

St. John's Depot Hill Property Sold for \$2.7M

Historic Building Will Become a Private Home

by Aldwin Fajardo

Historic Building

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The picturesque Victorian building on Depot Hill in Capitola, which for more than a century has been home to the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, will soon be a private residence. A family purchased the property for \$2.7 million.

The sale paved the road for construction of a new St. John's Church to start on the corner of McGregor Drive and Sea Ridge Road in Aptos, which the congregation bought in 1991. Much of the surrounding acreage is now a community of affordable houses with a planned small park.

St. John's Church set aside some \$1.8 million from the sale proceeds of the half-acre Depot Hill property for the Aptos construction project, which will also be partially financed by \$3 million from the church's capital fundraising campaign.

The multimillion-dollar construction project, which started Apr. 28, will be completed between February and March of 2009, according to Anne Baker, chair of the building committee for St. John's Church.

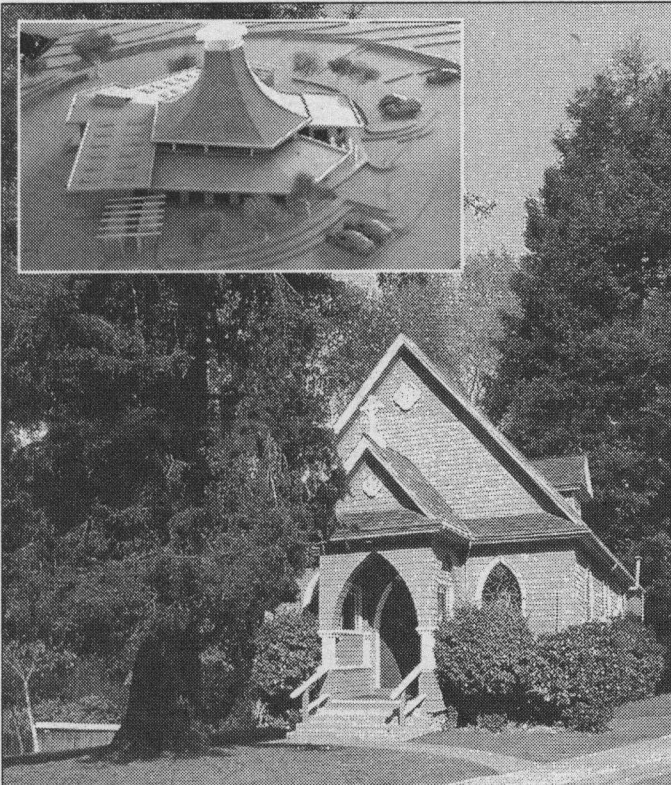
Baker said they expect to move into the new church next spring. She did not elaborate on the details of the Depot Hill property sale, pointing out that the buyers are private individuals.

St. John's to Get Much Bigger

The project's first phase — which would cost about \$6.13 million — includes the construction of the parish hall, kitchen, sacristy, library, nursery, youth center and restrooms,

as well as all site development, utility connections, and the parking lot. The first phase also includes a columbarium, which will be financed separately through the sale of spaces for cremated remains.

Baker said the second and third phases of the construction project will be built at a later date, based on the congregation's growth and the availability of financial resources.



St. John's church on Depot Hill has sold for \$2.7 million.

Inset: Model of larger church under construction in Aptos.

In 1989, St. John's Church launched the Second Century Campaign which initially raised the \$600,000 that covered partial payment for the McGregor Drive property.

The congregation raised an additional \$400,000 in 1999, which helped complete payment for the land and the church's share for the construction of a new access road. It also helped cover design and permitting expenses.

Baker said the new church in Aptos, designed by Warren Callister — an esteemed Bay Area architect whose career stretches back to the mid-1940s — will have more room for meetings, classes and bigger community functions. The primary design concept calls for the altar of the church to be in the center of the room so some 300 people can sit around in a circle and face each other.

St. John's Church has toyed with the idea of moving out of its current Depot Hill home, which can only accommodate about 85 parishioners, since 1962. Relocation plans became more solid when fire officials declared the old parish unsafe in 1963.

The initial application for the development was submitted in November 2003. The county's planning commission approved the entire project master plan on May 24, 2006. ■