

Historic Houses Old Train Station Becomes A Modern Home

By DENISE SIEBENTHAL
Sentinel Staff Writer

For \$50, two enterprising young men bought the 1892 Southern Pacific Railroad station in Firebaugh, Calif., and brought it piece by piece to the Santa Cruz Mountains to build a unique, modern home.

The imaginative house rising out of the trees off Redwood Drive in Aptos doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to the train station that Rick Hall and Peter Carr painstakingly dismantled.

It is, however, the perfect mingling of the old and the new, with nearly every stick of

redwood and every tiny pane of glass once belonging to the iron horse's stopping place.

A key feature of the three-bedroom abode is that it was designed solely with the environment in mind by Hall who has a degree in environmental studies-ecotecture, a combination of architecture and ecology.

The wood house was designed to include energy conserving elements. The walls are six inches thick to provide warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer. A solar panel will heat the water, with a backup water heater installed for long periods of cloudy weather.

"Besides the beauty of the recycled wood, its use eliminates the need for cutting down more trees," the two men emphasized.

"It doesn't look just like a train station because we built it with the land and existing trees in mind," Hall added, pointing out that no major trees were cut down when preparing the lot for construction. One fledgling sapling even rises through a whole cut in the front porch.

"The biggest point is that we can benefit the environment and the ecology and do it economically. We've done better than other builders. We're building a stronger house. Most builders build solely with money in mind. We're spending a lot less and doing it economically," Carr said.

After eight months of work, Carr and Hall will sell the house toward the beginning of next year and they plan to pass on the savings of using recycled material to the buyer.

"The whole perspective of the conservation and the ecology is to give it to someone for five to six thousand dollars less than a contractor would. It is the perspective of having saved money and passing that on to someone else," Hall commented.

Besides being the reincarnation of a Victorian train station and a plus for conservation, the interior of the structure will also become a comfortable, uniquely designed living space.

The house is actually two parts joined by a Victorian doorway, not out of the train station but complimentary none-the-less.

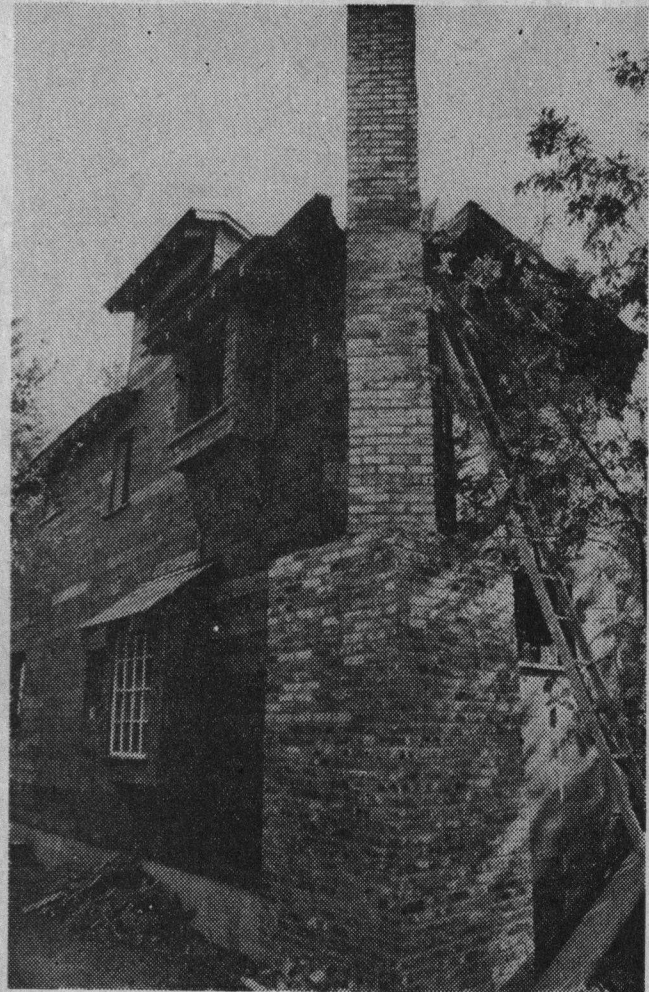
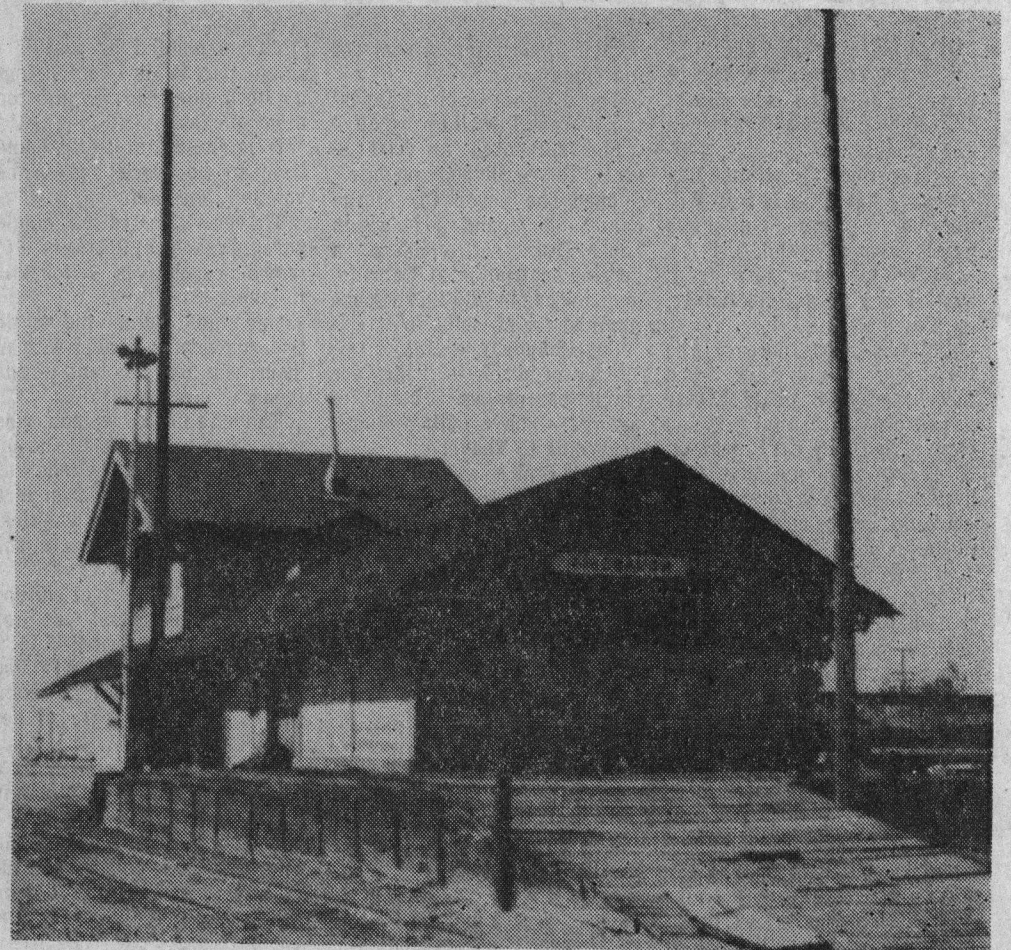
The builders describe the main two-story section as a "rectangle without sides," although it could be termed an octagon. It houses a front bedroom, large bathroom that will sport a hand-tiled tub and a living room that's graced by a large corner fireplace.

The sleeping loft in one of the two bedrooms upstairs features a spectacular view of the redwoods rising from Nisene Marks State Park.

"Some of these houses have a real radical view of the canyon — after they cut down 50 redwoods to get it. It's just not worth it," Hall said.

The window placement, Carr pointed out, is a very important aspect of the house for catching the sun to aid in the heating and lighting of the home.

The entire interior is wood paneled with the redwood boards from the station having



The side of the house on 3218 Redwood Drive shows the ingenious use by Diane Carr of old shingles from the train station to border the bay windows.

Air Pollution Board To Meet

The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control Board will meet Friday at 1:30 p.m. in the Watsonville City Council Chambers.

The board is expected to postpone for six months the effective rates of a rule which controls the emissions of hydrocarbons during the transfer of gasoline into

Organic Farmers

The California Organic Farmers of the Central Coast Area, including Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties, will hold its monthly meeting Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the UC-Extension Service Auditorium, 1432 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville.

Bykowski Resigns

Ronald F. Bykowski, executive director for Region M

This was the 1892 railroad station in Firebaugh, Calif., before Rick Hall and Peter Carr painstakingly dismantled the structure and hauled it to the Santa Cruz Mountains. They used the materials to build a unique, modern home.

been airbrushed and finished by Carr, Hall and friends Diane and Shawn Hall and Eric Stolzberg who helped with the construction.

One of the most remarkable features of the interior are the 75 open rafters that draw one's attention upward to the odd, seven-sided, fan-shaped ceilings.

The other section of the house is one story and contains a seven-sided modern kitchen. Two triangular sky lights brighten up the large cooking and eating space.

The two young men view their creation with the critical eyes of artists.

Hall, who has designed other buildings with the same imagination and conservation in mind, was careful to comment on the structure:

"Each house I build I perceive as an art piece or sculpture. So until it is done, I can't criticize it."

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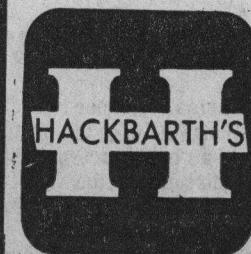
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