

Branciforte Plaza Gets Finishing Touches

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Business history is being made these days on one of the most historic hilltops in the City of Santa Cruz.

Slowly, carefully, steadily, the finishing touches are being given in a two-year renovation program undertaken by Robert and Edie Rittenhouse to convert the former Santa Cruz Dominican Hospital on Soquel Avenue into a Spanish — style center for businesses and specialty shops.

The center is called Branciforte Plaza.

Business Beat

You'll be hearing and reading that name often from now on as various businesses move in, as various specialty shops are opened.

Some businesses or shops have already moved in: the Insurance Center headed by Rittenhouse, the 1st National Haircutt & Curling Co., Inc., the Serendipity, DiNapoli's Restaurant, the Page Security Co.

Dean Witter & Co has announced it is moving to the former hospital's second floor.

Xerographics, Inc., which deals in expendable office supplies, is locating there.

Other announced shops getting ready to move in and open in the next few months are:

Fashions by Sh'Ros - a shop offering classic lines, such as Susan Howard, Peter G. sweaters, Amanda blouses. Owners are Shirley Edward and Rose Kelsey.

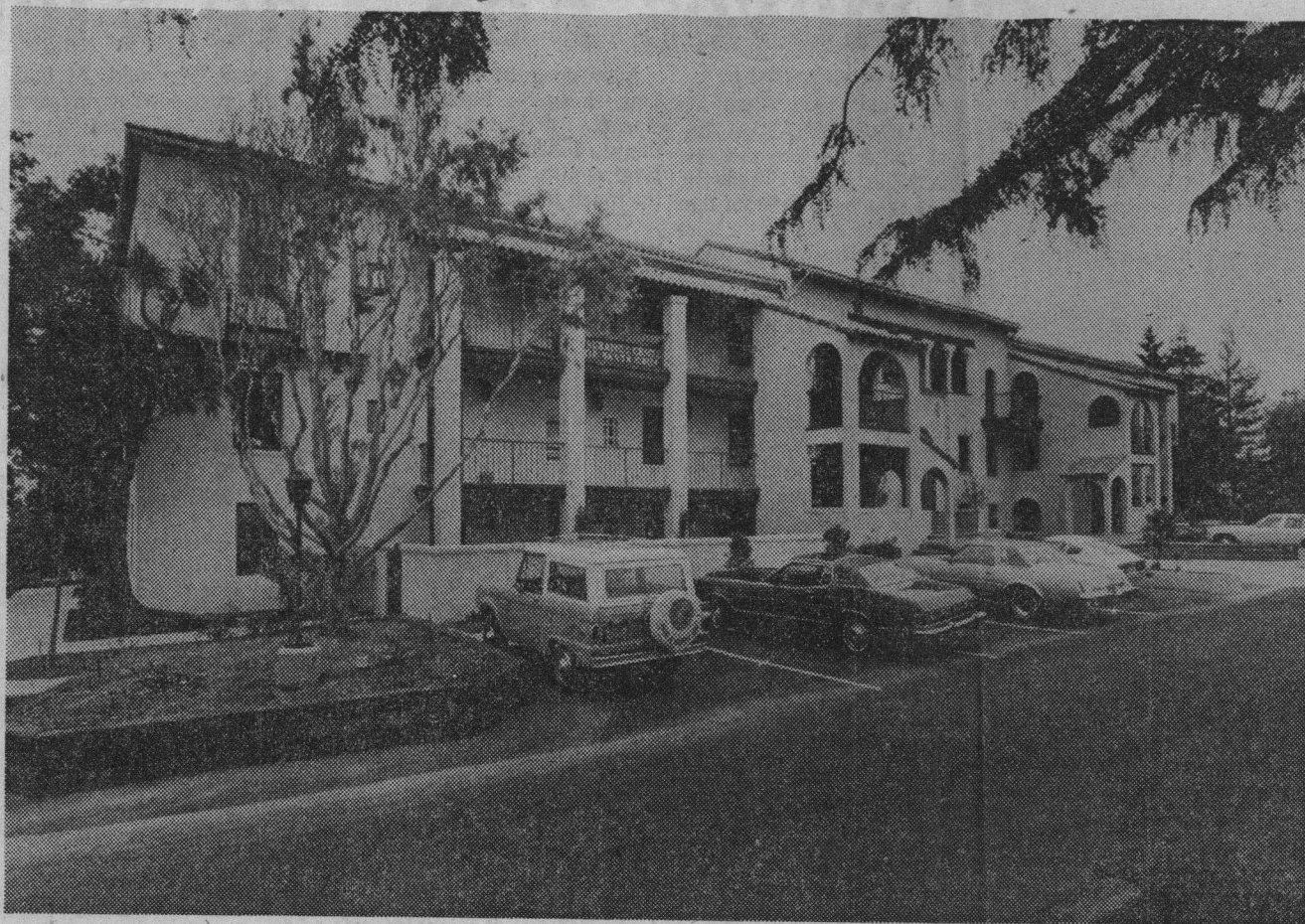
Shaffer & Sadlier Ltd. - a shop offering fine jewelry, fine arts and gifts. Owners are Evelyn Shaffer and Tim Sadlier.

An Oriental Rug Shop is coming, as is the Anne Garni Real Estate Office.

Actually, there is but one space not taken, Edie Rittenhouse told The Sentinel last week during a tour of the old hospital. There have been inquiries, she reports, but she is seeking a business that will contribute to the wellbeing of all the tenants.

It's Edie's job to put Branciforte Plaza together and to run it, Robert Rittenhouse makes it clear. He has the Insurance Center to operate, and in addition is involved in numerous community activities and affairs.

Rittenhouse is a native Santa Cruzan whose family is steeped in the city's traditions and his-



The former Santa Cruz Dominican Hospital on Soquel Avenue has been converted into a Spanish-style center for businesses and shops on one of the most historic hilltop sites in Santa Cruz. The project was conceived and carried

through by Robert and Edie Rittenhouse. Businesses and shops are moving in, some are already open, and others will open in September. Architect is Gary Garmann. Landscape architect is Roy Rydell.

vacated by the Adrian Sisters after the new Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital was built.

Preservation of a beloved building in which many Santa Cruzans of today were born was much in her mind, Edie said. At the same time changes did have to be made to convert former surgeries and wards and departments into spaces that meet the building codes and planning requirements of today.

Edie said the quest for an architect ended after she had discussed her ideas and seen some renderings by Gary Garmann, who now has his own offices in an ancillary building at the rear of the complex.

Gary, by the way, has designed Mylar calendars that give a year of dates on a big, luminant surface sheet suitable for a wall hanging. The calendars are now being marketed all over the U.S.

Roy Rydell, noted landscape architect who helped design the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall, was engaged to handle the landscaping. It was Rydell who suggested balconies and patios, Edie reports.

Now Haile will be able to tell others he was the first baby ever to be born in Branciforte Plaza.

Commenting about the building's background as a hospital, Rittenhouse pointed to the gaily painted elevator and said: "Probably more pregnant women have ridden in that elevator than in any other elevator in town."

From the purely business point of view it is thought that Branciforte Plaza will add impetus to East Side efforts to improve the appearance and the wellbeing of other enterprises along Soquel Avenue.

Nick DiNapoli moved his restaurant into Branciforte Plaza after operating the MerryGoRound Restaurant on Beach Street for 28 years. He calls this new place: "My dream come true."

DiNapoli's is a family restaurant operated by Nick and his wife, Nancy, and their children, Trina and Bill. It features Italian-American food. Nick said he is proud of his veal scalloppine, canelloni, spaghetti and ravioli and that he is famous for his sauce.

paneled store. Rose Kelsey, former director of the Miss California Pageant in the city and the Miss Scotts Valley Pageant in Scotts Valley, is the other partner.

"Fashion Is Our Signature," is the Sh'Ros theme. Planned hours daily are from 10 a.m. to 5:50 p.m.

Shaffer & Sadlier Ltd. also hopes to open Sept. 15. The fine jewelry involves gem stones, because Evelyn Shaffer is a trained gemologist. The fine arts line will include brass and sculpture in limited editions, and there will be fine gift offerings galore, according to Tim Sadlier.

This shop will have a dressing room, so that women can come with their evening clothes and put them on to see how the jewelry will complement their attire.

The store architect is Paul E. Behles.

The Serendipity is also a "dream come true" for two young women who believe firmly that the products of artists and craftsmen are "treasures" to be assembled and displayed

haircutter-stylists, but other important beauty services are offered, too: skin care, makeup, vacuuming of pores, chemical services.

The store here is owned by Susan Russell, Nancy Raymond and Lonnie Holcombe. There are five stores now in the chain, one in Watsonville. Two other stores are to be opened soon, one in Capitola.

Current hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but Thursday evening hours are being considered.

But at Branciforte Plaza it is important, too, to wander the paths around the historic hilltop. The view is of land once included in the Villa de Branciforte.

And on this hilltop, in 1869, was built a one-room schoolhouse which was expanded and enlarged several times until it had two stories and four classrooms.

Bricks from the old school well are used in the planter at the head of the steps leading up from Soquel into the grounds.

With the curly willows in front, big shade trees at the

rear, a rambler feels far removed from the busy city scene, and it's that sense of peace and quiet, blended with the Spanish-style renovation, that is expected to make Branciforte Plaza a special place to shop or do business, to eat and

to stroll. — A grand opening is planned for November, but the Serendipity, the restaurant, the salon, the Insurance Center are open now.

And you're welcome to drop in to see what's going on . . .

Red Cross Drawing Blood On Monday

Red Cross' Bloodmobile visit to Santa Cruz on Monday follows one of the most successful monthly drawings of the year, according to Hazel K. Snow, blood program coordinator for the Santa Cruz Red Cross Chapter.

Snow said that media coverage during the July drawing, together with the efforts of the chapter's "phone-the-donors" program, had produced nearly a 30 per cent increase in units delivered for processing to the San Jose regional center.

The upcoming blood drawing will be held at the Presbyterian Church, Mission and Highland streets, Santa Cruz, on Monday, from 1 to 6 p.m. Out-of-area visitors who have their donor cards are invited to donate blood here.

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tory.

Edie has also long been active in civic concerns, heading SCOPE (Santa Cruz Organization for Progress and Euthenics) in 1974, acting as field marshal of the Mothers March of Dimes in 1959, among other activities.

Edie said she began to think in terms of what could be done with the old hospital almost from the moment it was

During the renovation something wonderful happened to Edie to convince her the efforts to preserve the three-story hospital building were entirely worthwhile.

She got a telephone call from Don Haile, a local attorney. Don Haile sang: "Happy Birthday to me." Then he told Edie that he was the first baby to be born in the old hospital.

Nancy says she adores the prime rib.

DiNapoli's serves lunch and dinner, is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., closes Sundays.

Fashions by Sh'Ros will open hopefully by Sept. 15. Shirley Edward calls it a "Missy Store, not a junior." There will be sweaters and blouses, pant suits, dresses and other good things in a 1,000 square-foot,

properly.

Carol Orcutt and Bonnie Merrall are sisters who came to Santa Cruz from upper New York State. Their shop is in the little renovated house painted pumpkin color, just to the right of the hospital entrance drive.

Featured are antiques, original arts and handmade crafts, gifts, and they plan to

Civil Air Patrol Cadets Used