



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Friends of the Cowell Lime Works Historic District, a UC Santa Cruz-affiliated preservation group, hopes to tear down and rebuild the Lime Works' hay barn.

# RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY

PRESERVATION GROUP HOPES TO RETURN UC SANTA CRUZ BARN TO HEYDAY GLORY

UCSC- [redacted] 2011-2020  
By ALIA WILSON

awilson@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — More than 100 years ago, the Cowell Lime Works Hay Barn housed hay for hungry oxen that hauled lime from the quarries to the Santa Cruz wharf.

Now the 19th century structure near the base of UC Santa Cruz is home to termites, cobwebs and moss. A group is hoping to change that — by tearing down the barn by and rebuilding it.

"It's very iconic," said Joe Michalak of the Friends of Cowell Lime Works Historic District.

The barn is part of the 30-acre Cowell Lime Works Historic District, which includes four lime kilns, a cooperage, a cookhouse, limeworker cabins, the Cardiff

House and other historic structures.

"What it really represents — all the buildings in the district, but particularly the hay barn — is that history in the community is fast disappearing," Michalak said. "These buildings represent and give insight to the way people lived in that era. When these buildings are gone, people may not have the same level of interest in what went on in that time period."

In the 1850s and 1860s, the area was the largest lime manufacturing operation in California. Used in cement, stucco and other building materials, lime was in high demand during the development of California cities, including San Francisco, after the Gold Rush.

The barn's construction has the preservationists eager to get

to work on the building, which is believed to date to the 1860s.

Like pieces of a puzzle, the structure's frame is fitted together, rather than nailed, using mortise-and-tenon construction. Michalak said this style of construction is found all over the Eastern U.S., but is relatively rare in California. Craftsmen with the Timber Framers Guild still practice this craft and would use it to reconstruct the barn frame.

"It's one thing to see old photos or read about in books, but it's quite something else to have these buildings — old lime kilns, barns, workers cabins — right there where people can see them," Lime Works Board President Frank Perry said. "I've been very inspired by the old lime kilns and buildings, and I would like future generations to also be

able to see them, enjoy them and be inspired by them."

Before reconstruction can begin, however, the board must raise the money to fund the project.

Documentation and "deconstruction" of the 30-foot-high, 40-foot by 80-foot barn will cost an estimated \$100,000 to \$150,000. The cost of reconstruction is likely to exceed \$1 million, depending on new foundation requirements and other factors. Whatever can be salvaged from the structure will be reused. The group hopes to get the money through fundraising, grants and private donors.

For information or to help with the project, visit <http://limeworks.ucsc.edu> or send contributions to Friends of the Lime Works, c/o Sally Morgan, MS: PP&C, UC Santa Cruz, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA 95064.