

hands in 1945.

The city of Capitola is planning to build seven apartments on one side of Gibson. Another developer has taken out planning permits for eight units on the Brommer Street side.

Real estate people and developers have courted the Fitzgeralds, the Gibsons and other neighbors on the block for the past four or five years, the residents say.

"It's just about the only vacant land that's in big chunks that's left in Capitola," Susan Tupper, Capitola city planner, said.

"Our phone keeps pretty well busy," said Connie Crittenden, who with her husband, Robert, moved to 38th Avenue after the war. Back then, they could look past the cow pasture across the street and see the mountains. Now, through the overgrowth of trees and bushes bordering their front yard, they see the back of the 41st Avenue Playhouse, a huge oblong of cement painted with images of whales and other ocean creatures.

"We live here," Connie said. "It's our home. If they want to commercial all around us, that's fine."

As she spoke, she stood in her kitchen peeling potatoes and keeping an eye on the roast cooking in the microwave she is learning to use.

One buyer told the Crittendens they could realize quite a profit if they sold, Connie said.

"That wouldn't change our minds. At our age we don't care about realizing anything. We don't care about how much we're losing by letting it sit," she said. "We're kind of pleased with it the way it is."

She and her husband have pretty well adjusted to the changes around them, such as the heavy traffic on 38th that forces them to "set there and wait for our chance to go across."

But the apartments scheduled to go in next door might be a little harder to get used to.

"We've always had lots of privacy," she said. "If we have condominiums, we can't step out the door without someone looking down our necks."

Like the Crittendens, the Fitzgeralds refuse to move. They speak philosophically about the development going up next door.

"What can you do?" Louise said. "It's not our property."

George said, "Capitola is like cancer — it just grabs." But,

he adds, "You have to roll with the punches. The only thing is, they can't force us out."

Gibson, however, said he and his wife may move when the development comes in.

"You get these all built up in here, it's going to be a mess. We're thinking about selling the whole thing," Gibson said. "The property's getting too expensive to live on."

The couple can sell and retire more comfortably in a place like Oregon or Arizona, Gibson said.

Allan Korth, who owns and runs Santa Cruz Wholesale Nursery, specializing in rhododendrons, next door to the Crittendens, plans to put his property up for sale this fall. Like Gibson, he looks forward to a more comfortable retirement in a more pleasant area.

"We have this one more season," Ethel, his wife, said.

The Korths have lived on 38th Avenue for 31 years.

"It was a sleepy town. The

people next door raised chickens. They had a little egg ranch," she said. "It was about 10 years after we moved here that things started to change."

George Fitzgerald vividly remembers the neighborhood as it used to be. He recalls an old fellow who lived in a decrepit house underneath a water tank up the street.

"He had a Clydesdale horse," George said. "He used to rent out plowing with his horse."

A seasonal Basque neighbor down the street would occasionally lose his herd of sheep. Louise remembers shooing the herd back down 38th more than once.

"In those days we didn't have the traffic we do now," she said.

The couple used to see jack rabbits, quail and pheasants from their home. Now, they see an opossum now and then.

"It's progress," Gibson said of the transformation. "That's all."



Connie and Robert Crittenden: Phone keeps busy.