

Family can build new home — but old one stays

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A Live Oak man, forbidden to tear down his old house to build a new one in its place, has been allowed to build the new house in addition to it on the same property.

Now when Patrick Davidson finishes his new house, he'll have an old one in the front yard.

Friday, Davidson leaped the latest hurdle in his quest to build a new home for his family of four.

After a brief hearing, the county zoning administrator gave Davidson permission to convert his old house to a "non-habitable structure," which will entail ripping out all plumbing except hose bibbs. Davidson must also agree not to rent out the house.

Davidson's problems began when he decided the 120-year-old house at 1401 El Dorado St., where he and his family have lived for four years, was not worth renovating.

When he applied for a dem-

olition permit, the county's Historical Resources Commission decided the house was a historical resource because few, if any, others like it remain in the county.

Davidson wanted to get rid of the termite-infested house because under current zoning laws he couldn't have two residential structures on one lot. The commission and the county's planning staff recommended Davidson try for 90 days to find someone to buy and move the house, and

that if no one came forward, he then tear it down.

But the board of supervisors, with board Chairman Gary Patton and San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara leading the way, said no. The house had to be saved.

Since then, a plan has been worked out by county planner Don Lauritson for Davidson to convert the old place to a non-habitable structure and build the new house behind it. He can have both on one lot. This would save Davidson

from having to subdivide his 20,000-square-foot lot and from the expense of \$8,000 in associated fees. A variance was required because the house is larger than the 1,000-square-foot limit for non-habitable buildings.

Planner Lauritson said there is a possibility of getting a state grant to move the old structure to a park land, perhaps at Brommer Street and 30th Avenue, but that's "a long shot," he said.

It seems the house is not in good enough shape to be an

attractive historical example (though it's good enough to require preservation, according to the Board of Supervisors).

Lauritson said a county-wide survey of historical buildings will begin in October. Should a dozen or so examples of similar architecture be found, particularly if they're in better shape than what Davidson calls his "eyesore," then perhaps he can tear his down, Lauritson said.