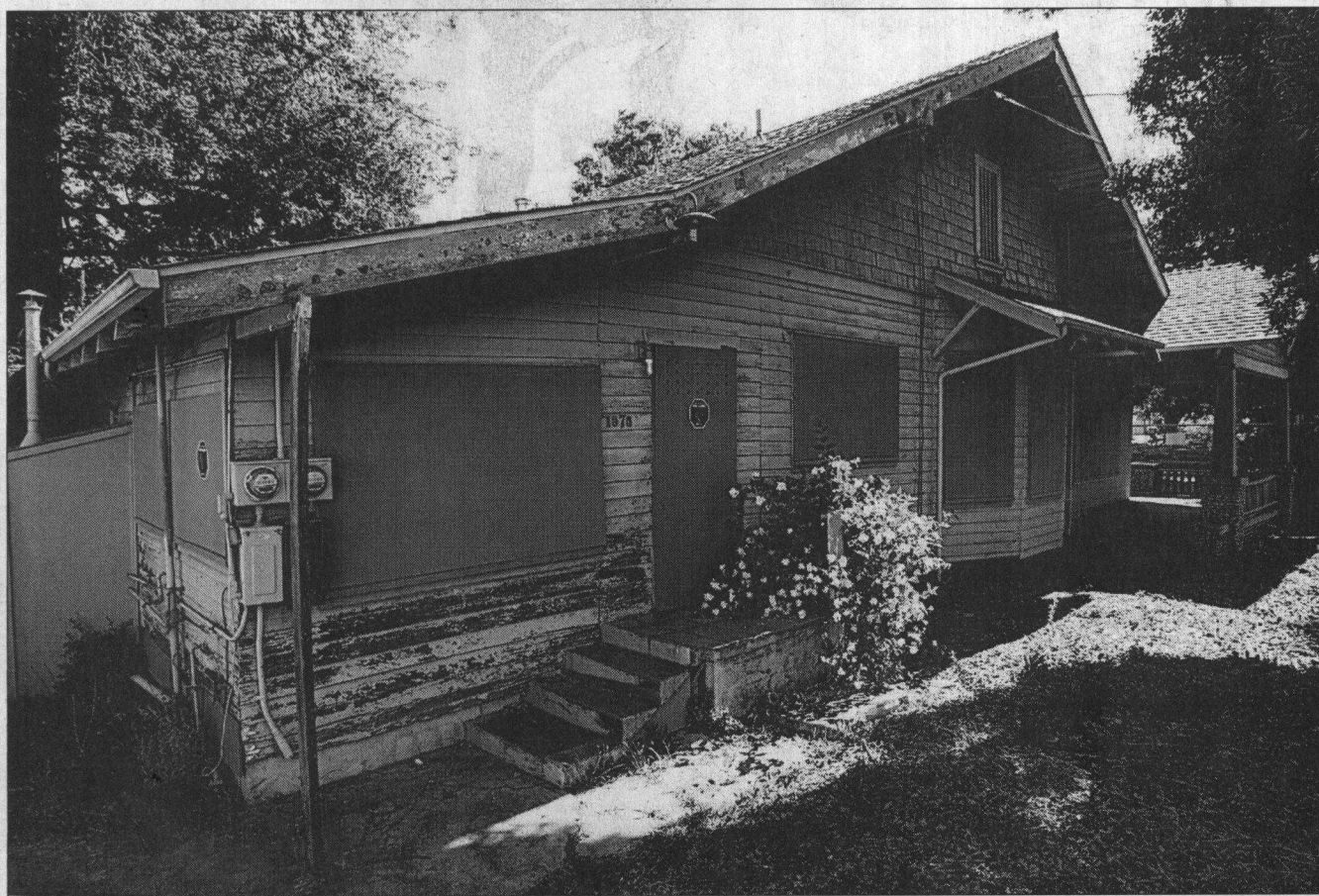


CHANTICLEER AVENUE PROJECT



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Santa Cruz County's Redevelopment Agency plans to spend \$50,000 on a facelift for the historic Miller House at 1975 Chanticleer Avenue, where a county park is planned.

Miller House to undergo renovation

Historic Houses

\$5 million park project reduced to \$50,000 facelift

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By **KIMBERLY WHITE**

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LIVE OAK — Residents on Chanticleer Avenue have been excited for years since learning about plans to create a community park with a tennis and bocce ball court, dog runs and a skatepark.

But that excitement has dimmed in recent months.

In March, they learned the county's Redevelopment Agency won't fund the \$5 million project, and instead has allocated only \$50,000. That's just enough to renovate the Miller House, a historic farmhouse that would've been the centerpiece for the Chanticleer Neighborhood Park.

Bidding for the project opens Friday, and if all goes well, it should be available for

rent by the end of the year.

Betsy Lynberg, who administrates the county's Redevelopment Agency, said the work will be minimal, and "won't create any new public use of the house or the property," since it will be rented as a private residence.

"We just want to leave the property where it can be managed until such time that the community is able to identify funds" to pay for the park and amenities, she said. "This is really just putting the property in a holding pattern."

But Supervisor John Leopold, whose district includes Live Oak, said no decision has been made on who will rent the house. It could be used as a private residence, professional building or some kind of community office. Either

way, the county will benefit from the rental income.

He's sympathetic to the residents, saying county officials had "a social contract to build the park."

But ahead of what he called a "terrible proposal" by Gov. Jerry Brown to dismantle the state's Redevelopment Agencies by July 1, county officials divided the \$75 million in RDA funds. Of that, \$44 million is earmarked for a new Mid-County sheriff's center.

Meanwhile, neighborhood activist Mariah Roberts and other members of the Chanticleer Neighborhood Group are dismayed the park didn't make the cut, especially when "an incredible amount of work went in to creating this gem."

She and Leopold met earlier this week to discuss the future

of the 4.5-acre site, including possibly renting out community-garden lots. Both like the idea since residents could get some use from the land and the county would receive rental income.

A silver lining is the \$10,000 the RDA agreed to allocate to fund the Leadership In Our Neighborhoods, or LION program. Its goal is to get residents involved in identifying problems in their neighborhoods, and working with community agencies to develop solutions. Roberts said she plans to work with the group to develop some kind of community project at the site.

"We just want that publicly owned space to be open to the public" and are willing to help raise funds to make that happen, she said.