



—Times-Union Photo—Bob Gapsky

Col. Carey E. Brown outside cobblestone home.

He Helped to Plan Decades of Growth

By JAN BARBER

When Carey H. Brown started as a planner, the Panama Canal was under construction and zoning for cities was in its infancy.

Now Col. Brown, 84, with six decades of planning behind him including projects ranging from preparing zoning in Washington, D. C., to a Rochester master plan, is retiring.

A new chairman will be chosen tomorrow night to fill his place on the Wheatland Planning Board.

After 13 years on the board and the Monroe County Planning Council, he resigned this month "not due to a lack of interest" but as a result of "decreasing vigor as the years go on." He had served as a town planner since the Wheatland Planning Board was formed in 1957 and had served as its chairman for all but about two years.

Sitting on the porch of the 140-year-old cobblestone home he has owned in Wheatland since 1941, Col. Brown talked about some of those 60 years of planning, including the 13 in Wheatland and a year on the Scottsville Planning Board.

He saw the growing centralization in city building.

"The whole idea of city planning and zoning in particular has all been developed within the last 50 years or more. Before that there was a grocery or a little store on every corner of the main streets," he says. "They were spotted in, then. Plazas have just developed within the last few years.

"Zoning helped to concentrate the stores, but, too, it was the business people themselves who realized the advantages of being in one place. And the auto came along and people needed a place to park and didn't need a store on the corner to walk to."

In public buildings, Col. Brown saw the rise of the civic center concept, as an illustration of concentrated building. "The civic center idea was largely a development of people interested in planning. Prior to that time public buildings were scattered out around the town," Col. Brown said.

In Wheatland, Col. Brown has seen rural growth. During his tenure as planning board chairman, he saw the development of North Road, Browns Road, northwest Wheatland, the Rolling Acres Subdivision and the Scottsville Plaza on Scottsville Road.

What of the future of planning?

In general, Col. Brown says "the planned unit development (PUD) is an interesting new thing."

But, he adds, that he saw the beginnings of PUD years ago. "It has been within my lifetime that forerunners of that were done," he adds. In the 1920's, Co. Brown saw a section of Baltimore rise on a small scale of the PUD type.

"I think the general principal of PUD is good," Col. Brown says, "but I think we have to consider the locations and type of structure.

Personally, Col. Brown says he would like to see "a country of homeowners" develop, but he adds that he knows there are other housing needs.

For Wheatland, Col. Brown "trusts in the future it will have fine development. I trust people will want to preserve the general rural nature of the community."

A native of Ohio, Col. Brown graduated from West Point in 1910, fifth in his class and joined the Army Corps of Engineers. That first year after graduation as a fledgling engineer, he observed projects including the construction of the Panama Canal.

After World War I, his service in the Corps included work as assistant engineer commissioner for the District of Columbia for three years and en-

gineer for the National Capitol Park and Planning Commission for four years.

"We adopted the first zoning regulations in Washington, D.C., then," Col. Brown said. "It was one of the first in the country and a model for others to follow." In the capital, Col. Brown oversaw development which included the water, sewer and school systems.

In 1930, he retired from the Corps and came to Rochester as director of the Rochester Civic Improvement Association, an organization sponsored by community business leaders interested in city planning.

The association and Col. Brown worked for the implementation of the Bartholomew master plan for the city. It called for a plaza to be built on a deck over the Genesee River in the heart of the city with City Hall on the deck along Broad Street looking down the river. He says the present Rundel Library and the Civic Center sites were part of the plans.

In 1934, Col. Brown joined Eastman Kodak and helped in the development of Kodak Park. He retired 20 years later from Kodak as manager of engineering and manufacturing services.