

On this map, I counted 583 buildings that the Sanborn surveyors classified as dwellings or a form of developed commercial structure. These were, in my judgment, the significant structures of Davis in 1945.

This category of “significant structures” is separate from an almost equal number of accessory buildings, which are primarily garages and sheds, that are also seen on the map. I did not count any of these.

NUMBER OF SURVIVING 1945 DAVIS BUILDINGS

How many of those 583 buildings can we still see today? In a series of two hour or longer sessions in late December 1999 and early January 2000, I stood in front of the location of each of these 583 buildings. Ledger-sized Sanborn maps on an oversized clipboard in hand, I looked at each place and decided if the 1945 building was or was not still there.

Before reporting what I found, I need to explain that only recently has it become practical to count and report the results on maps such as in the centerfold. In mid-1999, the educational materials publisher Chadwyck-Healey, Inc. began digitalizing Sanborn maps in the “TIF” format and offering them for sale on CDs at reasonable prices. In this form, the twelve 1945 sheets can be manipulated in many ways, including printing at virtually any size or, as on pp. 10-11, assembling them into a centerfold map and coding them.

Before the Chadwyck-Healey scans, Sanborn maps were awesomely oversized, clumsy to use, and under-utilized for these reasons. But, digitalization has rendered them malleable and thus manageable. Using ledger-sized (11 by 17 inch) prints-outs of the 12 sheets, the present counting and reporting has been easy.

Proceeding: by my reckoning, 330 of the 583 buildings are still there. This is a survival rate—one might term it—of 57% (Table 1, page 7). Or in the reverse, it is a demolition rate of 43%. Missing structures are shown in solid black on the centerfold map.

Most of the 330 look much as they likely appeared in 1945. Some have been remodeled quite extensively but continue to convey their period, so I counted them as still standing.

In a strict sense, a few are still extant, but so submerged in a remodeling or rebuilding that they are no longer recognizable or of their original period. I classified these 17 structures as remodeled-out-of-character (“R.O.O.C.”), counted them as demolished, and labeled them as such on the map.

This classification was subjective and others may disagree, but the number of R.O.O.C. structures is small.

