

Home Improvement



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Kem Akol is doing an extensive restoration on the old Parrish House on North Main Street in Soquel. Akol recently bought the house from the Soquel Elementary School District for \$303,000.

Couple is restoring the historic Parrish House

By JARED ROWE

SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

In 118 years, the Parrish House on North Main Street had only three owners.

No. 4 will have a shorter stay.

SOQUEL

In July, Kem and Kelly Akol bought the dilapidated historic house from the Soquel Elementary School District for \$303,000. The couple plans to renovate the two-story Gothic Revival and sell it in the spring.

"I'm doing it for fun ... and the profit," said Kem Akol, a contractor and property manager.

Addi Wyman built the home in 1883 for its original owner, Benjamin Parrish, an apple grower and Pajaro Valley businessman.

In 1935, the Carpignano family bought the house and ran a winery out of it for 20 years.

The Soquel Elementary School District acquired the prominent house about a decade ago. It was part of the property on which the district would eventually build Main Street Elementary School.

Since the late '80s, the district has been at a loss to find a use for the house. School trustees have not had the money to renovate the home, which was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

"The house was leaning 8 degrees in one direction and 11 in another," Akol said. "It was a sound house, but it settled differentially. It is higher in the middle."

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Tom Sullivan, who last week was preparing the house for its makeover, said setting it down on a new concrete foundation will likely straighten out.

In 1986, the county designated the house a historic landmark, meaning it could not be destroyed or its style significantly altered. It is one of the county's last remaining homes built in a "vernacular style," which Akol defined as having a simple design but borrowing from different styles.

The house also earned historic recognition because its first owner was an important figure in Soquel history.

In the first phase of construction, Akol had the house moved 52 feet forward on the lot and a new foundation poured. He plans to add a family room, laundry room and attached garage.

By March or April, it will be a 2,430-square-foot, four-bedroom, 2.5-bath home, which Akol said he will put on the market.

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