth counter-reaction that became a common response in many communities, with Davis at the forefront of the transition. That the once prominent building is now obscured by overgrown vegetation and vague signage is also indicative of its close association with the Savings & Loan scandal that destroyed the Pacific Life Insurance Company and had historically significant economic and political impacts at the local, state, and national level.

Criterion B/2: The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building is not associated with the lives of persons important to national, state, or local history. Therefore the building is not eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, or Davis Register of Historical Resources under Criterion B/2.

<sup>19</sup> Cited as but one example of the blatant behavior was Phillips' sale to Pacific Standard of a \$4 million mortgage that had already entered default, and was thus of negligible value, in order to pocket a large commission on the transaction for himself. Phillips also forged minutes from board meetings to give the false impression that his investment decisions were being overseen and approved by the Pacific Standard board of directors. In the end, Phillips faced a federal criminal investigation for his actions, but was never indicted. In a civil case, he and two other Texas executives were ordered to repay \$11.6 million to the company. Local officials of Pacific Standard were cleared of any direct wrongdoing, but were faulted for their negligent oversight. The president and chief financial officer were ordered to repay \$125,000 to the company. Kelly Johnson, "Payout Ends Nine Year Ordeal for Pacific Standard Policyholders," *Sacramento Business Journal*, 24 May 1998; "Davis Insurance Firm Put on Hold," *Sacramento Bee*, 29 November 1989; "Southmark Plan," *New York Times*, 6 April 1983; "Insurer's Woes Laid to Illegal Acts," *Sacramento Bee*, 13 February 1990; "CEO Blamed for Insurer's Woes," *Sacramento Bee*, 17 October 1990; "Regulators Sue Insurer's Officers - 5 Looted Davis Firm, State Says," *Sacramento Bee*, 18 October 1990; "Loan Probe of Failed Davis Firm," *Sacramento Bee*, 12 July 1991; "Insurance 'Looters' to Pay \$11.6 million," *Sacramento Bee*, 12 August 1993; Stephen Pizzo, Mary Fricker, and Paul Muolo, *Inside Job: The Looting of America's Savings and Loans*, 2nd ed. Harper Collins: New York, NY, 2001, note 7, ch. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, "Payout Ends Nine Year Ordeal," *Sacramento Business Journal*, 24 May 1998; "Regulators Sue Insurer's Officers," *Sacramento Bee*, 18 October 1990; "PSL becomes 3820 Chiles Road," *Information Technology Times*, October 1999, 5.

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 3820 Chiles Road

Criterion C/3: The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building is significant under NRHP, CRHR, and Davis Register of Historical Resources Criterion C/3 for its distinctive architecture. It is an outstanding example of New Formalist architecture, which is rare in Davis, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of the architectural style. The building features hallmarks of the style that include a heavy, projecting, flat slab roof supported by a stylized full-height colonnade that gives classical forms a modern interpretation. It also features a symmetrical plan, smooth exterior surfaces, a projecting decorative volume on its main façade, and a berm around its ground floor that gives the main floor the appearance of being raised on a podium. Silvio Barovetto was an architect central to defining the character of Davis during the 1960s. The building is the only large, corporate project that he completed in the city, and it is his most ambitious work in Davis.

Criterion D/4: In rare instances, buildings themselves can serve as sources of important information about historic construction materials or technologies and be significant under Criterion D/4. The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building does not appear to be a principal source of important information in this regard.

Eligibility for listing on either the NRHP rests on significance and integrity. A property must have both factors to be considered eligible. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, would overwhelm the historical significance of a resource and render it ineligible. The Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building has been altered over the years by removal of its architecturally-significant signage and flagpoles. Although these alterations, along with lack of maintenance to the building's landscaping, have affected its integrity, it retains character-defining aspects of its New Formalist design that allow it to convey its original significance. Therefore, the Intercoast Life Insurance Company Building retains sufficient integrity for historical listing. It is eligible under Criterion A/1 and C/3 for listing in the NRHP and CRHR, and for inclusion in the Davis Register of Historical Resources as a Landmark.



***Figure 1: 1971 aerial photograph showing Intercoast Building site, Voyager Hotel to east, I80 to north, and the beginning of El Macero Vista 1 development to south.***

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 3820 Chiles Road



*Figure 2: The Davis High School gymnasium, designed by Silvio Barovetto. Photograph 19 April 2015.*



*Figure 3: One of four star-shaped clusters of offices and classrooms at Pioneer Elementary School. Photograph 19 April 2015.*

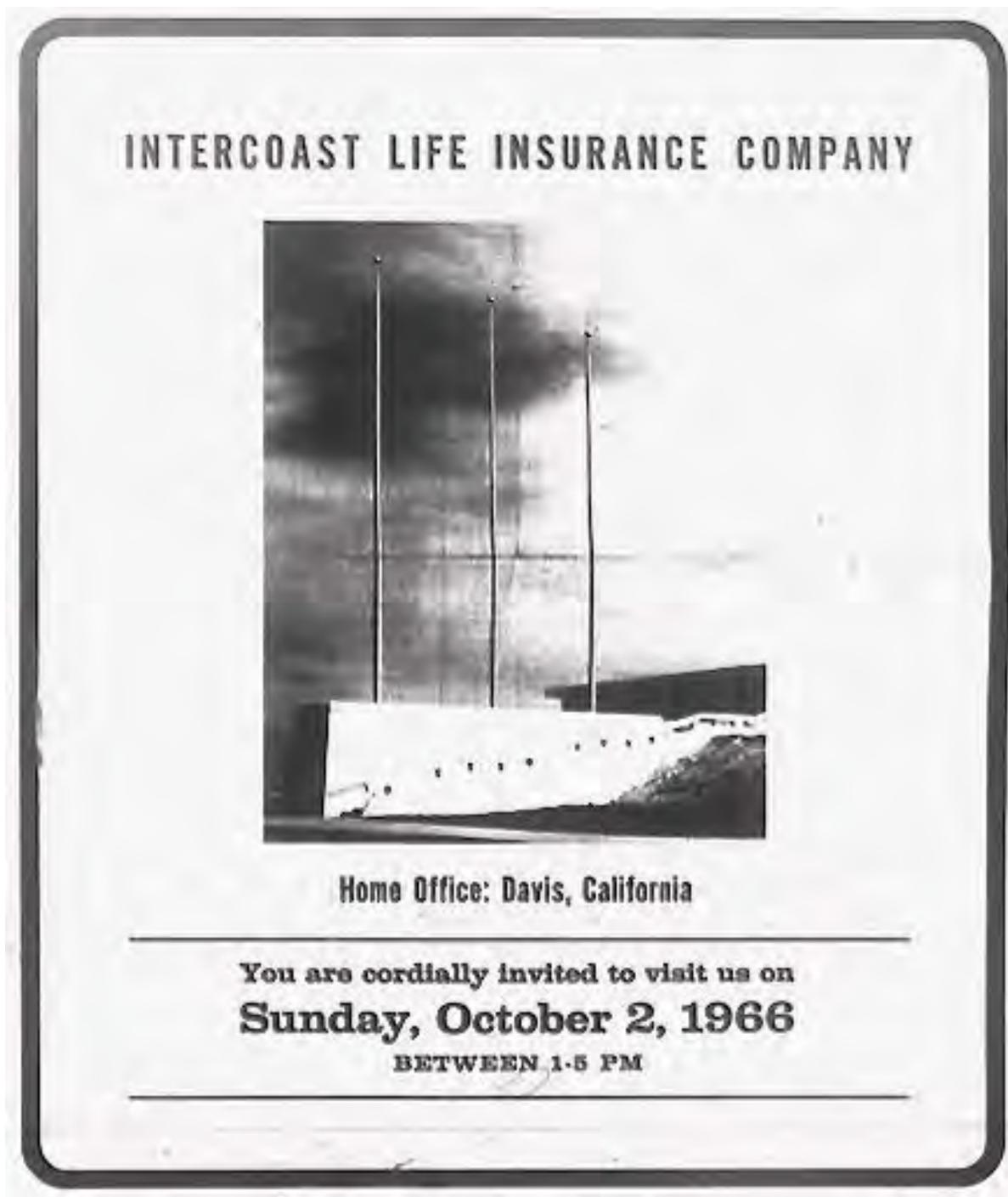
\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 3820 Chiles Road



*Figure 4: Community Park Pool buildings. Photograph 19 April 2015.*



*Figure 5: Cast concrete columns at Holmes Junior High School. Photograph 19 April 2015.*



# INTERCOAST LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY



Home Office: Davis, California

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You are cordially invited to visit us on  
**Sunday, October 2, 1966**  
BETWEEN 1-5 PM

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*Figure 6: The promontory of the building featured in the grand opening invitation.*

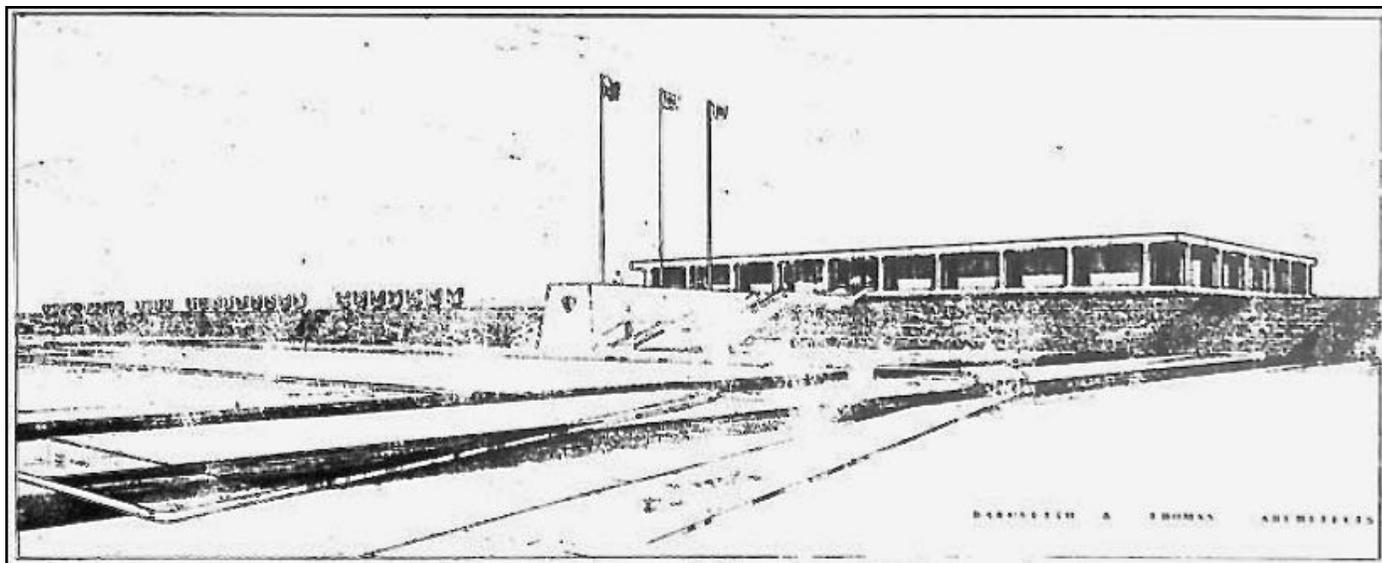


Figure 7: Architectural sketch showing the building, promontory, and company sign atop the revetment.



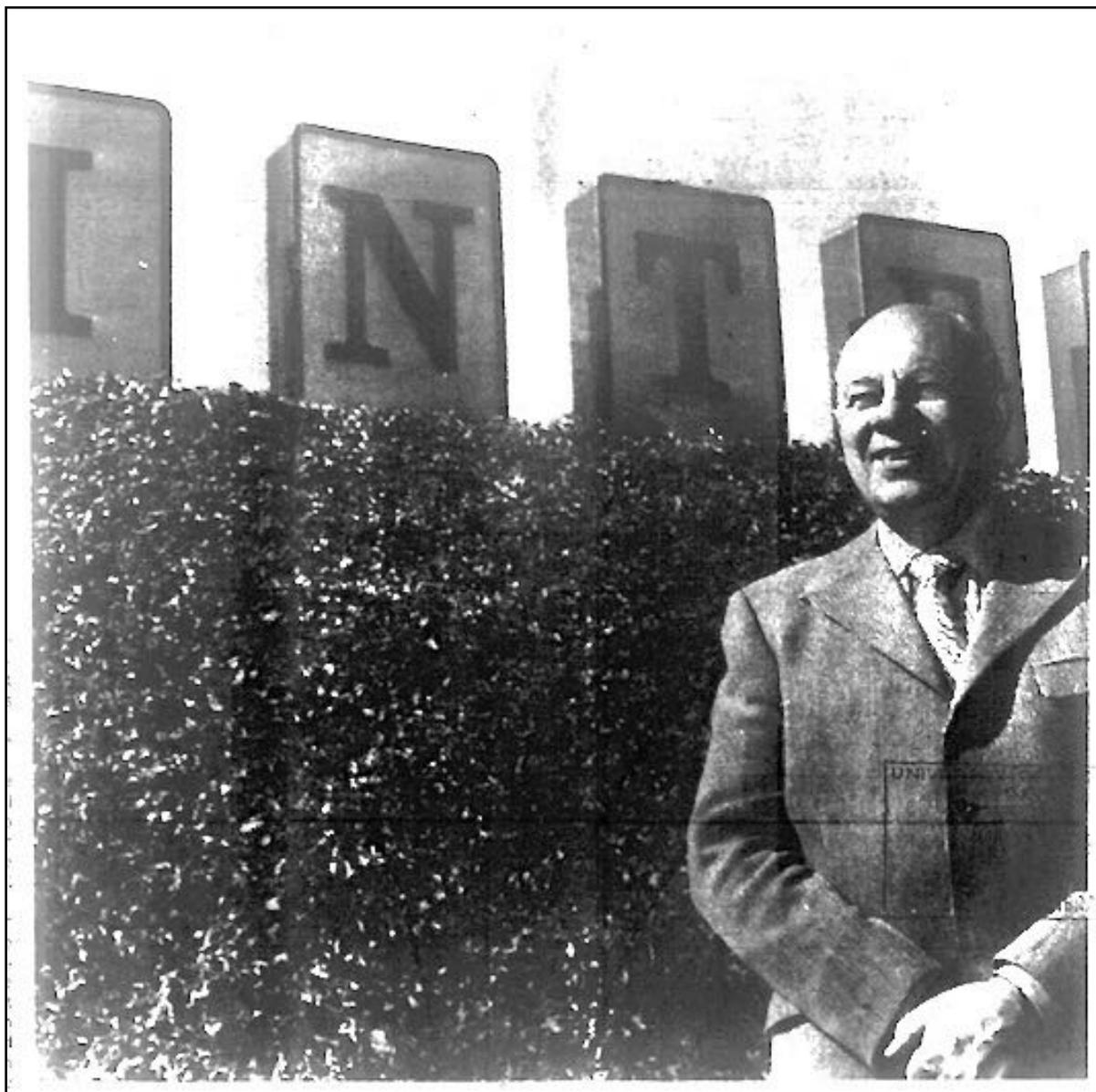
DATA PROCESSING: Of particular interest to visitors will be the Minneapolis Honeywell electronic computer and data processing equipment, which will be in a glass enclosed area adjacent to the reception area on the upper level. Economy of operation and

maintenance costs, extreme efficiency, and almost unlimited work-load capabilities are characteristic of this new "tape" recording and reporting equipment.

Figure 8: Honeywell computers on display at the grand opening.



*Figure 9: The "Avant Garde Sculpture" of the Davis branch of the Yolo County Library.*



*Figure 10: Pacific Standard President, Clifford Gamble, in front of the disputed sign.*

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*Figure 11: Photograph of northwest façade of building, camera facing southeast, 1 March 2015.*



*Figure 12: Photograph of building promontory, camera facing southeast, 1 March 2015.*



*Figure 13: Photograph of east façade, camera facing west, 1 March 2015.*



*Figure 14: Photograph of colonnade on northeast façade, 1 March 2015.*



*Figure 15: Photograph of north façade of building showing bridge from promontory, camera facing west, 1 March 2015.*