

Memories for sale

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By HERON MARQUEZ ESTRADA

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — The beginning of this story is not today, Monday, July 22, 1985, but more than 100 years ago.

That was when the "Sunshine Villa" was built by Dr. Francis M. Kittredge at the corner of Third and Front streets as a home for his wife, a daughter of Judge William Blackburn.

Over the next few decades the estate changed owners, functions, even names (becoming the present Hotel McCray), but the building's facade and appearance remained basically the same as it became a landmark in Santa Cruz.

Now for \$1.5 million you can own a piece of local history as the hotel, believed to be oldest hotel and one of the oldest structures in the city, is on the auction block, according to Doug Deitch, the agent in charge of the sale.

Deitch said he has been receiving an average of 10 calls a day about the property, mainly from tourists visiting the city who notice the prominent for sale sign on the property.

Thus far none has approached the asking price and some have been scared off by the restrictive zoning accompanying the hotel because it is protected as an historical landmark.

It is this restrictive zoning, plus waning interest in running a hotel, that is prompting the present owner, Charles Kilpatrick, to sell the property, which is approximately 52,000 square feet, Deitch said.

Deitch said that the best use for the property at the moment, one that would make it into a money making proposition, would be restoring the hotel to accommodate guests with perhaps a restaurant-bar.

He admits that such a move would require a rezoning of the property and an investment of as much as \$1 million to renovate the acreage properly.

As it now stands the building is but a shade of its former self when it served first as a hotel and then as a mansion for J. Philip Smith, a New York food distributor who bought the property in about 1890.

He transformed the hotel, which he renamed the Sunshine Villa, into

Hotels



Historic Hotel McCray
is on the auction block

an imposing summer residence for his family and into one of the social centers of old Santa Cruz.

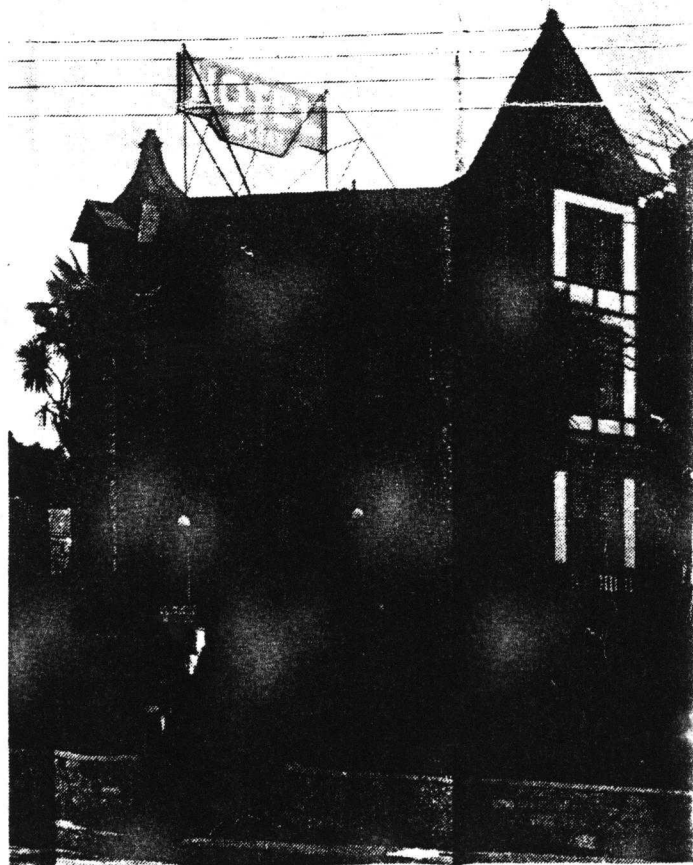
The high point of the Smith reign were the Venetian Water Carnivals which Smith helped underwrite. A dam was built at the city's edge and the San Lorenzo River was transformed into a lake for the three day affairs.

The Smiths lived in the home until about 1920 when a group of Santa Cruz men bought the mansion. In 1926 the home was purchased by John McCray, who also operated a hotel in Paso Robles at that time.

The property was renamed the Hotel McCray and was operated as a commercial establishment for about 17 years.

The acreage, which includes several other buildings beside the main house, changed hands several times in the two decades until it was sold to Porter Kilpatrick in 1954.

The house was then passed on to Charles Kilpatrick in 1977 when his father died. The family had moved here from Alaska.



Hotel McCray in its day