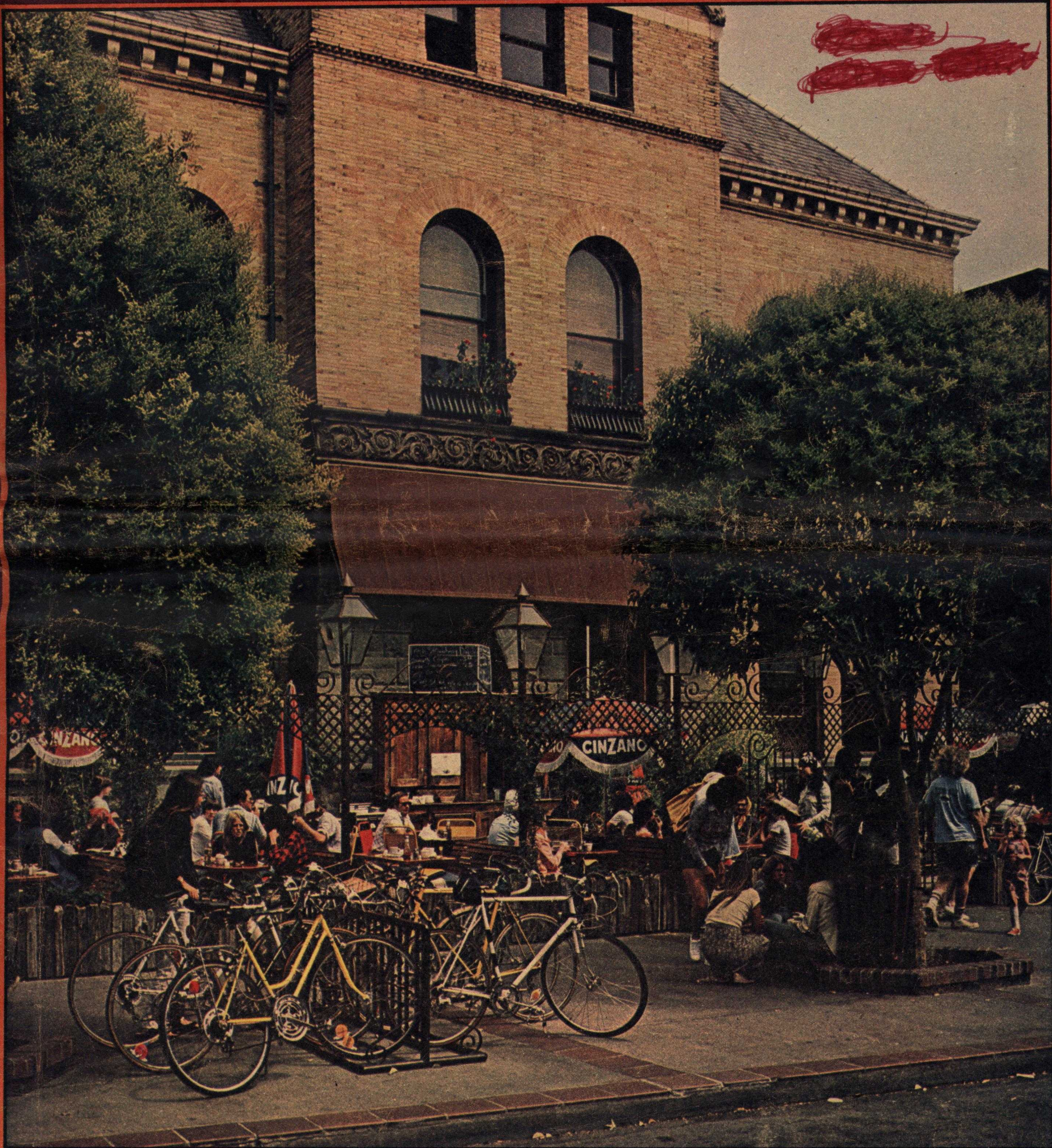


Pacific Garden Mall 1967-1969

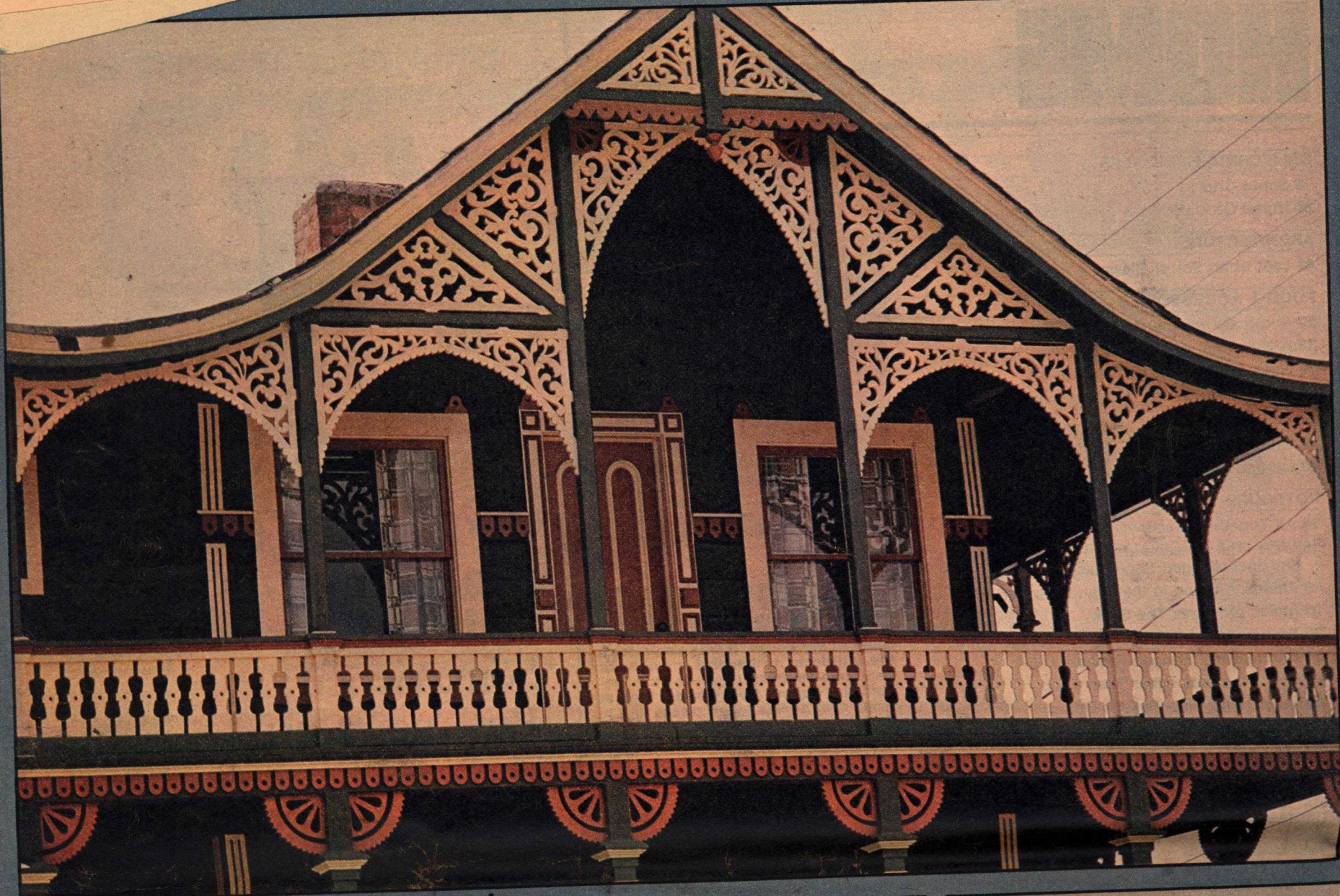
LOS ANGELES TIMES, FEBRUARY 13, 1977

HOME

a glass house that
pre-dates the energy crisis
home q&a: ernest lehman
his idea receiver is always on



Santa Cruz new vitality for an aging beach beauty



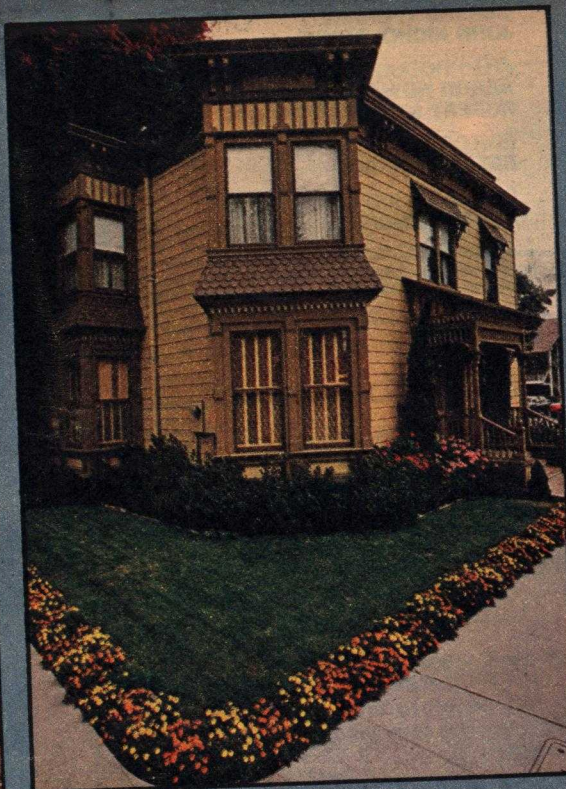
The grand dames of Victoriana watch while the unique Pacific Garden Mall and restored Cooper House bustle anew.

Santa Cruz

BY GEORGE BERONIUS

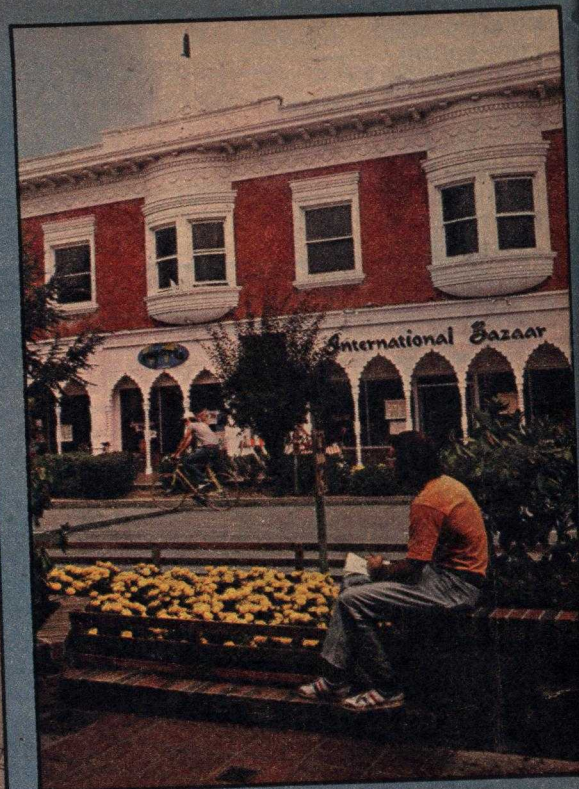


The famous Boardwalk, with its melange of roller coasters, merry-go-rounds, arcades and hot-dog stands, is doing better than ever. Downtown has been revitalized with one of the nation's most successful garden mall projects. There is renewed interest in the abundant historical architecture of the area. The lively arts are lively indeed.



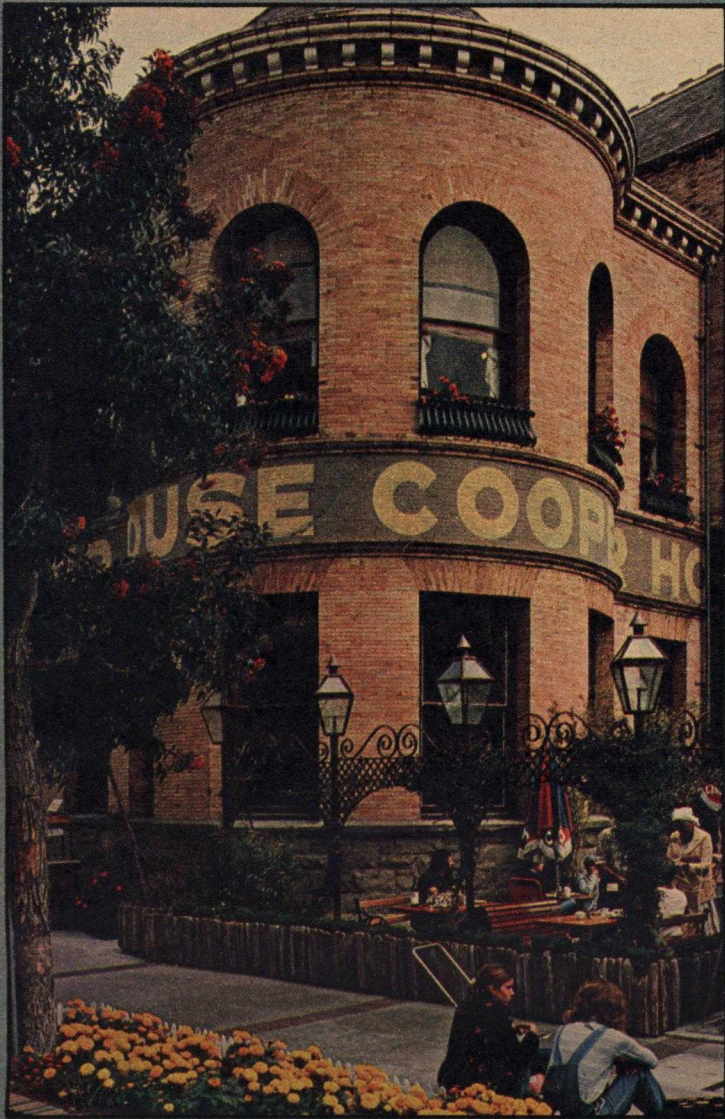
At the turn of the century on Monterey Bay, a pleasant seaside village called Santa Cruz was becoming a world-renowned playground. All summer long, trains and steamships brought pleasant people to its pleasant hotels and beaches. Then in the fall, they all went home again, leaving the beaches to the seagulls.

The railroad had come to Santa Cruz from San Jose in 1876. In 1903, President Teddy Roosevelt visited the Boardwalk, grinning his approval. Five years later he sent along the Great White Fleet, which anchored off Lighthouse Point. It was all very splendid.

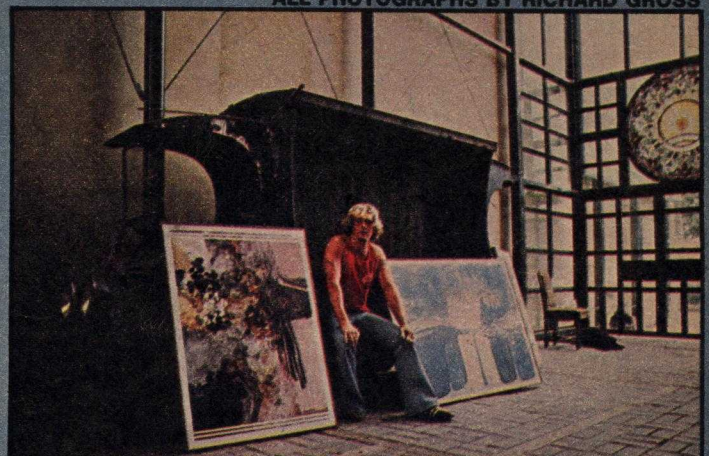
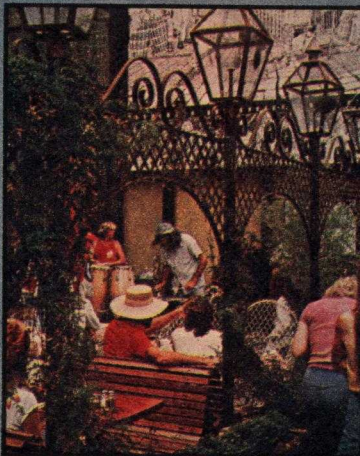


Unfortunately, those pleasant times were not to last for long. In 1915 a concrete highway was built from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz. With it came spoke-wheeled, coughing touring cars and tented tourist camps. And, later, plaster and pink stucco auto courts.

The Queen of Monterey Bay was rapidly transformed from resort to beach town, early vintage. To it, as to many another turn-of-the-century spa, the age of the American automobile brought a new breed—the weekend tourist. Resort hotels of the day had been designed for long-term guests, wealthy families who summered over. The big, proud Victorian hotels, with



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD GROSS



their quiet verandas and wicker rocking chairs, simply weathered away.

The 1930s, as was the case nearly everywhere, found the area stagnating. Not that all of Santa Cruz was complaining. It was a nice place to live, especially if one's income was limited.

All was to change dramatically during the 1950s with a decision by the regents of the University of California to locate one of its new, post-war campuses in Santa Cruz. At about the same time, the powers that be in the city had been wrestling with what to do about its decaying downtown area. There were big regional shopping centers coming in, and the downtown mer-

chants, boxed up in old buildings with dingy storefronts, were feeling the pinch.

Then in the early '60s, an Arizona photographer named Chuck Abbott came to town looking for a special place in which to retire. It was still the kind of town, he found, where you might move into a house and discover in the attic a yellowed copy of the San Francisco Chronicle announcing World War I.

Abbott and his wife purchased three rundown Victorian houses and set about renovating them. Next they became interested in one of several stalled civic enterprises: a mall for the main downtown street, Pacific Avenue.

Local enthusiasm flamed, and the long-hoped-for urban renewal project finally got underway. The Pacific Garden Mall was dedicated in November 1969 and was an immediate success. It has been heralded in national publications, studied by city planners from all over and freely copied, just as it was a copy of other cities' solutions to a similar problem.

Today, Pacific Avenue zigzags through the heart of the downtown area, past spruced-up storefronts and new shops.

Sidewalks are crowded with shoppers and tourists. It has become an esthetically pleasing meld of commercial and parklike/Continued

atmospheres, achieved through the efforts of key townspeople, local architect Kermit Darrow and landscape architects Harold Hyde and Roy Rydell.

Particularly impressive for visitors are the flowers and overall landscaping, much more successful than in many other garden mall projects. Sometimes unnoted is the fact that more than 40 kinds of trees have been planted, many donated and some of them very rare.

Near the mall's center, on the corner of Cooper Street and Pacific Avenue, is the old county courthouse, renamed Cooper House. Perhaps more than any other single structure in the city, it stands as a living metaphor for what

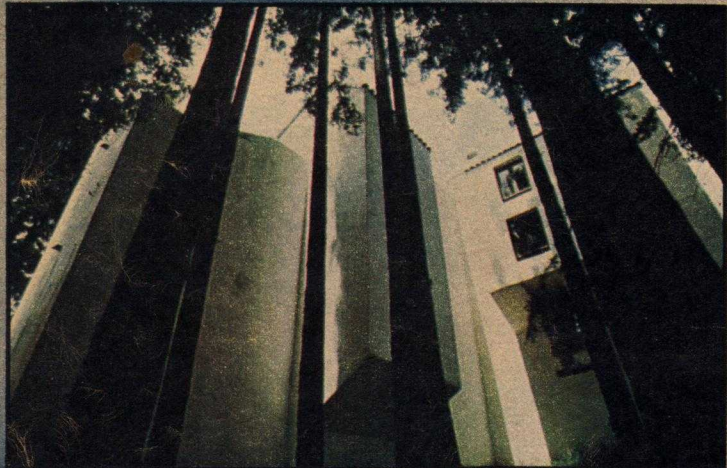
has happened to Santa Cruz.

Abandoned in 1967, it was about to be razed when an inspired developer purchased the building for \$75,000. After extensive remodeling, Cooper House, with its "gold" bricks (actually sand mold bricks with brownstone facing), is a focal point for strollers along the mall. One gets the feeling, however, that at its sweet old Romanesque Revival heart, it is just a bit uncomfortable with the goings-on.

For one thing, its forecourt has become a sidewalk cafe. At midday, before a crowded luncheon throng, a mime sets up shop. He is clothed in black to emphasize his chalk-white face. For 30 minutes his silent performance

goes on, teasing and cajoling passersby amid loud laughter and applause.

Suddenly, the jerky puppet-on-a-string movements vanish; he relaxes, and out of a rucksack, propped against his parked bicycle, comes a battered old hat. He passes it through the bemused luncheon crowd, pointing silently to his mouth, and the coins chink in. Inside the old courthouse, up the marble staircase that Santa Cruz barristers and cops once trod, an art show is in progress. It is an exhibit of surfboard shapes, entitled "Surfboards, Past and Present." University students, faculty and sandal-shod visitors seriously contemplate the fibreglassed slabs of polyurethane foam.



Santa Cruz

In kinship with nature,
students reach for
an alternative lifestyle



Concurrent with concern over the refurbishing of downtown Santa Cruz was the continuing design discussion about the new UC campus.

"We were into environmental planning long before it became fashionable," recalls quiet-spoken Jack Wagstaff, retired as of 1975 as UCSC's campus architect.

Wagstaff still vividly recalls tramping the grassy meadows of the 2000-acre Cowell Ranch in search of building sites for the new campus. With him, on many occasions, went John Carl Warnecke and San Francisco landscape architect Thomas D. Church, to whom most experts give joint credit for formulating the unique principles that preserved the area's natural beauty.

At the heart of the matter were the great *Sequoia sempervirens*—one of California's two types of redwoods.

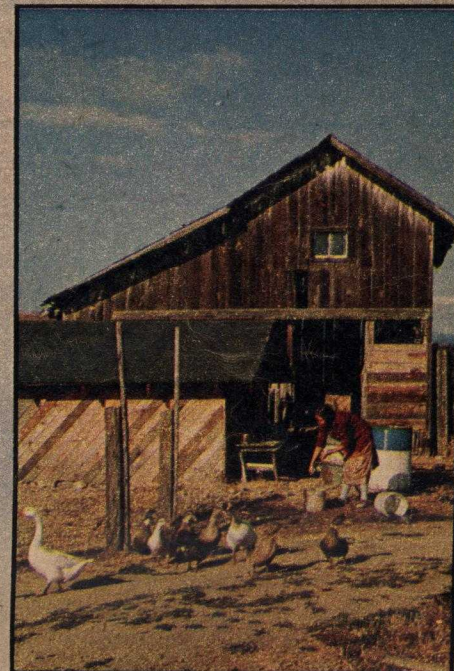
"There will be no indiscriminate removal of major redwood groves to accommodate preconceived architectural schemes," Church wrote to Wagstaff in 1962. "To a greater extent than any of us have faced heretofore, the buildings are less important in the visual composition than the trees."

That important concept endured. Today one can tour the woody campus by foot, along beautifully planned paths and footbridges, or by automobile, often passing beneath redwoods towering more than 150 feet. It is diffi-/Continued

ACADEME AMID THE REDWOODS

On the northern edge of Santa Cruz is the campus of the University of California. An experimental farm and student teepee housing are shown at left and below, and a glimpse of the unique campus architecture is at far left. At bottom, a student wedding in the redwoods.

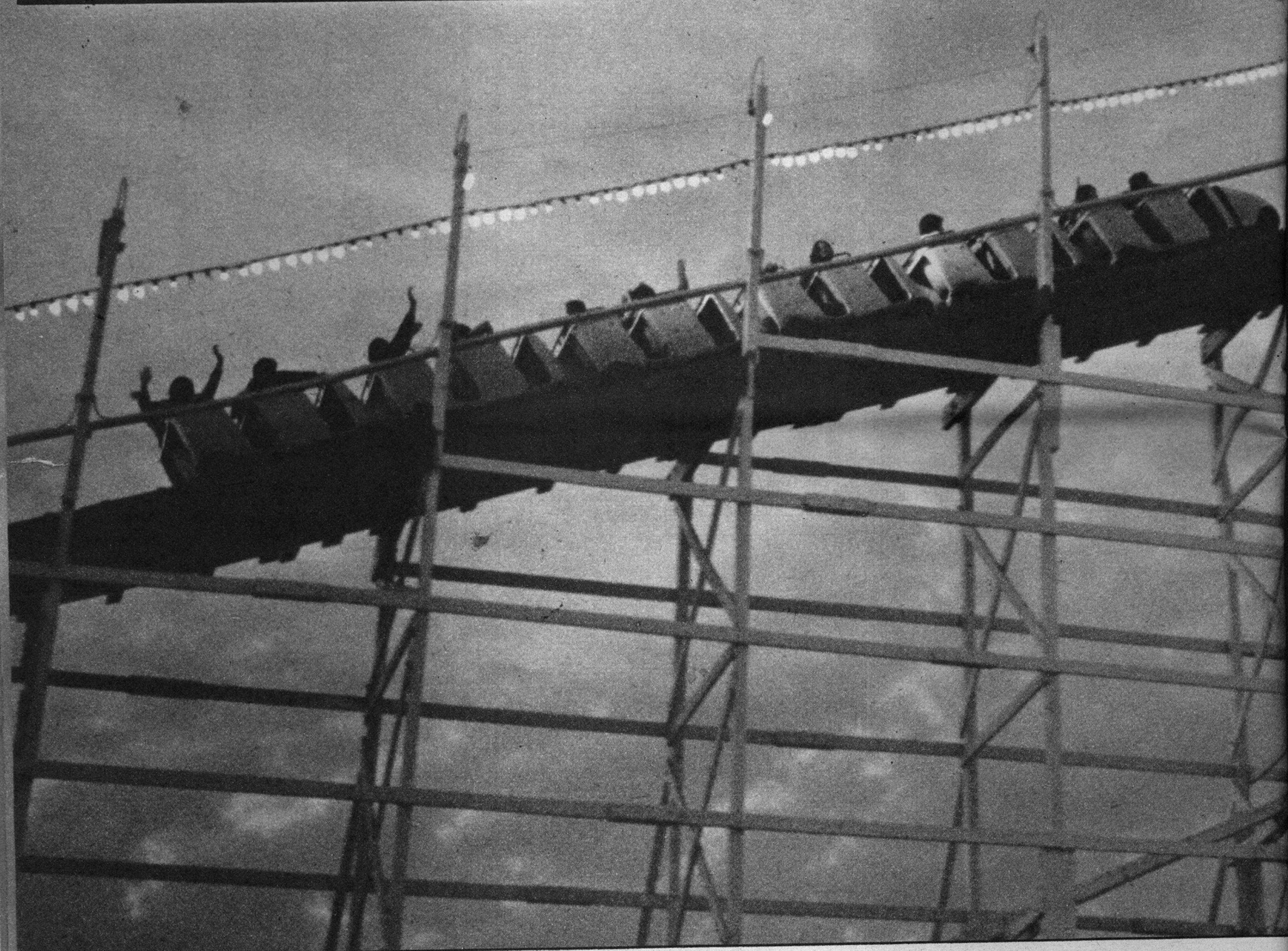
The coming of UCSC in 1965 brought many changes to Santa Cruz. While an acknowledged architectural and landscaping triumph, the university's presence has created many administrative as well as social problems for city fathers. Most authorities credit San Francisco landscape architect Thomas D. Church for the concepts and foresight that have preserved the area's beauty.





Santa Cruz

Tranquility survives
on the fringe
of a frenetic midway



cult at times to realize one is passing through a major educational institution.

The university lies above Santa Cruz, though within the city limits, and overlooks Monterey Bay. From a great open meadow, the campus rises northward to the near-wilderness forest. Besides the awesome redwoods, there are pine, eucalyptus and madrone trees growing in wild profusion.

Tucked away in the forest or spreading across the crests of rolling meadows are the university's eight liberal arts colleges, each distinctive in architecture and coloring. These so-called "scholarly villages" reflect the heart of the academic plan: to break the university down into self-con-

tained, Oxford-style colleges, each mostly self-sufficient. The Santa Cruz experiment has been called unique in the nation's public university system.

To the new University of California campus in 1965, came the first students, representing the upper 10 percent of their high school classes. They were immediately caught up in the beauty of the place. But with them came all the troubled social and political atmosphere of the late 60s. Santa Cruz, hard at work on its own economic problems, had not anticipated what was to become widely known as "student activism."

Early enthusiasm for the benefits to be derived from being a university/Continued on Page 20

REMINDERS OF THE PAST

Old Santa Cruz is still very much present—the beaches, the rocky coastline, and its crowning jewel, one of California's last beachfront roller coasters. Originally erected in 1884, its roar and shrieking customers have been a part of the scene ever since. To some, including Santa Cruz city manager David Koester, its soaring structure has become a symbol of skyrocketing property values. As in many other California cities, says Koester, the result has been to squeeze out lower-income residents, many of them retirees who came from higher-density urban areas in search of serenity and security. Even with its problems, however, Santa Cruz remains one of the California coast's more beautiful hideaways.

