



Mario Fernandez and George Ruiz dismantle parts of the old Salz Tannery buildings Friday.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

'GREEN UNBUILDING'

Expert in charge of deconstructing Salz Tannery more a preservationist than a wrecking ball

Tanner 1es

By J.M. BROWN

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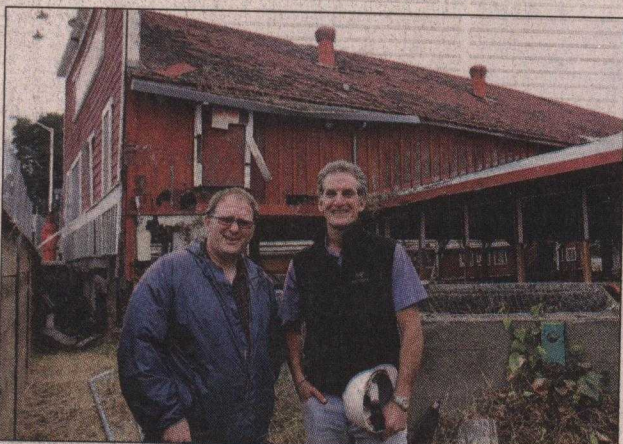
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SANTA CRUZ — Carefully taking apart two historic buildings for the next phase of redevelopment at the Salz Tannery is a dream job for longtime Santa Cruz demolition expert Vincent Altman.

Altman, whose company, V's Demolition, specializes in "green unbuilding," as his project manager Matt Bradberry calls it, loves working on structures that are at least 100 years old.

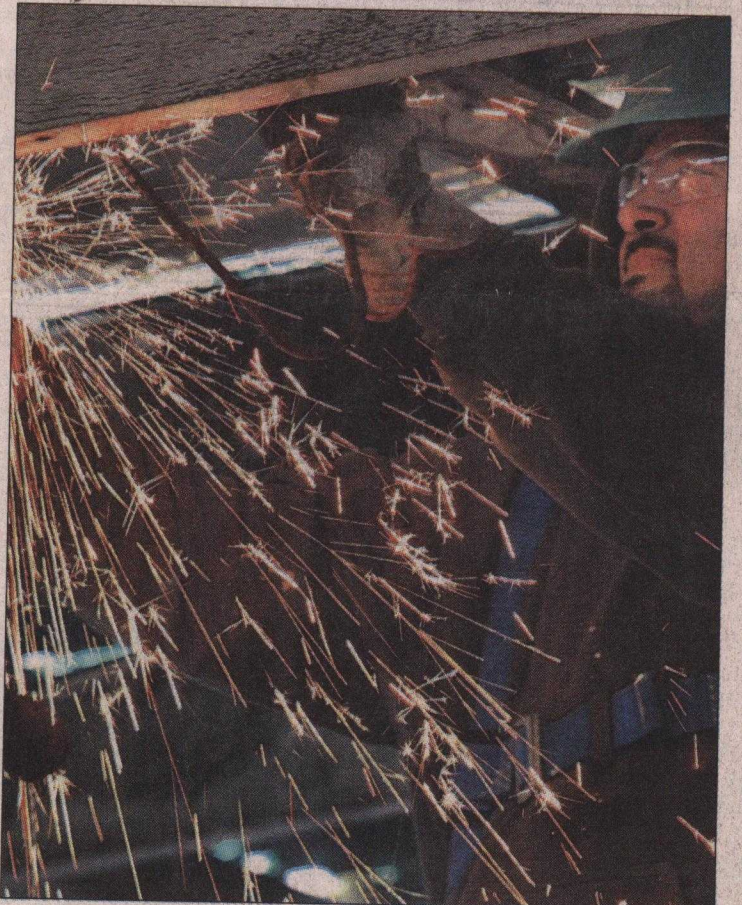
Since July 13, Altman and his crew have been delicately deconstructing the adjoined tannery structures so that up to 90 percent of the framework is preserved. At least 80 per-

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Matt Bradberry, left, and Vince Altman are heading up the demolition of parts of the Salz Tannery.



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Sparks fly as Juan Lopez grinds off a sprinkler pipe in the old Salz Tannery Tanyard Building on Friday.



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Salz Tannery's beam house and tanyard buildings are being converted into part of the \$55 million Tannery Arts Center on River Street.

TANNERY

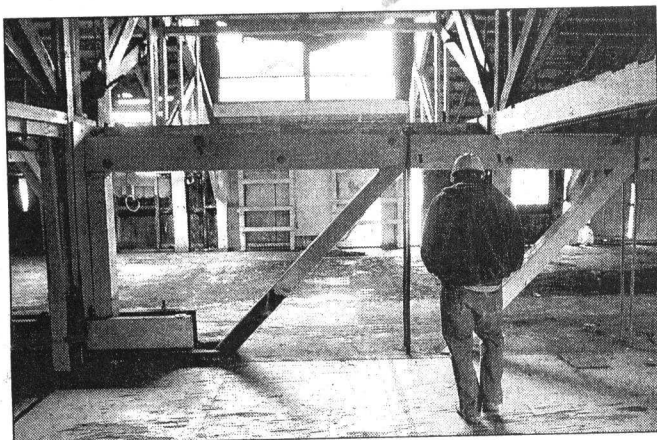
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cent of the wood and metal parts taken out will be recycled or repurposed.

"We will preserve the rustic feel but bring it up to modern standards," said Altman, who has been in business 28 years. "The chore is to give it that historic feel."

The project, known as Phase II of the \$55 million Tannery Arts Center campus on River Street, will contain work studios designed to complement the work-live lofts for low-income artists that opened a year ago.

Overall, a total of five buildings that were part of the 150-year-old tannery, which closed in 2001, have been salvaged. A capital campaign for Phase III, a performing arts center, is under way.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Douglas Ross Construction's Jason Anderlite walks through the Salz Tannery beam house Friday.

Altman and his crew are carefully gutting the former tanyard building and beam house, which represented the heart of the tanning process.

The 19,000-square-foot and 21,000-square-foot buildings are connected by a slanted

breezeway that Altman is saving.

"We're the surgeon not the crash ball," Bradberry said.

Safeguarding the historic value of the twin structures is critical to the entire project's integrity, said former Mayor Emily Reilly, who serves

on the Tannery Arts Center board. Preservation was key to winning a state grant for the project.

"That we are seeing this next phase to completion — the vision of a total arts campus — is so important to the community," Reilly said.

Altman, who worked on the UC Santa Cruz Fieldhouse but otherwise takes mostly residential jobs, was excited to be selected for the Tannery project because of the size of the challenge and a requirement to use green construction principles.

"Instead of taking all this wood and throwing it away, it will get used again," Altman said. "The whole point is not to bury this stuff."

Altman expects to finish his work by late August. The \$7 million studios are expected to offer work and exhibition space for a diverse range of arts.