

New plans on track for old depot

The 88-year-old Southern Pacific depot at the corner of West Beach and Walker streets is about to get a facelift and a new life.

Once known as the handsomest depot in Santa Cruz County, the station closed 22 years ago. Southern Pacific announced in May 1958 it would close the station to public use and in February 1961 the work force was laid off except for one freight agent.

The depot has been used for storage since 1981, when Granite Rock purchased the property from SP. Now Granite Rock has plans to convert the building into offices.

About 2,500 square feet will be available in the second floor apartment and the first floor baggage room, offices and waiting room, according to real estate agent Sherrell Watson of Kane-Hall-Palmtag.

Watson said the building can accommodate up to three businesses. He hopes to find a single company that might be interested, in which case renovations to the client's specifications can begin immediately. Otherwise, interior remodeling work will begin in a month or so, then spaces will be leased.

"It's going to be nice," Watson said. "It won't be just new paint and wallpaper."

He said the present appearance of the exterior will be retained as much as possible.

When the station opened, the upper floor was living quarters for the station agent. The ground floor was used for a baggage room, offices and a waiting

room. The freight warehouse was made available to apple packing firms.

At the time it opened, the station was one of the largest in

California of those not on main lines where other lines meet. The only larger non-main line stations were at Redding, Colton and Pleasanton.



Watsonville's Southern Pacific depot, although boarded up, looks about the same today as when this picture was taken in 1907.