

The Lynch House is shown at left in this undated photo.

Courtesy of Bill Lynch

NEW LIFE FOR OLD HOUSE



Johnathan Deo/Sentinel photos

Bill Lynch, great grandson of the house's builder, and developer Jeff Major check out the home Friday.

Bed-and-breakfast inn planned for stately, abandoned mansion

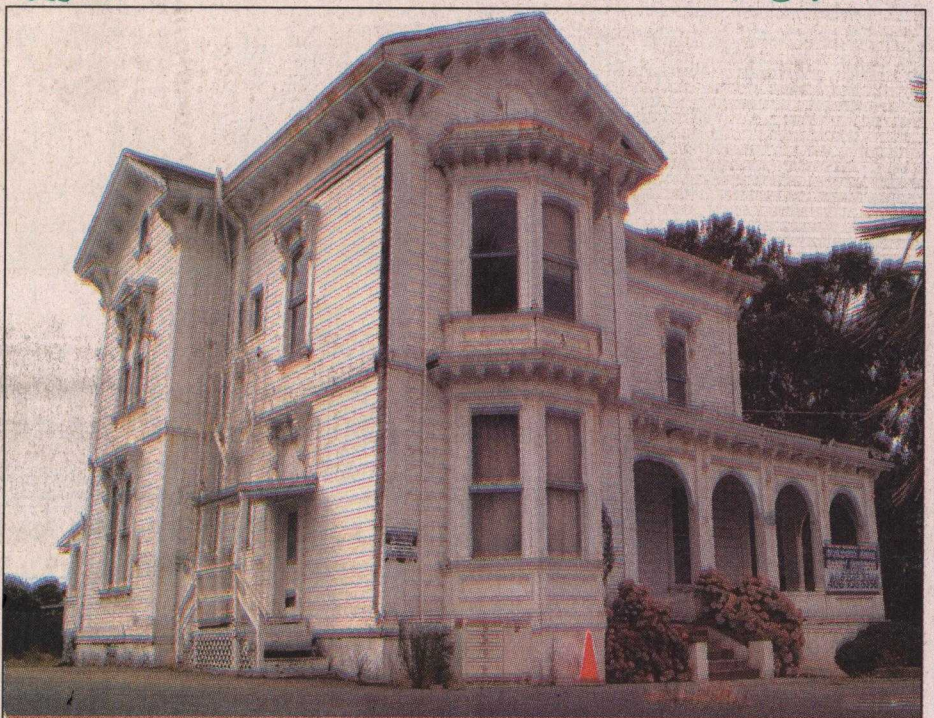
By **HEATHER BOERNER**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — The last time Bill Lynch was in his great-grandfather's house, he was about 18 years old.

He remembers a stately old kitchen, and that's all. But now Lynch, the descendant of builder Sedgwick J. Lynch, is ready to see the house with new eyes. The house his great-grandfather built is about to get a more-than-\$1-million makeover, and go from an abandoned, once-grand building to what the developer hopes will be the best bed-and-breakfast in the area.

The 1877 Lynch House sits on West Cliff Drive, next to the trestle bridge across the street from the Coast Santa Cruz Hotel. Its Italianate design includes a grand porch and various moldings.

Lynch, 73 and older now than his great-grandfather was when he



Developers plan to breathe new life into the Lynch House, which sits abandoned and in disrepair at the end of West Cliff Drive across from the Coast Santa Cruz Hotel.

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Mansion

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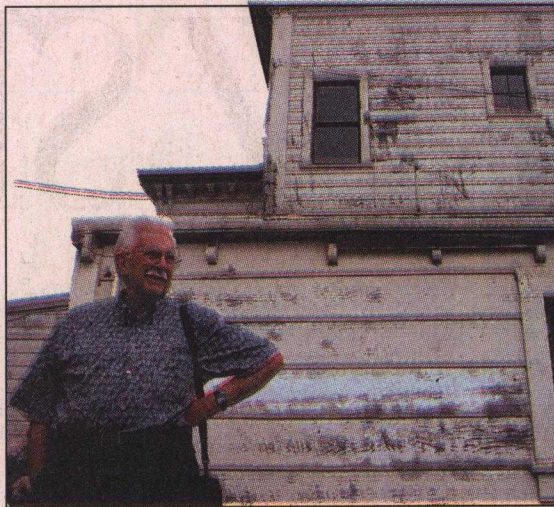
built the house, is happy the building, with its peeling paint, ivy insinuating itself into the cracks of the walls and missing second-floor widow's walk, is going to be occupied again.

"I really thought someone would burn it down before it got fixed up," he said. "That's how they usually dispose of historic buildings when they don't want to keep them up."

The house was the last home of the elder Lynch, one of the town's founders and one of early Santa Cruz's most prolific entrepreneurs. He built the house five years before his death, and while it's been described as his retirement home, Bill Lynch said nothing could be further from the truth. At the time, the house was called the "finest residence in Santa Cruz."

Bill Lynch's memories of the place are spotty. By the time he was born, in 1931, the family hadn't lived in the house for decades. Starting in 1909, the house served as the Hanly Sanitarium, an early hospital. By the time Bill Lynch was a teenager, the house was the management office for Clear View Court, then a summer visitors' RV park. The house has been locked up for years.

C.L. Swenson and Corbett Wright got permission from the Santa Cruz City Council this week to redevelop the historic landmark as a bed-and-breakfast. Wright



Johnathan Deo/Sentinel

Bill Lynch, 73, says he doesn't remember much about the mansion his great-grandfather built in Santa Cruz.

said he hopes to have the house fixed up and ready to open as a nine-room B&B by the summer. He plans to restore one of the two original fireplaces, repair the 12-foot ceilings and serve guests gourmet food.

"At that location, I'm really excited," he said. "It's going to be a high-level bed-and-breakfast to rival

anything in the Monterey Bay Area."

Friday, Lynch walked the outside of the house with developer Jeff Major of C.L. Swenson, looking at the boarded-up windows, weeds growing through the cracked asphalt, the abandoned cabinet in the front. As they came around the back, Lynch noticed a cellar door. Major smiled and said, "We've heard rumors that there's a ghost."

"Could be the ghost of my great-great-grandmother down there," Lynch said with a chuckle. "She used to hold seances in the house. I remember my grandmother saying how they scared her, with the table rattling."

Sedgwick J. Lynch came to California from Pennsylvania as a prospector. He looked for gold in Marysville for years before he found his way to Santa Cruz. By the time he arrived, he had become a builder and contractor, helping to build the Capitola Wharf among other projects.

Lynch was a director of the Santa Cruz Railroad Co., the city's streetcar company. He was also a director and vice president of Santa Cruz Bank from 1878 to 1881. He was on a committee with W. F. Cooper on the incorporation of Santa Cruz into a city, which in 1857 he and others deemed "impractical under any circumstances."

According to a Sentinel newspaper account, Lynch moved to adjourn the meeting "until the town grows larger."

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