

# Replacement for barn raising questions

2-6-03

*Davenport*  
Wine shop would  
endanger creek,  
opponents claim

By **NICOLE STRICKER**  
SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

The next battle in a six-year war over a 78-year-old barn will play out tonight at the monthly California Coastal Commission meeting in San Diego.

The barn's owner wants to demolish the abandoned structure at Highway 1, Old Coast Road and Davenport Avenue to make way for a three-story wine store with two apartments.

But two members of the Coastal Commission and two environmental-advocacy groups have appealed the permit, contending the proposed building would encroach on San Vicente Creek.

"I'm not taking out one leaf of a willow tree," said David Luers, the barn owner. "I just spent so much time getting the community character (of the proposed building) right. It's just such a simple building."

Luers wants to build a 6,000-square-foot structure consisting of a ground-level studio apartment and garbage facilities, a mid-level wine shop and a top-floor apartment. The wine store would host public tastings and art displays.

"Since it's in a village, it should be a small-scale, mom-and-pop store, with me and my family being the mom and pop," Luers said, explaining they would live in the upstairs apartment.

But the site is near San Vicente Creek, and critics say the proposed project would threaten a sensitive riparian corridor.

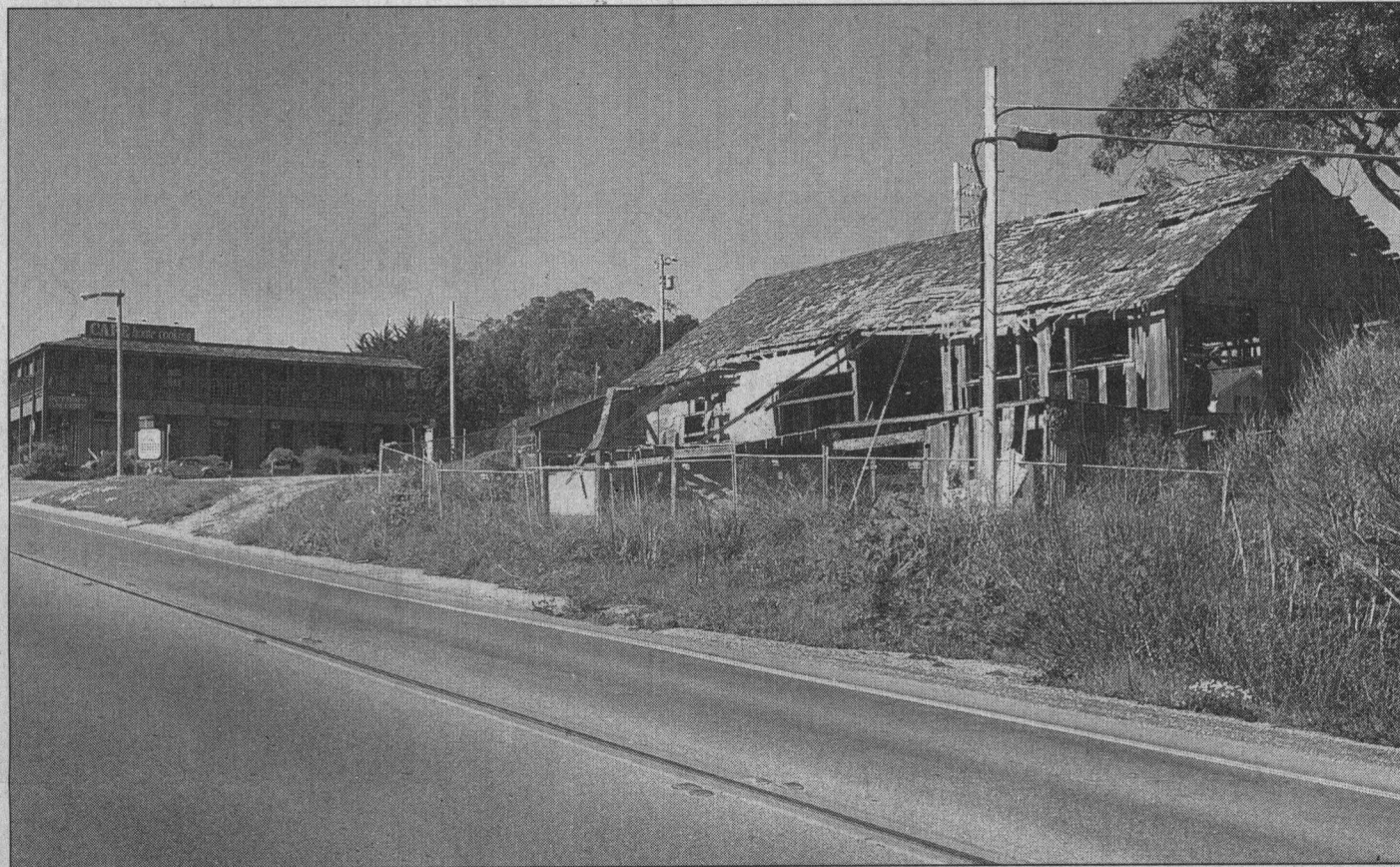
Opponents argue that Coastal Commission code prohibits building within 60 feet of the creek, and that Luers' plan could harm frogs and fish living in the creek.

"There are state- and federally protected species that need to be protected from noise and activity," said Susan Young, spokeswoman for the Sierra Club, one of the groups fighting Luers' project. "Runoff from the parking lot would go into San Vicente Creek ... degrading the survival of those species."

The county Planning Department approved Luers' building plan on a 3-2 vote, deciding it poses no danger to the creek.

An appeal of the decision was filed by coastal commissioners Pedro Nava and Sara Wan, the Sierra Club, and Coastal Organizers and Advocates for Small Towns.

"If you're driving north on Highway 1, the



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

**ABOVE:** The abandoned barn sits on Highway 1 in Davenport near San Vicente Creek, which harbors trout and coho salmon.

**RIGHT:** A computer-enhanced rendering of what the proposed wine shop and apartment building would look like.

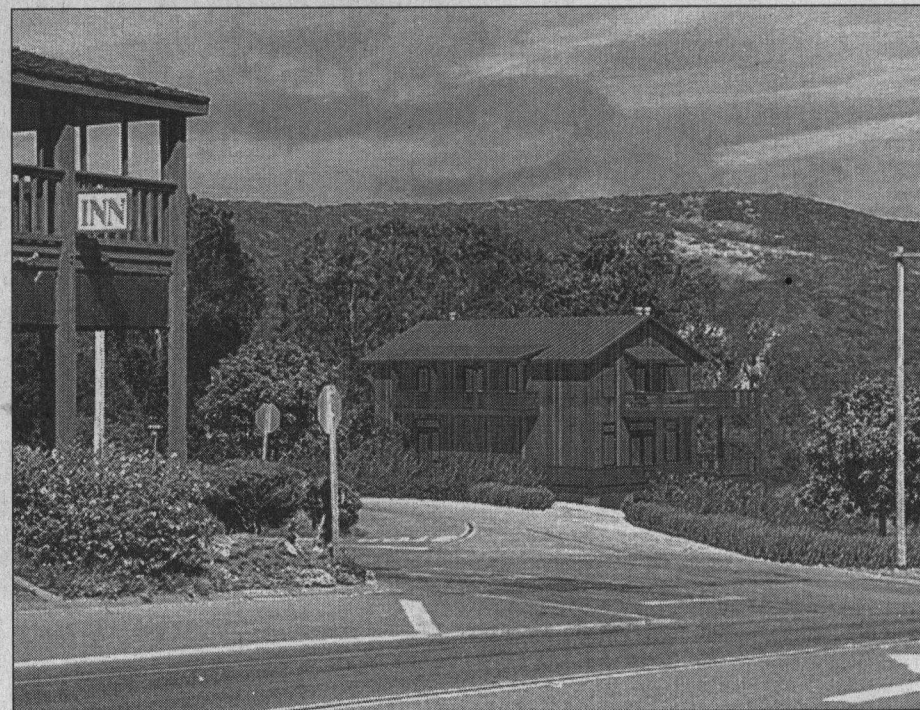
first thing you'd see is this gigantic three-story building, which is inappropriate for the town of Davenport," Young said.

The commission is scheduled to decide tonight whether the issues raised in the appeal warrant further review. If the panel agrees with the appeal, Luers likely would have to revise his proposal.

But Luers says he has worked hard to come up with a plan agreeable to everyone.

"With all the fighting that's going on, I think that erodes the good will of the town," he said noting the debate has been going on since he bought the land six years ago.

Contact Nicole Stricker at [nstricker@santa-cruz.com](mailto:nstricker@santa-cruz.com).



Computer rendering by Lynette Sergius, ArchiGraphics