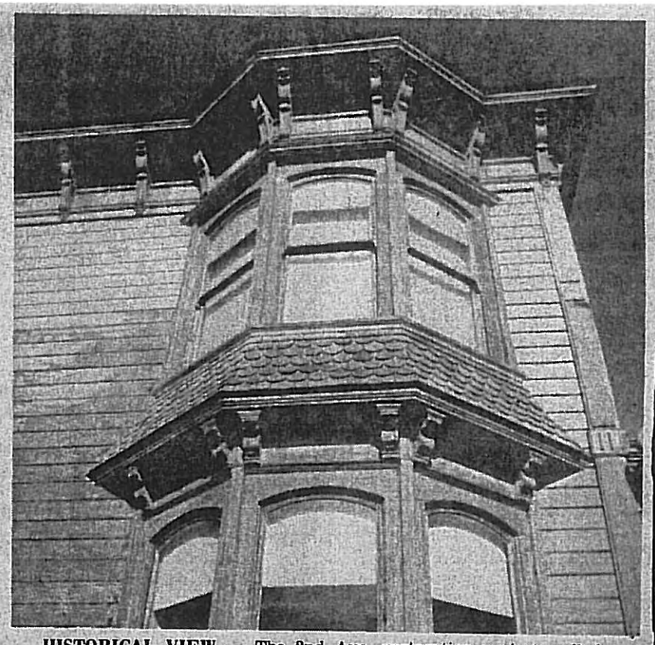

HISTORICAL VIEW — The 2nd Ave. restoration project, called Victoria Square by its developer, attorney Sandor W. Shapery, has been designed to emphasize the irreplaceable architectural features of Victorian structures officially designated historic sites.

Inner city renovation called key to better urban life-style

DALLAS — Structural renovation, long a rather specialized aspect of construction, is receiving fresh consideration from the leaders of the National Assn. of Home Builders.

Perhaps in part influenced by the economic realities of environmental and growth management policies that have slowed construction in suburbs and rural areas, the NAHB leadership has adopted a position of greater participation in the renovation, rehabilitation and recycling of America's inner cities.

During a slide presentation on innovative design, Del Mar architect Paul Thoryk showed a group of builders, archictects, developers and lenders his renderings for the $150,000 renovation of four Victorian-era structures at 2nd Ave. and Ash St. being recycled for use as offices, retail outlets and a restaurant by San Diego attorney Sandor W. Shapery.

The renovation project, to be completed in late spring, has been conceived to emphasize the romantic and functional architecture of the turn-of-the-century structures — all of which have been designated an official historic site by the San Diego Historic Site Board — and at the same time recycle the buildings for "contemporary human-scale uses," Thoryk said.

CENTRE CITY NEWS

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The CENTRE CITY NEWS is published every Thursday as an independent newspaper for the 54,000 people working downtown, the 15,000 people living in the Centre City, the many thousands working and living in Hillcrest, Mission Hills and the senior citizens high rises, plus all the military personnel in the Centre City year round.

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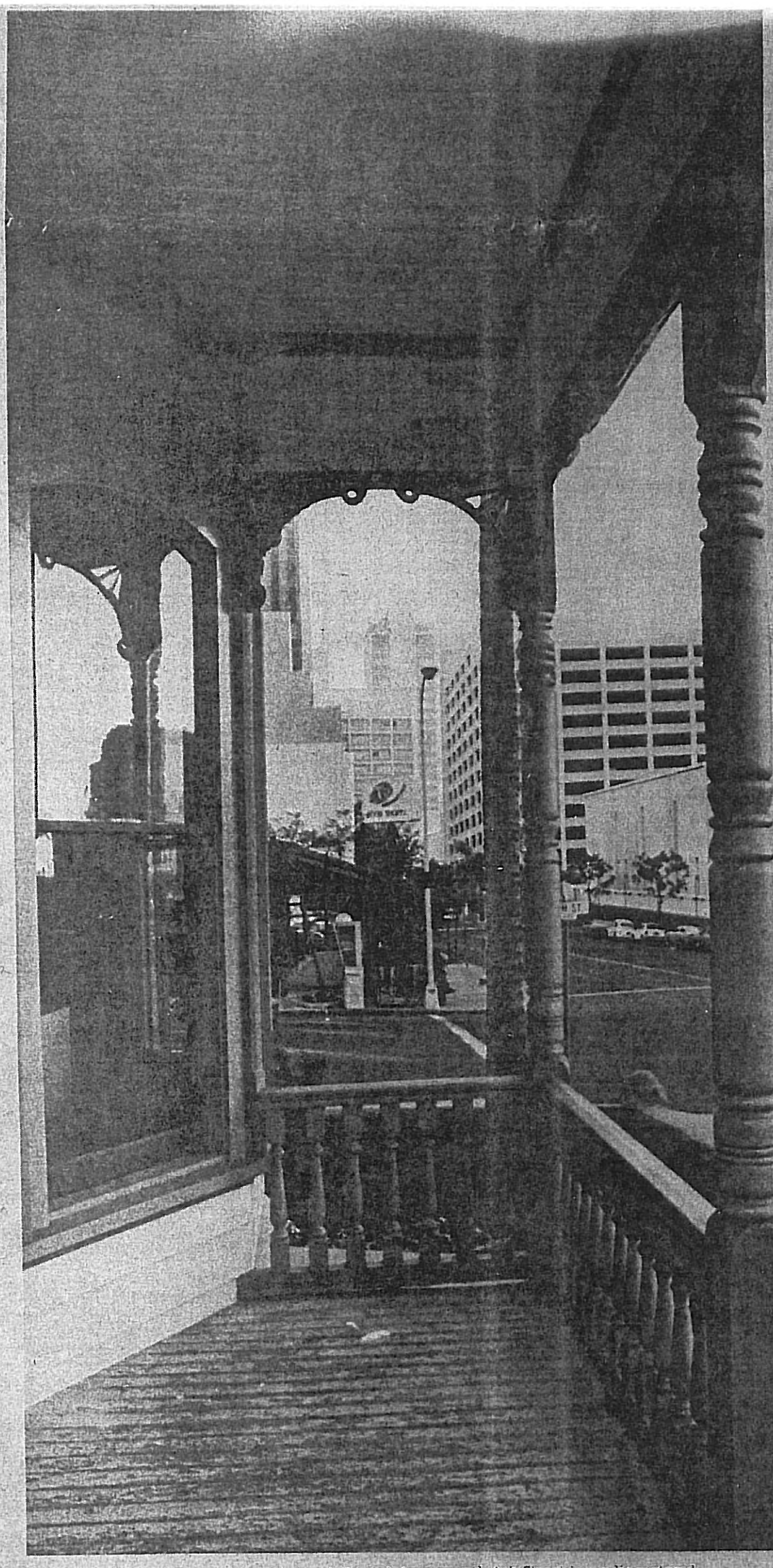
The goal of the CENTRE CITY NEWS is to help further a strong, vigorous Centre City, the heartbeat of San Diego.

Comments and suggestions along this line are welcome at all times. We are desirious to help and work with all advertisers in our circulation area.

Kiessig Corner, a group of Victorian era structures, are being renovated into Victoria Square by Sandor W. Shapery, a San Diego attorney, at the corner of Second and Ash. Victoria Square will contain a restaurant and bar, a sandwich shop, law offices and other commercial businesses when completed in May.

The changing face of San Diego's downtown



OLD STANDBY — House at Second Avenue and Ash Street is a relic restored.

19 hailed for aiding downtown

Those who have contributed to the revitalization of downtown San Diego in the past year were honored yesterday by the Central City Association of San Diego at its annual awards luncheon in Bellville's Dinner Theater.

Nineteen awards were presented to individuals and organizations. They went to:

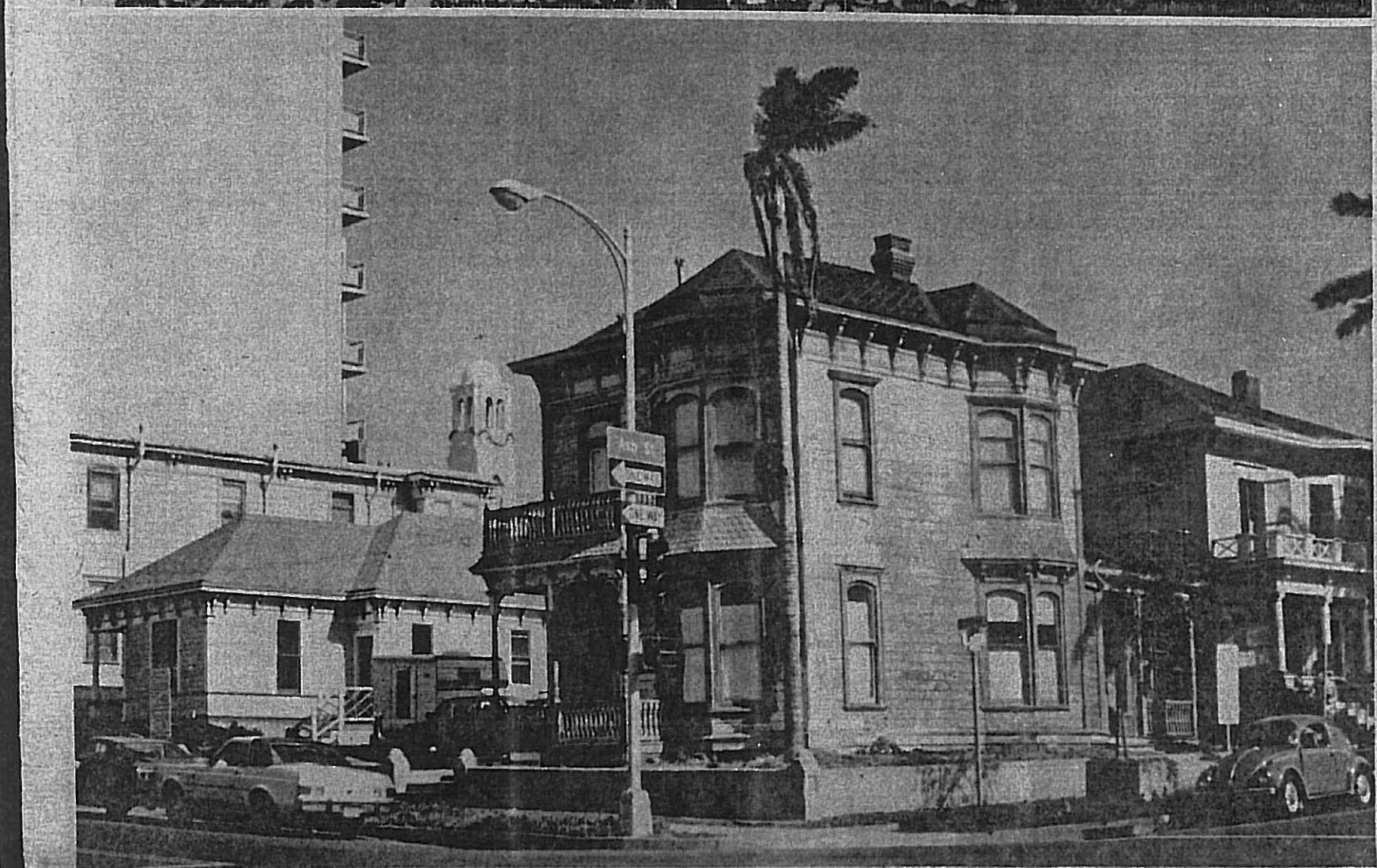
Salvation Army, for its planned construction of an adult rehabilitation building on 13th Street, between Broadway and C Street. Major Ernest Clevetts accepted the award.

The Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero, formerly Royal Inns at the Wharf, for an extensive refurbishment.

Sandy Shapery, owner of four Victorian structures at Second Avenue and Ash Street, for rehabilitating the buildings.

LABOR, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS REFORMS SOUGHT

Builders stress preservation, pa



BETTER THAN EVER — A commercial restoration project designed by Del Mar architect Paul Thoryk, above, will transform a four-building tract at 2nd Ave. and Ash St., below, into a restaurant, office, retail outlet scheduled for completion by late spring.

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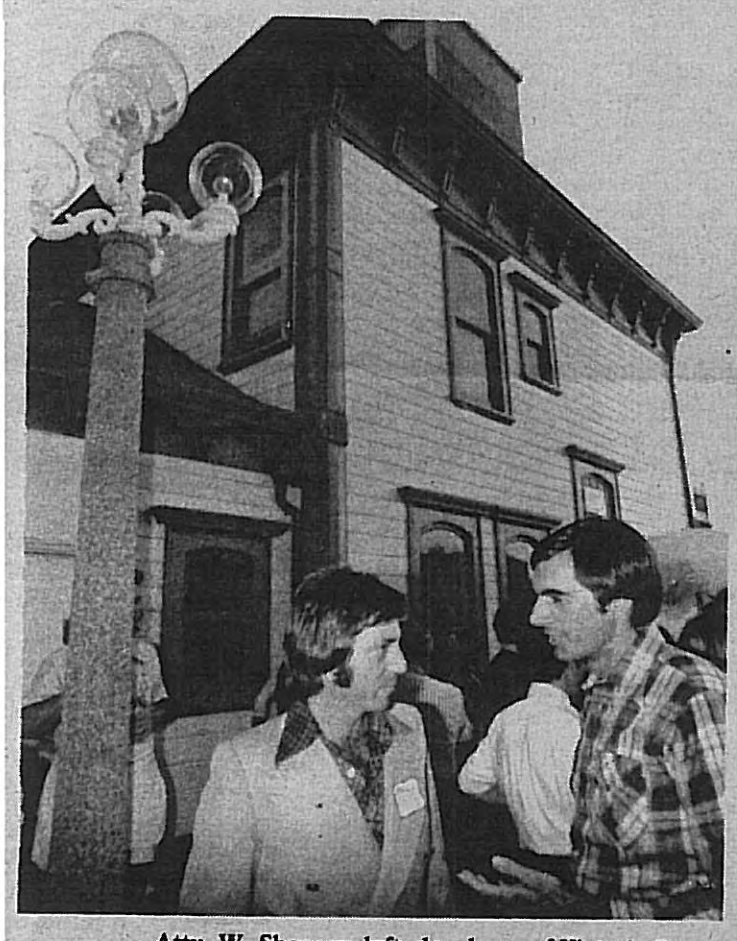
CENTRE CITY NEWS

SERVING DOWNTOWN - HILLCREST - MISSION VALLEY

THURSDAY SEPT 1, 1977

San Diego, California

State Treas. Jesse Unruh, right, was among the guests at the open house at Victoria Square for the law offices of Dillaway, Hughes and Wilson and of Sandor Shapery. Here, Steven Dillaway explains some of the work that went into the renovation project.



Atty. W. Shapery, left, developer of Victoria Square discusses the project with County Supervisor, Rodger Hedgecock during the Aug 19 open house. The building that will be eventually a house or restaurant is in the background.

The law firms of Sandor W. Shapery and of Dillaway, Hughes and Wilson jointly celebrated the opening of their new offices in the renovated Victorian law building of historic Victoria Square on August 19th.

The Victoria Square project was undertaken by Shapery more than a year and about a half million dollars ago, when he decided he wanted to practice law in other than impersonal and plastic surroundings.

Shapery bought the falling down buildings, then known as Kiessig Corner, shortly after they were disignated an historic site by the San Diego Historic Site Board in July, 1976. In its report, the board commented on the significance of observing the adaptive reuse of the buildings to see if it proved feasible and desireable to preserve, rather than destroy, our architectural heritage.

Paul Thoryk was the architect. 'I paid about $275,000 for the site, and I've put another $200,000 into renovation,' Shapery said. 'And I would do it again. 'Iam proud to have preserved an architecturally significant piece of San Diego history.'

Shapery said that he hopes the success of Victoria Square will convince other investors that more structuresdeserve to be saved.

The law firm of Dillaway, Hughes and Wilson has leased the entire second floor of the building. The building features central secretarial and recoptionist services, plus a complete California law libary.

This is the first of the four buildings to open. The other three structures are designated for a restaurant, specialty shop and sandwich shop.

A grand opening in the fall will mark the opening of the entire square.

Shapery is also the only local developer to be considered by the City to participate in the Marina Redevelopment Project.

More than 500 clients and friends of the attorneys attended the twilight party. Guests included County Supervisor Roger Hedgecock, State Sen. Bob Wilson, a partner in the Dillaway, Hughes and Wilson firm, and State Treas. Jesse Unruh. The music of Small and Gamble entertained the party goers and food was provided by Art Bolic. Festivities were arranged by atty. Wayne Hughes.

GALA MARKS VICTORIAN'S REBOUND

'Shackdown' Revived By Restoration

By DANIEL C. CARSON
Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

In the late 1930s, Mrs. Burnett Lee coined a term to describe the decaying rooming houses at Second Avenue and Ash. Street. "Shackdown," she called them.

Yesterday, she did not use that term. All dressed up and wearing pearls, the 39-year resident of San Diego attended a party to celebrate the restoration of the buildings' time-distant beauty.

One of the Victorians, converted into a fashionable law office, opened with a gala of music, food and dignitaries yesterday. The remaining two rooming houses and a carriage house will reopen in the fall as restaurants, specialty shops and offices.

"Shackdown" is hardly an appropriate term to describe the place now.

The front porch of the law office, 222 Ash St., is matted with cane set on red brick under a wood-frame portico. The portico and structure itself are gaily painted in yellow and white, with the green lawn and bright flowers out front reinforcing the cheerful effect.

Inside, traditional oaken furniture rounds out every odd corner of the two-story structure. Tiffany fixtures of stained glass decorate nearly every room, concealing flourescent lights. Douglas fir is mitered around the doors and windows and even cornices the ceilings.

The only visible concession to the modern age is the placement of smoke detectors throughout narrow corridors of the bungalow.

As Wayne Alan Hughes, one of the attorneys renting the second floor of the building, said, "The place has class."

For Sandor W. Shapery, who bought the buildings, masterminded the restoration and shepherded his plan through the governmental permit process, the completion of the first building represents a triumph.

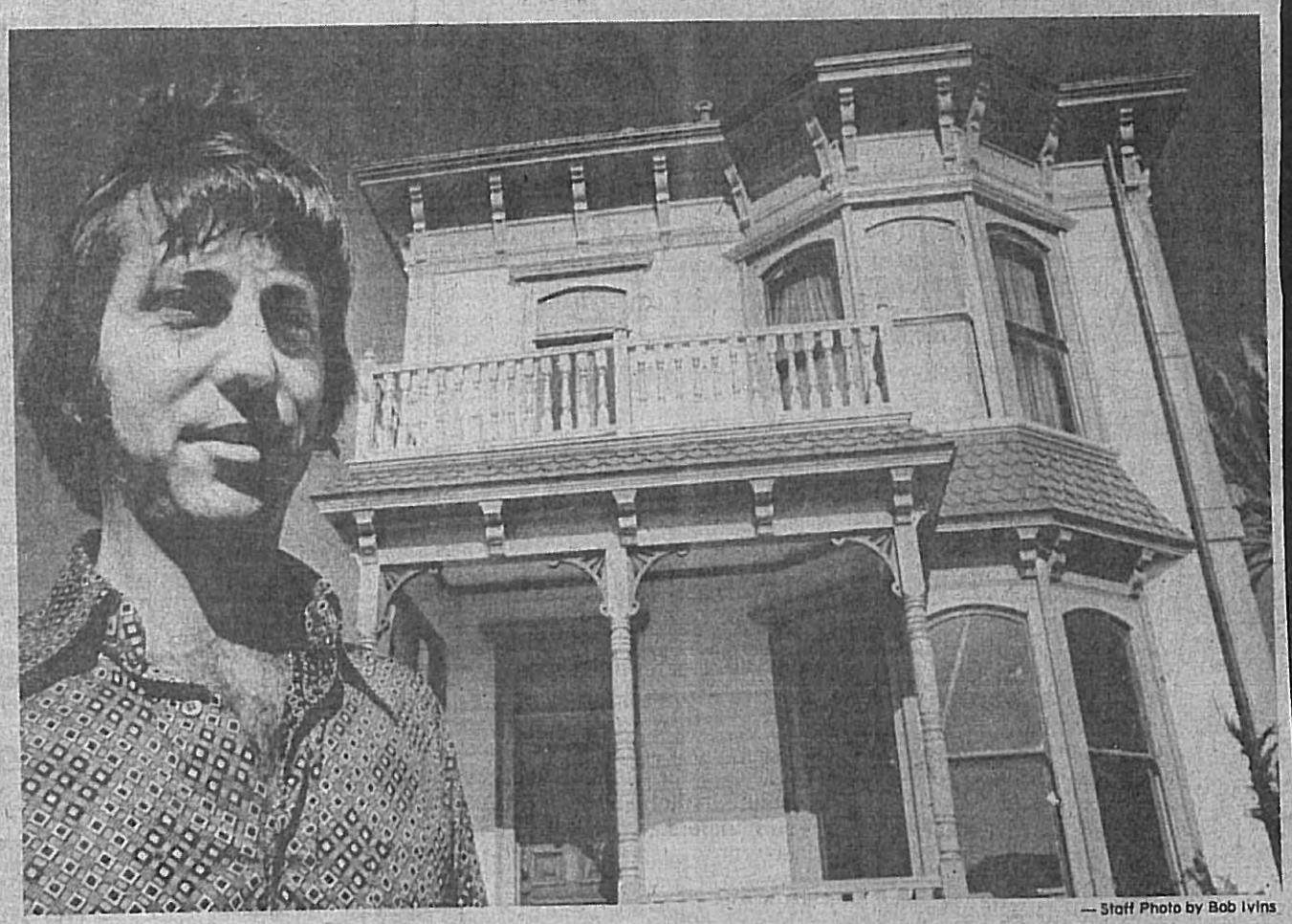
"Nobody down at City Hall has that much experience in dealing with restoration," Shapery said. "That makes it very difficult to get a specific definition of what the law allows."

Shapery had an advantage. He is a lawyer, specializing in real estate development. In fact, he has taken over the first floor of 222 Ash for his own practice.

"I've had tremendous cooperation from the city departments in this project. Still, it was a very frustrating process, even for an attorney," he said, one that took many months to complete.

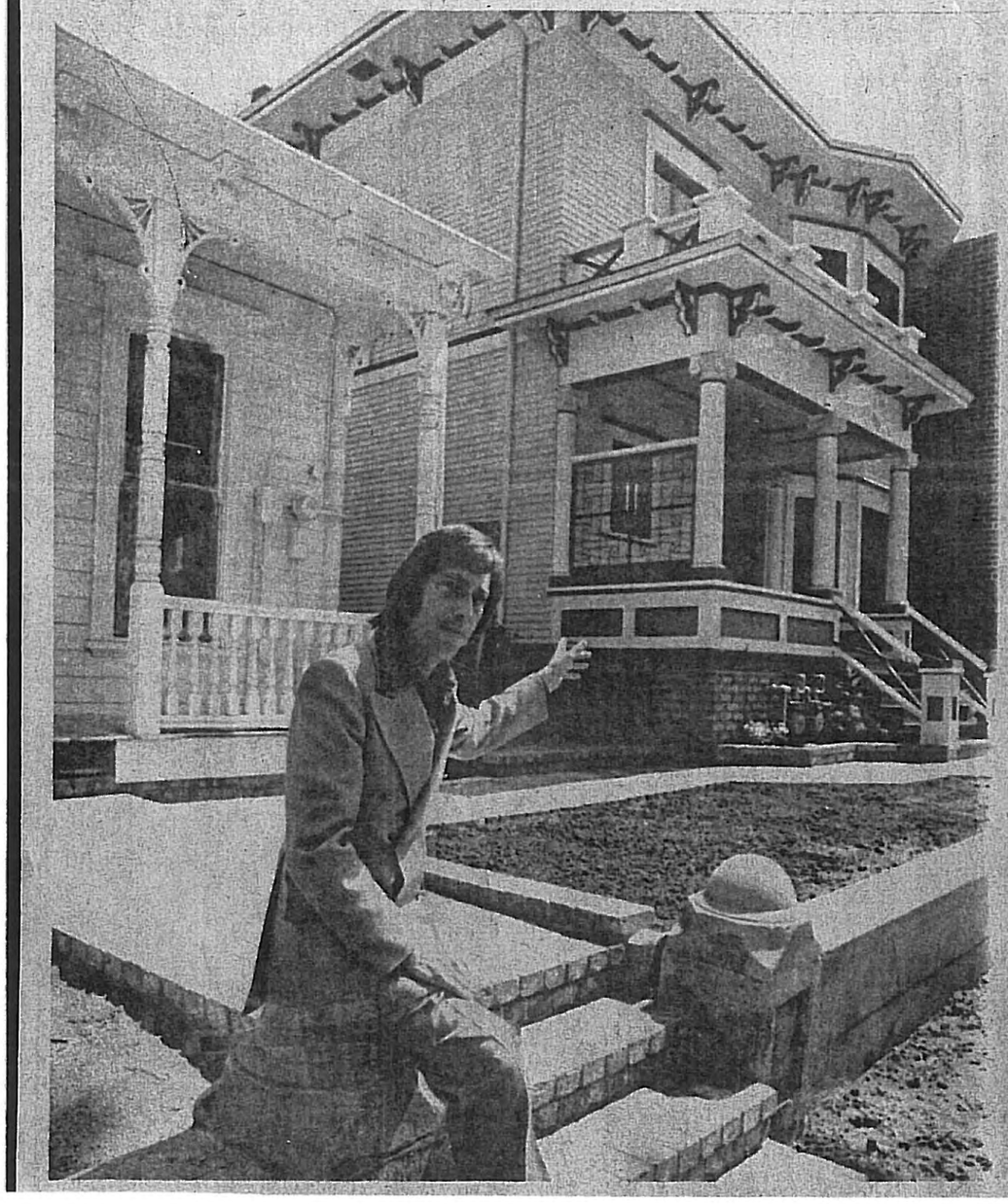
Early last year, after devising a plan, he ran head-on into problems involving zoning law and the structure of the buildings. The hallways were too narrow, the houses were set too close together and the wood structure prohibited their use for commercial purposes.

Shapery researched the buildings' origins. The bungalow on the corner, he discovered, was built by a Gold Rush era immigrant from Germany, Charles Kiessig. Legend has it Kiessig used to bury $20 gold pieces under the house in glass jars.



— Staff Photo by Bob Ivins

Sandor W. Shapery, a San Diego attorney specializing in real estate development, is the man who masterminded the restoration of three Victorian rooming houses and a carriage house at Second Avenue and Ash Street. He said he has invested almost half a million dollars and much time in the project.



ARTISTS GIVE LIFE TO HISTORIC SITE

Dreams of gingerbread dance in sleeping Victorian complex

By KAY JARVIS
TRIBUNE Building and Real Estate Editor

Sandor Shapery is a man who doesn't care much for the soaring glitter of skyscrapers.

He's wagering somewhere in the area of a half million dollars that other people feel the same way.

Shapery, a 33-year-old attorney who specializes in real estate development and commercial law, expresses "disenchantment with the plastic world, the directions it's going, the loss of individual identity and quality."

That's quite a mouthful, but Shapery isn't just talking. Last August he acquired a complex of four falling-down residential buildings at the northeast corner of 2nd Ave. and Ash St. and is currently finishing renovation.

When he took over the Victorian-era dwellings, they were in use as what might be kindly called low-cost housing. The rents didn't meet the tax payments and time was working with desolating effect.

In spite of that, Kiessig Corner, as it was known, was designated a historic site by the San Diego Historic Site Board.

The site board was particularly interested in the first of the four structures, which was built in 1894 by Charles Kiessig (and has remained in the Kiessig family for 82 years) because of its Italian Renaissance architecture and because it was essentially unchanged since construction.

Kiessig Corner, which will be known as Victoria Square when it begins its new lease on life as a commercial complex, includes the original two-story building, a second residential dwelling built about 1904, one that was moved onto the premises the same year and lastly, a carriage house that deteriorated finally into a junk room.

All that will be changed when the refurbished buildings open, splendid with polished floors and burnished wood interiors, glowing with stained glass panels and shimmering bay windows, and gingerbready with Victorian architectural refinements.

Shapery is going to a great deal of trouble to save what can be saved and to restore what was lost.

So much so that rather than carpenters and craftsmen, he calls the men working on the buildings

BUILDING
REAL ESTATE

"artists" because they not only want to do the work to perfection but at times insist on doing it over and over.

"Quality control is not the problem here," Shapery says. In fact, he estimates some 20,000 man hours will have been spent when the buildings are complete in August.

The serious problems encountered with the hardy old buildings were mainly related to zoning and structure.

Shapery said the city officials had trouble defining what the code requirements are and how they should be interpreted in regard to restoration. "It turned out to be a continuous process," Shapery says, "but they wanted to see it work."

Structurally, the foundation of the corner building had to be rebuilt and a beam had to be set under the width of the office building. Monitored smoke detectors were required because of the proximity to boundary lines.

It's worth it, he says, because much of the detail could never have been duplicated in a new building, much less the atmosphere. He paid $276,000 for the property and estimates $200,000 in costs.

The Victoria Square complex will be utilized like this:

Kiessig House, the original corner building at 2nd Ave. and Ash St. will be a restaurant and bar decorated with period furniture and leaded glass. Shapery discovered some newspapers dating to the early 1900s under old flooring, and they will be used to decorate walls and provide guests with a glimpse back into San Diego's history.

For additional dining space, Shapery is adding a large enclosed gazebo which will be the focal point of a large courtyard.

The building to the north of Kiessig House, moved onto the land about 1904, has been restored and, although it will ultimately be used for commercial purposes, it is presently used as law offices.

A small building to the rear was originally used as a carriage house, but will be a sandwich shop when renovation is complete.

The building at 222 Ash St., adjacent to the corner house, will be converted into 10 separate law offices, many boasting fireplaces and old-fashioned book cases, with a central secretarial and reception area.

The historical background of the buildings has some rather titillating sidelights.

See KIESSIG, E-2

San Diego History News

Formerly San Diego Historical Society Newsletter

APPLICATION TO MAIL AT SECOND CLASS POSTAGE RATES IS PENDING AT SAN DIEGO, CA.

Vol. XIII No. 8 PUBLISHED BY THE SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY August, 1976

Historical Site Board Report

Kiessig Corner Designated

Old Charles Kiessig house, corner of 2nd & Ash Streets. *Clay Scott photo*

By Louise Dyer

The Kiessig Corner and the U. S. Customs and Court House were both designated historic sites at the meeting of the San Diego Historical Site Board on July 9.

The Kiessig Corner, comprising two lots at the corner of Second and Ash in downtown San Diego, was approved as Site No. 110. This 100 x 100 ft. corner includes the Italian Renaissance Kiessig home, two other houses and a small carriage house. The two story frame home, still in excellent condition, was constructed in 1894 by Charles Kiessig who came here in 1886 from his native Germany. He first built the Tower House at 4th and F Streets where he operated a gun shop from 1889 until his death in 1914. The residence at 1401 Second Avenue is exceptional in that it is essentially unchanged since its construction probably due to the fact that it has been owned and occupied by the Kiessig family for its 82 years. The contrast to the surrounding buildings and its irregular shape, due to projecting bays and porches, make the structure stand out in the midst of a modern urban setting. Architectural features include a one-story kitchen and porch area fronting onto Ash Street, circular pattern ornamental butt wood shingles, a railing of turned spindles and posts on the balcony and side porch and slightly arched windows capped by a decorative shelf composed of intricate moldings.

Site designation was requested by Sandor W. Shapery who holds the property in an escrow which is expected to close the end of July. Mr. Shapery proposes a Victoria Square for the property. His restoration plans include a restaurant in the Kiessig House. Period furnishings, leaded glass and a gaslight outdoor patio for eating will be added. He plans to convert the other two Victorian type homes which presently are multiple dwellings to office space. Corbels, routed window frames and classical Victorian gingerbread which have been removed through the years will be replaced. Leaded glass windows and gas lights will be added. The small carriage house will become a sandwich shop. Extensive landscaping and the addition of a small gazebo will compliment this Victorian oasis in downtown San Diego.