

What lies beneath



Jon Chown/Register-Pajaronian

Ruben Delgadillo (from left) and Paul Britton of Britton Exploration, Inc. and Joe Rafferty of Redwood Geotechnical Engineering drill for a soil sample in front of the Redman-Hirahaha House on Monday.

Historic Redman House due for restoration, renovation

By JON CHOWN

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

With four wheels, it sort of looked like a tractor, but instead of a tiller, a hydraulic hammer slammed down on a 2-inch pipe with 140 pounds of force, pushing it deep into the ground. Shhhfft-clang! Shhhfft-clang! Shhhfft-clang!

After pulling the tube back out of the surface, a group of men, grubby from drilling holes into the soft earth, looked at a long shaft of Pajaro Valley soil, mostly mud-like clay, pulled from the ground in front of the Redman-Hirahaha House on Monday.

"What we have here," said Joe Rafferty of Redwood Geotechnical Engineering,

pointing to the dark gray, gloppy mess, "is a crust of hard clay on top and underneath is this soft alluvium clay, and that's underneath this whole valley."

The drill was a Standard Penetration Test, part of a larger subsurface exploration to study the soil's strength and to measure the water table of the ground. It marked the start of a larger process for the Redman Foundation to acquire building permits to restore the historic house and establish a cultural center for the community and a showcase of the Pajaro Valley for visitors.

Rafferty teamed up with Paul Britton of Britton Exploration for the tests. Raf-

ferty will convert the results into numbers, which will be turned over to the structural engineering firm to plan the new foundation. The results will also determine the weight limitations and load of the house.

Geoff Scurfield, a licensed contractor and president of the Redman Foundation, was watching the tests with keen interest.

"These initial tests all lead up to the engineering of not only the foundation, but the framing as well — how much steel will we have to use," Scurfield said.

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The permit process will take the foundation at least another month, but after that Scurfield hopes to begin improvements to the house as soon as possible. The first priority is to move the house off the crumbling foundation and onto cribbing to stabilize it.

"It's sagging in the middle," said Scurfield. "We don't want it to have to go through another winter like this."

Not only will this take permits, but money as well. Currently, the foundation needs money for an upcoming \$75,000 annual mortgage payment and money for restoration, so the house can begin to sustain itself financially.

"If we had money, we would be digging as soon as we had permits," said Scurfield.

To help with fund raising, the Redman folks have accepted a strategic planning grant from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County for \$5,500. The grant, which the foundation must find matching funds for to collect, will be used to promote fund-raising efforts.

The group is also holding an event, "Sunset at the Redman House," on Aug. 16 at the house. Ken Schwann of Monterey Bay Catering will provide hors



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Joe Rafferty (left) of Redwood Geotechnical Engineering, Inc. jokes with Redman Foundation president Geoff Scurfield Monday at the site of the Redman-Hirahaha House at 320 Lee Road.

d'oeuvres and local vintners will be on hand to share their wine. Stephen Pederson of High Ground Organics will show off the beautiful farm operation that surrounds the house and the heritage apple orchard, featuring more than 20 varieties of apples.

Much of the produce sold at the Redman House Foundation's pro-

duce stand on Lee Road is grown at the house.

"It's great land to grow on," Pederson said. "The soil is rich."

The Redman Foundation will also launch its membership drive at the event and hold a silent auction. For more information about the Redman House, visit www.redmanhouse.com.