



St. Joseph's Shrine on Santa Cruz's West Cliff Drive was built in 1950 to honor the Virgin Mary's husband.

RICK E. MARTIN — MERCURY NEWS

Santa Cruz chapel being remodeled

■ The 43-year-old St. Joseph's Shrine will be the base for a new Romanesque church and hall.

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A Catholic chapel undergoing a grand remodeling on West Cliff Drive above the surf of Monterey Bay is certain to become a Santa Cruz landmark.

Using the old, flat-roofed building of St. Joseph's Shrine as a base, carpenters are constructing a Romanesque church and hall just a stone's throw from Lighthouse Field at a spot visible from the city's municipal wharf and much of the rest of town.

Owned and operated by the priests of the Oblates of St. Joseph, the old building went up in 1950. It

was intended, according to the architect for the remodeling project, as the base for a national shrine the priests hoped to build to honor the saint whom Christians believe was the husband of the Blessed Virgin, mother of Jesus.

Although the religious order — which was founded to minister to immigrants and has, in Santa Cruz, served families from Italy — was unable to complete the shrine 43 years ago, it now can enlarge the church, according to architect Mark Primack.

"The walls of the original building are 10-inch-

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Monterey Bay church undergoes remodeling

■ CHURCH

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thick concrete," Primack said. "They were intended to support the shrine the Oblates hoped to construct."

Dick Stubendorff, the city's chief building official, agreed that the original building — which housed a chapel and the church hall — "has pretty substantial footings." He said, however, that some structural work was needed to meet present seismic standards.

The finished building still will consist of a chapel and a church hall, Primack said. For the time being, members of the congregation — many of them of Italian descent — are attending Mass in a small annex that used to house an exhibit featuring a replica of the Shroud of Turin.

Primack said the "front" of the building facing West Cliff Drive and the Cowell's surfing area below — and the prominent surfer statue across the street — actually will be the back wall of the

kitchen for the church hall. The chapel itself will be at the rear of the property, away from the street.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the new church facade will be a large, back-lighted stained glass window shaped like a Star of David.

Primack, who is Jewish, said friends ask him how he managed to persuade the Roman Catholic priests to install the star that is a symbol of Judaism.

"It is also a symbol associated with St. Joseph," noted Primack, pointing out that the New Testament identifies the saint as a descendant of biblical King David.

Project manager Doug Williams, with Slatter Construction, said the statue of St. Joseph that now sits in front of the building will be installed on a platform in front of the Star of David window.

Santa Cruz historian Ross Eric Gibson noted the Oblates' property — which the order used as a seminary for young men studying for the priesthood — was a gift to the order from James D. Phelan, the former San Francisco mayor and U.S. senator, who kept a summer home at Lighthouse Point.