

Historic Preservation

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Carmelita Cottages Future Concerns Historic Group

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The city Historic Preservation Commission Wednesday resumed its four-year battle with the Santa Cruz City Council to preserve Carmelita Cottages on Main Street as significant historic landmarks.

Commissioner Edna Kimbro in effect accused the City Council of lacking both the courage and the willingness to take the steps necessary to convert the property from housing for low-income people into a self-supporting historic park for all the city to enjoy.

Chairman Doni Tunheim said the long City Council inaction to use the property in accordance with the terms of its bequest to the city could lead to the transfer of ownership to Stanford University.

The commission's battle began in 1979 when the city administration arrived at an agreement with Stanford University on the disposition of the cottages the city was bequeathed by Lottie Sly.

Under terms of Sly's will, the city has the option to clear the land for a neighborhood park, restore the buildings for use as a "historic park" or turn the property over to Stanford University.

The cottages were built in 1870 and are considered by the commission, the Santa Cruz County Historical Society and others to be significant landmarks of the city's early beach history.

The commission contended the property should be preserved and its ownership retained by the city. It proposed the restoration of the buildings for use as a bed-and-breakfast inn, with rental units for tourists, and it also proposed use of the land as a historic park.

But the project was put out for study by the council and appears to have died.

Meanwhile, persons using the low-cost rental units have protested the concept of transforming them into "luxury" units for tourists. Ed Teitcher and other residents or Friends of Carmelita Cottages have

petitioned the city to stop its feasibility study of the bed-and-breakfast inn concept.

This group contends there is no reason to remove the seven Carmelita Cottages "from the dwindling supply of low- or moderate-income housing."

Kimbro noted that several petition signers enjoy the benefits of the low-cost rental units and thus have a vested interest in blocking any change.

But, she said, "low-income housing is politically popular just now and the City Council seems afraid to take any action, so I fear the property will go to Stanford."

Tunheim said she personally could see nothing wrong with using the entire property as just a historic park, but Kimbro said, "There has to be revenue to support it."

Commissioner Jean Doerr asked why the cottages could not be rented to local groups, such as the Girl Scouts, to get the revenue in the event the bed-and-breakfast proposal is not activated.

In other business, the commissioners denied without prejudice a landmark alteration permit to allow a bay window and two decks to be added to the historic building at 250 Ocean View Ave.

Jesus Tellez was elected commission chairman and Kimbro vice chairman for 1982-83.

Davenport Jail Restoration Set

The unveiling of the restoration project for the old Davenport Jail will take place Saturday at 10 a.m. at the jail off Highway 1.

Members of various chapters of the historical group E Clampus Vitus will lend a historical and a comical air to the ceremony when they install a pull-flush toilet in the jail. The toilet was donated by members of this group.