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The historic Redman-Hirahara property on Lee Road in Watsonville is in the process of being sold.

Iconic house, property sold

Historic houses - South County
**Redman-Hirahara property
 sale in final stages**

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — The sale of the Redman-Hirahara property, which sits just off Highway 1 at the corner of Beach Street Lee Road, is in its final stages, realtor Chuck Allen confirmed Wednesday.

The sale could affect plans to restore the 117-year-old Redman-Hirahara house, which sits on the 14-acre property.

Allen declined to name the buyers, but said they have experience in the farming business and intend to keep the property for agricultural use. That would keep it in line with neighboring High Ground Organics.

"The goal is to continue farming organically," he said.

Still unclear is what will happen to the Redman-Hirahara house, which was in built in 1897 by renowned architect William Weeks.

The prominent Japanese Hirahara family bought the house in the 1930s and lived

See HOUSE, page A8

HOUSE

From page A1

there until the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ravaged its foundation, making it uninhabitable.

A barn connected to the house is thought to have temporarily housed as many as four Japanese families who were displaced after World War II.

The house has for nearly a decade been the focus of a local group that wants to restore it and use it as a tourist destination.

The Redman-Hirahara Founda-

the money to restore the old house, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2009, two years after the house was lifted onto cribbing in 2007 to repair the battered foundation.

The foundation purchased the property for \$1.9 million in 2005.

The buyers and other stakeholders are still looking at engineering reports for the dilapidated house, and reviewing Santa Cruz County and California Coastal Commission regulations, Allen said.

Allen described the house as a "front-window location" to the Watsonville community.

continue the agricultural uses and to make it look as good as possible," he said. "Everyone is curious about the old house, and it begs the question, is it structurally sound?"

Redman-Hirahara Foundation Executive Director Barbara Powell said the group will try to work with the new owner and continue its fundraising efforts, "...and restore at least the exterior of the Redman House for landmark purposes, and then continue our strategic plan of highlighting the wine industry in our area by building a wine tasting center and entertainment venue on the surrounding mail.