

# Landmark MAKES A comeback



SCOTT MACDONALD/SOUTH COUNTY LIFE

Los Coches Adobe in Soledad is seen March 7.

## Soledad gets help to fund restoration of landmark

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For South County Life

Los Coches Adobe — California Historic Landmark No. 494, located a mile south of Soledad on Highway 101 at Arroyo Seco Road — is a mere shell of the vibrant meeting place it once was.

Now the city of Soledad has acquired the help of Monterey County-based Noyes Research Consulting to put together a plan that would restore the adobe structure.

In February, the City Council agreed to put up \$150,000 in order to qualify to apply for a \$300,000 grant from the California Cultural and Historic Endowment to repair the landmark.

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## TO GET INVOLVED

Soledad officials hold meetings at City Hall at 1:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss the future of Los Coches Adobe, a historical landmark.

for the good of the community,” said Charlotte Noyes, research consultant on the adobe project. “The building itself needs considerable rehabilitation, so we are in the process of seeking funding through grants from the California Cultural and Historic Endowment.”

Once a busy stage coach station and post office, the original structure was built in 1843 as a residence for William Brunner Richardson and his wife, Josefa Soberanes de Richardson.

Josefa was granted the ranch by the Mexican government in 1841. In 1846 and 1847, the site was used as an encampment for U.S. Army Capt. John C. Fremont’s troops. Los Coches was turned into an inn sometime around the turn of the

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century, when it catered to miners and travelers.

According to many, Los Coches Rancho has an allure of mystery surrounding it. Some even claim that it is haunted.

For decades, the historic landmark has remained off limits to the public.

Dilapidated and boarded up to keep out intruders, the building is in desperate need of attention. The eight acres of land surrounding the adobe that make up Los Coches Rancho are covered in brush.

A committee charged with planning the adobe’s restoration is composed of many Soledad residents and business owners “who genuinely care about doing the right thing out there,” Noyes said.

Soledad officials have been holding meetings at City Hall at 1:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss possible outcomes for the historical landmark.

Some of the ideas have included a south county farmer’s market, a hotel, and a portal to Monterey County wine country.

In this proposal, the adobe would be restored and used as a visitor information center, with a focus on the rich heritage of the southern Salinas Valley.

“It’s my ultimate dream that everything will come together, and the community will be able to use the facilities out there in the next three years,” Noyes said.