

King Street Victorian Gets A New - Or Old - Look



Paul Stom lowers the finial onto the tower.

(Sentinel Photo by Dan Coyne)

A Victorian house on King Street which was minus its original tower finial for many years got a new — or old — look Wednesday.

A replica of the original finial was built from scratch and installed Wednesday at 1104 King St.

The finial's design was taken from an old postcard photograph of the house, and the replica follows the original tower design very closely.

Paul Stom of Northern Roofing used a crane to place the finial atop the house's tower. The replica's wood-turning was done by Jeffrey Williams.

The house was probably built in the 1870s, according to information dug out by the present owners, John and Melanie Douglas, who purchased it seven years ago.

"When the postcard picture was taken in 1910, Laurent Street was named Towne Street," Melanie Douglas points out.

When the Douglases bought the property, the house was a commune with 11 persons occupying the various

rooms. Prior to that, it had been the combination home and office of Dr. Marion van Ronk, Santa Cruz osteopathic physician.

Dr. van Ronk had purchased the house from the Williams family; Williams was associated with Brown Bulb Ranch and did much work in the garden on the corner of King and Laurent.

"I believe the Williams bought the house from a family named Derfer," Mrs. Douglas says. "I was given the address of their son when we moved in, but I found out he was deceased."

She did discover the initials and date: M.D. 1911, in the concrete on the side of the house, indicating that perhaps the Derfers were living in it in 1911.

"Those are my initials, too," Melanie says, "but that is not the year I was born."

The house was basically sound when the Douglases bought it. They had looked at it several years before, but then were sent to Colorado. John Douglas is a mathematician in Santa

Clara County.

"The first time we looked at it, we said anyone would be crazy to buy that. But when we came back from Colorado, the old house looked pretty good to us."

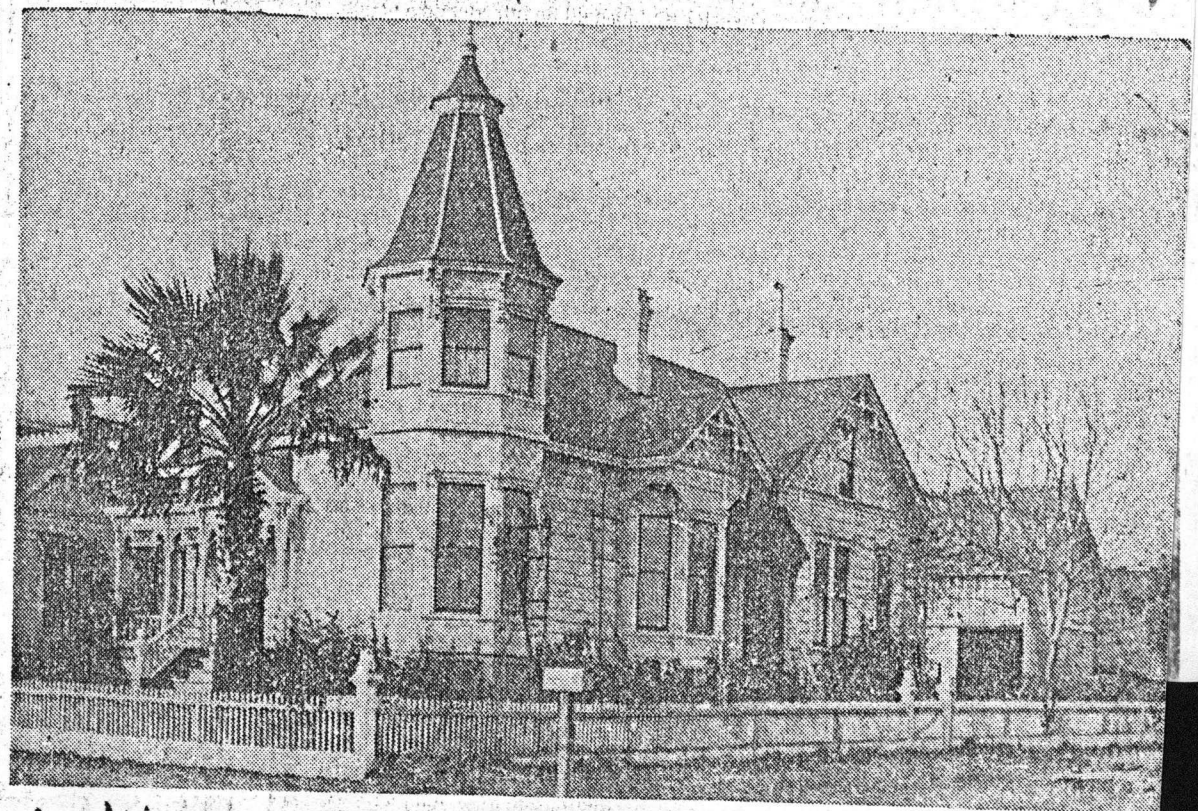
The Douglases have two daughters, 10 and 13.

"It needed a lot of work, and we aren't finished yet," Melanie notes. "When we bought it, there was a sink and a foot-square sink board in the kitchen — no stove — but there were fixtures for a gas stove, and there was a hot water heater. I cooked with an electric skillet and a popcorn popper for awhile."

Melanie's grandmother came from Santa Barbara for dinner — and was shocked that they had no stove.

However, she didn't buy them one. "When she left, she bought us a crystal chandelier," Melanie says.

The chandelier — and the new tower — are right at home at the old house.



This postcard photograph shows the house in 1910.

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