

Cooper House Sold To SF Businessmen

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The Cooper House has been sold to two San Francisco businessmen for \$1.6 million, Max Walden said today.

Walden, who purchased the historic former county courthouse in 1971 for \$75,000, said he expects the new owners, Stan Mattison and Russ DeLong, to continue the Cooper House much as it is today "with some improvements, I'm sure."

After months of refurbishing the courthouse building, which was built in 1895, Walden opened the first of a series of shops and restaurants there in the spring of 1971.

The European-style outdoor cafe and the jazz sounds of the local group, "Warmth," have become a focal point of the Pacific Avenue Mall and given the old building a second spot in Santa Cruz history.

Walden, who previously developed Old Town in Los Gatos, says the Cooper House "has been the highlight of my life."

He said he has purchased the former county courthouse in Hanford, which he hopes to have restored into a series of specialty shops and restaurants in the spring of 1980. He doesn't intend to make it a copy of the Cooper House,

but notes the two buildings are similar in age and construction, and both are situated in the middle of downtown areas.

Walden said he has found the operation of the Cooper House "rewarding, particularly to see people now competing for the 20 spaces (inside)" from the beginnings when "I used to open the window and say, 'Hey, we're open.'"

Contacted in San Francisco this morning, Mattison confirmed that he and DeLong intend to maintain the flavor that Walden has given the Cooper House.

"We feel the Pacific Avenue Mall is a tremendous asset for Santa Cruz, and as a shopping area it has a great future."

He said the emphasis of the "new" Cooper House will be "to appeal to the desires of the local community for quality shopping and dining."

He said he and DeLong first noticed the Cooper House on visits to Santa Cruz. "Obviously, it's uniquely appealing," he said. They learned that the building would be available for sale early this year and began negotiating with Walden "two or three months ago," Mattison said.