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A Visit to 2nd Street in Baywood Park

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There is an old saying that “the only constant is change.” This is a story about change – the changes that have taken place on one street in Los Osos. In the 1950’s, 2nd Street in Baywood Park had wide open spaces – before the car-culture took over with sidewalks, gutters and parking spots. In this picture from the mid 1950’s, the plumbing and electrical store on the left was built as a hardware store in 1953. It also served as the town’s post office and library. Then later in the 1960’s, the free spirit known as the “Baykeeper” – artist and sandal maker Sandal Markara – who lived on his home-built boat in the bay, had his studio there.

Next to it is Boot and Spur, the town’s first bar. Cowboys used to ride up, tie their horses to a post, go inside and pick up beer. Hunters took their game inside while they imbibed, away from mountain lions, coyotes and foxes who were known to frequent the area. Niffy’s Merrimaker, which is there now, is still a bar.

The identically designed Baywood Park Market, with its curved entryway with sidelights of glass block, is across the street on the far right. The architect put his

last name and the building's date above the door. Later it morphed into a second-hand store, then became a market again. Today it lives on as a convenience store.

Not visible in the photo was a third identical building, a gas station, on the southeast corner of the street. After the gas pumps were removed, it was divided into separate shops, once housing an art gallery and a newspaper office. It remained vacant for years before it was demolished in 2013.

These three identical buildings of the Streamline Moderne style were designed by architect Neal Wright (no relation to Frank Lloyd). Richard Stuart Otto, the second large developer for Los Osos/Baywood Park after Walter Redfield, commissioned them in 1947.

No designer is known for Otto's two Baywood Park offices down the street to the south. The wood building on the corner of 2nd Street and El Moro remains. The other brick building was demolished in 1983 to be part of an office space that was never completed. The new property owners, the Baywood Inn, finished the project in 1990, and owns both buildings. Otto's other sales office was in Hollywood.

This historical visit down memory lane demonstrates change, but it also shows the constancy of community spirit that carries on.