

Historic inn to stay in the family

Historic Houses

By SHANNA MCCORD

smccord@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — The Darling House, a West Cliff Drive bed and breakfast overlooking Cowell Beach, will remain in the hands of longtime owners Darrell and Karen Darling and stay open for overnight visitors.

The Darlings, who bought the 5,500-square-foot historic Mission Revival-style home in 1983 for \$611,000, put the 100-year-old house up for sale two years ago as business started to slow amid the recession.

However, unable to find what they considered the right buyer — with an asking price around \$4.55 million — the Darlings have decided to keep the property and turn over the innkeeping business to their daughter, Denise Darling, 51.

A reopening ice cream social

'What we have here is unique. The setting is beautiful, the house is historic.'

DENISE DARLING, new inn owner

will be held Monday to pass the inn's keys to Denise and her husband, James Campbell.

"We've had a number of people who've said they're interested, but we're not going to give it away," said Darrell Darling, 70, a former pastor. "We never really wanted to sell it if Denise wanted to run it."

Denise Darling said she views the eight-bedroom family home as an asset for the Santa Cruz community, a place often used to host fundraisers for political

hopefuls and events for local non-profits. The Darlings have been very active in Democratic Party politics.

Denise Darling and her husband will live at the property along with her parents, who plan to help with the gardening.

Despite a tough economic environment for the hospitality industry, Denise Darling believes the bed and breakfast, with rooms fetching up to \$345 a night in the summer, can thrive.

"What we have here is unique," Denise Darling said. "That's where I see potential. The setting is beautiful, the house is historic. It has the original craftsman workmanship we don't find these days."

The three-level home, built in 1910 and designed by architect William Weeks, was named a county historic landmark in 1986.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Denise Darling, left, is taking over the reins from her parents, Darrell and Karen, to keep the Darling House bed and breakfast open.