

'A gentleman came to Col. Hinds and offered free electricity for the house if Hinds would put electricity in houses he was building elsewhere in Santa Cruz.'

SANDRA MOCK, OWNER OF THE HISTORIC HINDS HOUSE

The first electric light in Santa Cruz is on a staircase balustrade of the Hinds House, built in 1888 for real-estate developer Alfred J. Hinds.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

The Hinds House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is at the corner of Chestnut and Church streets on the edge of downtown.

Historic Houses - Central Santa Cruz

Reflections of the Past

The historic Hinds House, built for a prominent Santa Cruz developer, recalls the glorious Gay '90s. The 1888 mansion, which looks toward downtown like an old dowager, is now operated as a residence hotel. It's for sale at \$1.85 million.

By CAROLYN LEAL
SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

The three-story Victorian at 529 Chestnut St. is one of Santa Cruz's best examples of an architectural style known as Stick-Eastlake.

Built in 1888 for Santa Cruz real estate developer Alfred J. Hinds, the house has the rare honor of being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There's also a Santa Cruz Historical Society plaque affixed to the front wall. The house was designed by architect John H. Williams of Santa Cruz and constructed by contractor W. J. Hinds.

The cream-colored house with tan and brown trim remains an imposing structure. Two large redwood trees stand guard on either side of the house and a boxwood hedge borders the formal garden in front.

Sandra Mock has owned the house since 1980 and operates it as a residence hotel. But the 11-bedroom house seems more like an exclusive residence than a hotel.

Many of Mock's tenants are from Europe and Asia, where they are familiar with residence hotels. One guest, a man from Romania, has been in residence for 10 years.

"It's a new concept for Americans, but Europeans are accustomed to residence hotels," Mock said.

A map posted near the kitchen is a visual record of where the guests are from, with flags marking their countries of origin, chiefly in Europe, South America, China, Japan and Korea. Many are employed by UC Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley high-tech firms.



Photographs of the home's original occupants, **ALFRED J. AND SARAH HINDS**, decorate the restored Stick-Eastlake home — along with other historic images.



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Hinds House: Historic home offered at \$1.85 million

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"They hear about it by word of mouth," Mock said. "I don't advertise."

The nearly 6,000-square-foot house is on the market for \$1.85 million, listed with Arnoldo Gil-Osorio of Century 21 Arrowhead Realty. But Mock seems ambivalent about her decision to sell. She clearly cares for the old house and its residents.

In 1981, Mock restored the house to its former glory, after researching the way it originally looked. When she bought it, it was in sad shape. The two large parlors on either side of the formal entry had been used as bedrooms, but Mock returned them to their original status. Today one is used as a TV room and the other is a formal sitting room with a grand piano.

Both have the original fireplaces and hand-carved mantels.

The TV room is popular with the mostly male tenants.

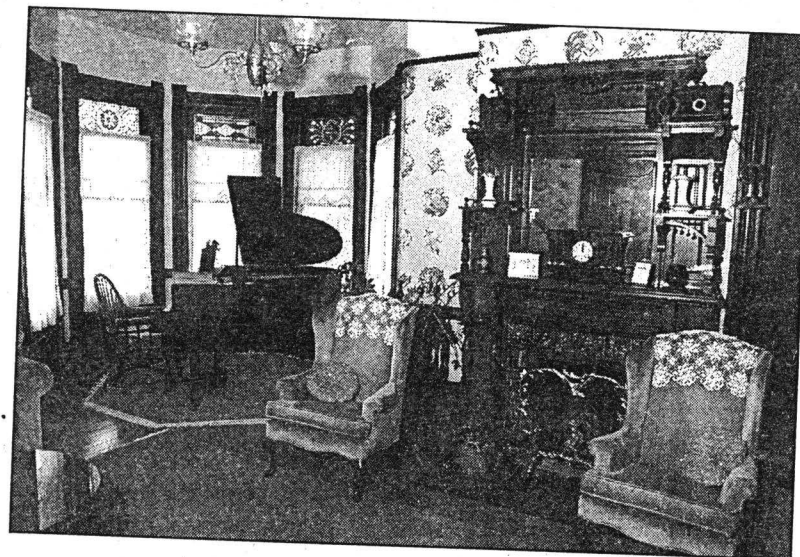
"Each bedroom has its own cable TV, but the men like watching sporting events, like soccer games, together," Mock said.

The dining room, furnished with period furniture, has a large crystal chandelier and seems ready for a formal dinner party such as those hosted by the original owners.

"When I furnished it, I tried to get furniture that pre-dated the house, so it would all go together," Mock said.

In 1910, the house was one of the first in Santa Cruz to be wired for electricity, Mock said.

"A gentleman came to Col. Hinds and offered free electricity for the



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

When the Hinds House was restored in 1981, the owner carefully selected period antiques that would enhance its ambience.

The house is filled with colorful stained-glass windows, all original.

house if Hinds would put electricity in houses he was building elsewhere in Santa Cruz," Mock said.

The first electric light in Santa Cruz is posted on a staircase balustrade. The modern kitchen has a cozy eating area and a large cabinet where residents keep their dishes.

In the laundry room, there is an old photograph showing residential Santa Cruz in 1890 and the Hinds House is clearly visible, looking down Church Street like a watchful dowa-

ger.

The house is filled with colorful stained-glass windows, all original.

And it is immaculate, the result of twice-weekly maid service, Mock said.

Alfred J. Hinds was an early real estate developer in Santa Cruz and was lauded for his prominence in his obituary. At one time, he operated a stationery store in downtown Santa Cruz, where he also sold pianos. His sister Amelia Hinds married Duncan McPherson, founder of the Sentinel.

It is tempting to imagine a perfect life for Alfred, a well-to-do Santa Cruz civic leader, and his socially prominent wife, Sarah.

But years before Hinds built the Victorian mansion, he and Sarah suffered a calamity of immense proportions. Four of their young children died in the infamous diphtheria epidemic in Santa Cruz in the late 1870s.

Aimee, 4, Ethel, 5, Laurent, 3 and Rupert, 8 months, are buried side by side in Santa Cruz Memorial Park.

The Hinds were not alone in their grief. At the height of the virulent epidemic in Santa Cruz, there was one death every day, and several families lost all of their children. In all, 106 children were claimed in 1877, according to records at the Santa Cruz library.

The epidemic prompted Santa Cruz to clean up its sanitation and waste disposal system.

Later, Hinds had three sons, Leland, Wendell and Theron, and he enjoyed prosperity as one of Santa Cruz' early real-estate developers.

His house at 529 Chestnut St. stands as his family's most visible monument.

Gil-Osorio suggested that the house could be used as shared living space for young professionals.

"It's a new concept to bring here, but it is popular in Spain and South America," he said.

It also would be ideal as a bed-and-breakfast inn, capitalizing on its closeness to downtown Santa Cruz, he said.

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