

## Hope is seen for Dobrowsky house

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The prospects of saving the Dobrowsky house in downtown Redding are looking up.

Friday was the deadline to submit a letter of interest in the historic 1920s era Craftsman. The bungalow at Yuba and Oregon streets faces demolition if it cannot be moved before the expected construction of the \$155.7 million Shasta County Courthouse in 2017.

Melissa Fowler-Bradley, court executive officer, said she heard from at least one person who contacted before and after he submitted his proposal to the state Judicial Council. She said a few other people, who contacted her office about the house, were forwarded to the agency. The Judicial Council owns the property on which the house sits and has been soliciting ideas to save it.

"We have a few people who have an interest. But until it's a done deal, I really won't know," Fowler-Bradley said. "And I'd just be speculating."

It is anticipated the Judicial Council may announce next week whether there is a potential taker.

The deadline fell on the same day a few demonstrators gathered in front of the house dressed in black and armed with "Save the Dobrowsky House" and "Don't Destroy History" poster boards.

Leading the group of seven was local historian Dottie Smith.

"We're just hoping someone will come along and save it," Smith said.

Their demonstration coincided with training exercises by the Redding Fire Department on the vacant house next door. The presence of four fire engines on Yuba Street and history buffs drew onlookers.

"I hate to see the old things go away. I know we have to make progress, but sometimes I think it goes in the wrong direction," said Frank Studva, who lives on the city's south side and frequents the downtown for its quaint buildings. "They should leave these old homes."

Proposals to preserve the building's historic nature run the gamut. There has been talk of jacking up the house or perhaps salvaging the interior.

Blaine Spence is upbeat about the future of the house but is realistic that it's complicated by the need for coordination and cooperation of various entities.

The best outcome would be to move the house to Caldwell Park and turn it into a museum, he said, echoing Smith's sentiments.

Smith and her friends also want to know what will become of the two coast redwoods.

"I know a lot of people want to save these redwoods," she said.

Fowler-Bradley said the state sent

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an arborist to look at the trees on the property.

A report identifies seven trees, including the two redwoods. She said the architect and project manager are trying to focus on the larger ones, which are in better health.

The 50-foot redwood was found to be in healthy conditions, while the taller one, at 60 feet, was found to be in better shape.

A maple tree by the fire hydrant out toward the street also is in good health. An oak tree right on the edge of the alley west of the house was not as healthy, she said.

"With the positioning of the building, they are going to save as many as they can," she said.

Designs for the courthouse are still months away from being finalized.

The project next Tuesday will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee. The committee would make recommendations to the Judicial Council about what happens to the project.

If it recommends approval of the design development, the project moves into the next phase. It would begin preliminary plans in late summer. At that point, provided funding is included in the next budget cycle, architects would by fall draw up the actual construction drawings.

“That is when things are locked down,” Fowler-Bradley said.

State officials opened the Dobrowsky house for a tour March 3. The McConnell Foundation’s Lee Salter and Shannon Phillips were invited to attend.

Whether the philanthropic foundation has an interest in the house was not known Friday. Phillips did not return a call for comment.

Spence said ideas about what becomes of the house are floating out there. But someone needs to step up.

“So many of our buildings in Redding have been destroyed. When they put the Redding mall in, a bunch of historic buildings were destroyed,” he said. “This is something we want to save.”

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- Caption: Andreas Fuhrmann/Record Searchlight Dottie Smith, seated, and other fans of the Dobrowsky house protest Friday the plan to demolish the Craftsman house in downtown Redding.

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