

LONG-VACANT CORNER BUILDING TO GET FACELIFT

By MARY SCHLEY

THE L-SHAPED structure at Dolores and Eighth that recently housed a title company and was at one time a market will become Carmel Realty's new offices, but only after it undergoes a significant beauty treatment, which the planning commission approved Wednesday.

The plans designed by Monterey architect Craig Holdren call for plastering over the wood and brick siding, replacing the "kind of sad" awning at the front of the building with a cedar trellis, installing custom double mahogany doors at the intersection of the two wings, resurfacing the parking lot, updating the windows and adding one at the back where there once was a window, landscaping the property and remodeling the interior. The square footage is not changing.

"I'd like to commend the owners and the applicants for taking what's really a blight on the downtown area now, a dreary building, and making it something fresh and pleasant," commissioner Don Goodhue said.

No one took issue with the design, instead focusing on reducing the amount of pavement and adding more plants and trees.

"I was hoping there would be space in the landscaping for the planting of at least one tree, if not two," Carmel Residents Association President Barbara Livingston said. "We're trying to get more trees planted downtown."

Goodhue suggested reducing the size of the driveway on Eighth Avenue to accommodate more planters, and commissioner Michael LePage encouraged the architect to include more landscaping in the parking lot.

"It is a lot of asphalt, I agree," Holdren said.

"This is a real opportunity for us to get some trees along there, which we really need," LePage said. "The problem with this corner is it's so bare."

Commissioners voted 3-0 to approve the project with the requirement that the owners submit a landscape plan for review and approval by the planning commission before proceeding with construction. Commissioners Steve Dallas and Jan Reimers had to recuse themselves due to conflicts.



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

Long vacant, this building will get a facelift and extensive landscaping before it becomes the new home of Carmel Realty.

Bee release bash celebrates pollen season

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE ART of beekeeping will be on display Saturday, April 13, when Carmel Valley Ranch hosts its annual bee release party.

While the proliferation of pollen in the spring wreaks havoc on Carmel Valley's human population, its arrival is welcome news for the area's thriving bee population.

Home to more than 60,000 bees, Carmel Valley Ranch will see those numbers rise this weekend.

"Our beekeeper, John Russo, once a year purchases a number of bees to replenish the hives and keep them in full honey production mode," explained Will Schaeffler, a spokesman for Carmel Valley Ranch. "This makes sure our bees are redirected away from their natural inclination — which is to swarm and form a new colony somewhere far away — and stay within the confines of our own hives here."

Thousands of new bees will be released just before dusk Saturday, a strategy Schaeffler said will keep them from immediately flying somewhere else.

"They will establish themselves in their new home by the time the sun is set," he predicted.

Just down the hill from the ranch's organic garden — and right next to about 7,000 lavender plants — are six aviaries.

"The bees fly right over a fence to reach the lavender when it's blooming," Schaeffler said. "There's a hint of lavender in some of our honey."

Sold in the ranch's retail shop, the honey the bees produce is also used in its culinary creations and spa products.

Besides making honey, bees provide an essential function

in pollinating plants.

Bees pollinate an estimated one-sixth of the world's flowering plant species and about 400 of its agricultural plants. In sunny Carmel Valley — where so many farms and gardens prosper — the value of bees can't be overestimated.

"This is part of a larger initiative to repopulate the declining bee population in the state and across the country," Schaeffler said of the ranch's beekeeping efforts.

The event is free, but space is limited and reservations are required. In addition to the bee release party, the ranch offers workshops that provide the public with an opportunity to be a beekeeper for a day and learn more about the subject. Call (831) 625-9500 or visit www.carmelvalleyranch.com.

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