

Ohta mansion restored

By MARJ VON B

The Soquel home of the Dr. Victor Ohta family has been put up for sale.

Originally valued at about \$250,000, the hill-top mansion with its 10-acre site is being offered for \$185,000 by Wells Fargo Bank, trustee of the Ohta estate.

The house was once a stark reminder of the tragedy that took place there the night of Oct. 19, 1970, when Dr. Ohta, his wife and two young sons and the doctor's secretary were shot and killed by John Linley Frazier.

After the murders, Frazier set fire to the house. A central portion of the structure was gutted and the rest was damaged by smoke before firemen arrived.

In the months afterward, the building suffered other damage from a never-ending stream of curious trespassers.

At first the house was offered for sale "as is," but this proved to be unsuccessful, so it was decided to restore it.

Bogard Construction Co., original builders of the house under architect Aaron Green, was hired for the job.

Because of the recurring vandalism, in January a young Bogard employee, John Briggs and his wife, Joy, moved into an undamaged portion of the home to act as caretakers while the reconstruction work was going on.

In the months that have followed, it has become a beautiful home once more. Approximately \$70,000 was spent on the reconstruction.

One day recently Mrs. Briggs let newsmen from the Green Sheet tour the house which had been opened that morning for inspection by local Realtors.

It was hard to believe that it was the same place visited before under such different circumstances.

The words of Mrs. Ohta to a friend came touchingly to mind, "When I die I want to leave something beautiful behind me."

Thinking of the possible difficulties of selling the house because of what had happened there, we asked Mrs. Briggs how she felt about living there.

"The tragedy of the Ohtas' hasn't touched me, personally," she said, "because I never knew them."

"But now that the house is whole again, I have the feeling that the people who lived here were happy and loved their home."

"What it needs now," she said simply, "is the energy and love that was put into it in the first place, and it again can be a happy home."

Ironically, enough, the Ohta home has in a sense been the first house Mrs. Briggs has shared with her husband.

She came there as a bride of three months, and will probably remain there until the house is sold.



Master bedroom—Frazier used glass door to enter house many times

"In some ways it has been an emotional experience for me," Mrs. Briggs said.

She recounted "unbelievable" times when strangers suddenly appeared inside the house without invitation, just to satisfy morbid curiosity.

Acquisition of a huge dog, a cross between a Great Dane and a Boxer, put an end to that.

Then there were other times when friends of the Ohta Family came.

"For them, I got the feeling it was something they had to do . . . to lay the tragedy to rest . . . It was in a sense, the final goodbye."

"The most emotional encounters," she said, were with the children, friends of the Ohta sons, Taggart and Derek, who were slain.

"One day some friends of Taggart's came. They talked for a long time about their friend, as he was, and not about what had happened," she said.

"I got the feeling that they would always remember him in a very positive way."

Mrs. Briggs said that the house would remain closed to the public in general and would be shown only by appointment through real estate agents.



Central part of restored home—kitchen is off to right