

Demo party at Fresno's Expositor Building to reveal original walls

By BoNhia Lee
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A growing urban movement to peel back the stucco and slipcover facades that modernized old downtown buildings in the 1950s and 1960s is coming to downtown Fresno's Fulton Mall.

On Saturday, volunteers — history lovers, downtown Fresno business owners and the city's biggest cheerleaders — will remove an interior plaster wall in the historic Expositor Building to get a look at its original brick wall and windows.

The prep work begins Friday evening. Demolition starts on Saturday.

Once the original wall of the narrow, two-story building is uncovered, the owner can get a better idea of the redevelopment possibilities, said Craig Scharton, Fulton Mall manager for the [Downtown Fresno Partnership](#), who is helping to organize the demolition party.

Scharton identified the owner as Henry Liu, who is from out of town. Liu is "committed to restoring the front of the building," Scharton said.

The [Expositor Building](#), located just south of the clock tower next to Goodwill, is one of the oldest buildings in downtown Fresno. It was built in 1881 with only one floor, according to the [Local Register of Historic Resources](#). A second story was added in 1888 and an addition to the rear of the building was installed in 1898.

The building was home to the city's first newspaper — the [Fresno Daily Expositor](#). The printing presses were on the ground level while editorial offices were located upstairs. The paper shut down in 1898.

A saloon and lodge hall later moved into the building. In the 1960s, the building facade was covered in stucco as part of the Fulton Mall project, a modernization of buildings. Two botanical stores now occupy the first floor while the second floor remains empty. The stairway between the two levels was removed years ago.

Local amateur historian John Rupe discovered the old building while doing research in 2013 for a project he was working on to build a model of historic Fresno as it looked at the turn of the 20th century.

Rupe and group members of Fresno's Past took their findings to the [Fresno Historic Preservation Commission](#) to have it designated as a heritage property and listed on the Local Register of Historic Resources.

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[Expositor Building Demo Party](#)

When: 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, preparation work; 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, wall demolition and debris removal; noon to 1 p.m. lunch; 1 to 5 p.m. wall demolition, debris removal, clean up and tear down.

Where: Expositor Building, 1031 Fulton Mall, next to Goodwill, Fresno.

Details: Volunteers must be over 18. You have to scale two ladders, wear masks and sign liability waivers. Bring hand tools, goggles, and gloves if you have them.