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Consultants say the Rispin Mansion could be turned into a bed and breakfast for \$2.4 million.

Rispin Mansion looks 'promising' as a Capitola bed and breakfast

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CAPITOLA — A bed and breakfast inn may be the most promising use for the long-vacant Rispin Mansion, according to a consultant's report examining possible uses for the historic building.

It would be possible to create 10 guest rooms with a living room, library, kitchen and dining room retaining the historic uses of the 1922 home, reports the Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco.

"In terms of construction costs and general fit with the existing building, the bed-and-breakfast alternative seems to be the most promising," the firm recommended.

The firm also investigated the possibility of creating a public library and a meeting center at the city-owned mansion, located at 2000 Wharf Road.

The study sought to compile preliminary information to assess the different uses. No decision has been made on the future of the property.

According to the report, an inn requires the least modification of the building, with renovations pegged at \$2.4 million. In comparison, turning the building into a community library would cost about \$3.3 million.

An inn also offers the greatest potential for revenues, the firm said, estimating net operating income at \$194,000, based on a 70 percent occupancy rate.

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— *Consultant's report*

"The average room rate for the property was estimated to be \$190 per night, including \$20 for meals," said the report. "Based on 10 rooms and a projected overall annual occupancy of 70 percent, total room revenues are estimated at \$434,000 and meal revenues at \$50,400."

An inn could also provide community uses such as dining, public meeting rooms and historic and art exhibit space.

Renovating the mansion for meetings of community groups or corporate events was estimated to cost \$2.1 million. Such a use would be feasible as long as large rooms are not required, the firm said.

If the city were to opt for an inn or meeting center, the consultants recommended a private investor help operate

the facilities.

Using the mansion as a library would not generate funds even if a small gift shop or food service were included, the firm said.

The home, built by Henry Rispin, is a mix of Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean styles. Rispin owned much of the Capitola beachfront in the 1920s, but then apparently made several bad investments that cost him his fortune.

In 1946, the mansion became home to the nuns of the Order of the Poor Clares. They were the last inhabitants of the property, which was bought by Capitola in 1986.

Through its 73-year history, the mansion has been vacant longer than it has been occupied.

For the past year, a group of volunteers has been restoring the gardens. A Rispin Steering Committee appointed by the City Council is scheduled to meet Wednesday to discuss the report.

What remains unknown, however, is the strength of the community desire to have a library at the site, said Planning Director Kathy Barbaro. Capitola does not have a public library within its city limits now.

Several members of the Rispin committee have said there is strong community interest in a public library at Rispin. They suggest gathering more information about the feasibility of a library before a recommendation is made.