



Photo by Bob Baker

On Sept. 27 Doris Odell and Brad Perkins of the Eugene City Housing and Community Conservation lifted, separated and transported two 50 and 70-year-old homes from their foundations at 10th Avenue and Ferry Street to a site five blocks south in the West University Neighborhood.

Moving up – moving out The HCC renovates, relocates 3 houses

By BARBARA SELBY
Of the Emerald

Taking three houses and dividing them into seven apartments sounds like the familiar landlord game, but try to move them 10 blocks, renovate them according to housing-code standards and then create "a harmonious structure of seven living units."

The above project currently is being undertaken in the West University Neighborhood by Doris Odell and Brad Perkins, of the Eugene City Housing and Community Conservation. Perkins also designs and supervises Oregonized Design:Renovate, the firm that will coordinate where the houses will go on their new lot.

Two of the houses, a white prairie-style structure built in 1910 and a brown bungalow built in 1930, were moved Sept. 27 from a lot at 1035 Ferry St. to join a third house at 1561 Ferry St.

Odell, owner of the lot at 1561 Ferry St., purchased two of the houses prior to the move. She says she is pleased with the project plans.

"It's the idea of saving something instead of destroying it and starting over," she says.

"Inside, some of the things are just beautiful. It's going to turn out really nice — the plans and the intentions are good.

"The buildings should be an asset to the neighborhoods," she adds.

Robert Thomas, director of Neighborhood Development of HCC shares Odell's enthusiasm about the rehabilitation.

"It preserves the quality of the neighborhood and brings the neighborhood density up," Thomas says.

"This project is preserving three structures. It costs more money and energy to replace them."

But along with enthusiasm comes hard work.

"It has been a real battle all the way," Perkins says. "It was just a tremendous task to pull all the strings and have all this happen together. Timing, plans, money, support. Neighborhood committees. Getting the buildings to move, the right property, right owners, and doing it all to beat the rain."

His work has just begun.

Foundations need to be poured and roofs rebuilt. A garden and lawn will replace the current mess of mud and boards.

The houses' interiors look no better — more boards, thread-bare carpets, a fireplace or two, a claw-foot bathtub and many empty rooms.

Come this summer, the disorder will be replaced by



Photo by Bob Baker

A 1910 prairie-style structure and a 1930 bungalow have headed south for the winter — and probably forever.

a small forest, a brick courtyard connecting the three homes and seven parking spots. They will be seven apartments, ranging in size from one to three bedrooms, all completely redecorated.

The houses will be united in design, window style and paint color, Perkins says. He estimates the buildings, now about 60 years old, will last for 100 more.

Perkins likes to emphasize the value of older structures, which society ignores.

"Older buildings are built very well," he says. "There's beauty in age no matter how old it is."

After graduating from Oregon's School of Architecture in 1975, Perkins travelled through Europe. His time abroad left its mark.

"People in other countries respect buildings," he says. "What I'm trying to do is to bring a little bit of Europe to Eugene. In Europe the texture is so much different. The structure pattern, the design of the brick."

He says they "fashion it all in a way that helps bring people together informally. Making places for people, to get people closer together. There's lots of places to

hide, and not enough to let people say 'hello' more readily."

Part of that European concept will be incorporated throughout the courtyard design, including windows, the front door color scheme, the trellis (a lattice used as a support for growing vines) and the roof material, he says. The complex "will reflect the European attitude of beauty and unity."

While trying to follow traditional styles, Perkin also plans to include some modern attachments. The roofs will be designed to accommodate future solar-panels.

The bottom apartments may be adapted to wheelchair living. Children may live here, and play in the courtyard, he says.

"Right now, people aren't building," Thomas says. "Projects like this use local supply, local labor. The loans are local, due to the 'revolving' account and the local lender's task force.

"We'd like to do more projects like this," he adds. "The overall goal of HCC is to improve the quality of living for the residents of the city."