



SEEN THROUGH THE ROUNDHOUSE GIRDERS, the 4-story parking garage is scheduled to open in 2008 next to the light rail station.

Folsom Life photo by Tom Paniagua



Life Newspapers file photo by Tom Paniagua

JERRY BERNAU served as chairman of the board of the Folsom Chamber of Commerce in 2006. His term included the arrival of light rail in Folsom and the 150th birthday celebration of Folsom.

Bernau leaving his mark on Folsom Historic District

BY MARC MALONEY
 Life Newspapers

As evidenced by the daily rumble of construction cranes and the pouring of cement, the Railroad Block in Folsom's Historic District is a busy place.

The City of Folsom's Redevelopment Agency is constructing a four-level, 300-space parking garage at Reading and Leidesdorff Streets. When the garage opens next spring, work will begin on Historic Folsom Station, a mixed-use project that will provide new retail and office space and apartment homes.

The Historic Folsom Station project team includes Folsom Railroad Block Developers, LLC, (Bernau Development Corp., Sotiris Kolokotronis, and Ryan Fong) and

Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects.

Bernau, a former Folsom resident and president of Folsom-based Bernau Development Company and Kensington Homes, said the design team is taking great pains to ensure the project's buildings are historically accurate.

"The history part of this is what draws me into it," he said. "We have a great opportunity to work the city's history into our project."

In a nod to Folsom history, the four buildings will be known as the Granite House, the Valley Road Roundhouse, Sutter Row, and the Leidesdorff Building. The Granite House will include street-level retail shops and loft residences, Sutter Row will offer loft residences and retail and office space, the Leidesdorff Building will feature

plaza-level restaurants, offices, and loft residences, and the Valley Road Roundhouse will be a freestanding restaurant and bar.

All four buildings, Bernau said, have been designed to complement the existing architectural fabric of the 19th century buildings on Sutter Street and to reflect the look of the Railroad Block's original buildings.

This attention to historical detail is no coincidence; Bernau and several others have spent hours investigating Folsom's architectural past.

The research team, Bernau said, includes employees and volunteers from the Folsom History Museum, the Folsom, El Dorado, and Sacramento Historical Railroad Association, California State Parks, the California State Railroad

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Ask the Contractors' Board



Q & A

James Miller, Chair
California Contractors State License Board

SACRAMENTO — Do you have questions about hiring and managing building contractors? The California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) has answers.

Q: I want to pay my contractor the total amount of money I owe for my current remodel because I have the money now. If I wait, I'm afraid I'll spend it on something else. Can I pay in full now and eliminate the payment plan in the contract?

A: Although it may be convenient for you to pay up front, the CSLB advises against this for your protection. You should never pay the full amount until you've seen the work your contractor has done and are satisfied with the way it's been completed. Additionally, you

should pay no more than one thousand dollars or 10 percent of the total (whichever is less) toward a down payment. A payment plan (if you have one) must be drafted into the contract and signed by you and the contractor. Payments should only be made upon completion of each task or material received.

Q: I have plans to get my living room remodeled over the next couple of months. Because the holiday season gets so busy, I'm hesitant to map out a firm timeline/schedule. Is it necessary to have a work schedule as part of my contract if I don't care about the completion date?

A: If you don't stick to a specified time schedule, the contractor may take more time than necessary or fail to complete the remodel because he may get involved with other projects. Respect both your schedules by setting a start date and an end date in the contract. If you establish a longer timeline to accommodate potential holiday plans in the contract, your contractor will know to expect a loose timeline. If he agrees, he will sign your contract with that notation and must work accordingly.

Q: What's the difference between arbitration and filing a consumer complaint with the CSLB? I had some major problems with the home

repairs a contractor just completed. I want some satisfaction without going through a long, drawn out legal process.

A: If you want a conflict resolved, you'll have to file a complaint regardless of the procedure you'd like to follow. After you file a complaint with the Contractors State License Board, the case is evaluated and recommendations are made based on monetary damages and your contractor's record. CSLB always tries to resolve problems at the lowest possible level. During mediation a CSLB representative meets with you and your contractor to help settle the dispute (free of charge). If this doesn't work, you may end up in arbitration, small claims court, or on-site negotiation.

Q: I signed a contract last week for some electrical work on my home. However, as I reviewed the contract the next day, I came across a few details that made me uncomfortable. I called my contractor right away to cancel and also wrote out an official cancellation notice, which I dropped off at his office the next morning. Now, a week later, he's claiming he didn't receive a cancellation notice within three days. Is it basically my word against his. Am I stuck with this contract?

A: You are entitled, by law, to cancel a contract within three business days of signing it. So, you are within your rights if you cancelled it the day after you signed. You can cancel by e-mail, regular mail, and fax or by delivering a written notice. One way to avoid any misunderstandings is to use registered mail or ask for written verification that the notice was received. If you have concerns, contact an attorney or file a complaint with the CSLB.

For more information, visit www.cslb.ca.gov or call (800) 321-2752.

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Museum, and various historical consultants hired by the City of Folsom during the environmental review process.

The Granite House, Bernau said, is located on the site of the original Granite House/Granite Hotel/Hotel de France that burned down in the late 1800s.

"This building is designed to emulate an elegant old hotel with design elements inspired by the Enterprise Hotel, which was also located on Sutter Street and known at the time as the nicest hotel between San Francisco and Nevada," he explained.

The Valley Road Roundhouse's design is based on the original four-stall Sacramento Valley Railroad roundhouse that existed in the late 1800's.

"In any historic rail yard, there were three main elements: the depot, the turntable, and the roundhouse," Bernau said. "Since the depot is still standing and the turntable has been restored, it was important to add back the third element, to establish the relationship and give the turntable, which sits prominently in the center of the site, added relevance to better communicate the railroad history."

The Sutter Row building, which will sit across the intersection of Sutter and Wool Streets from Snook's Candies, will resemble a collection of four small commercial buildings like those found in the 700 and 800 blocks of Sutter Street. It will feature four street-level shops, offices, and 17 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

"This building serves to transition the design from the retail shops to the railroad and hotel-themed buildings as you move west on Sutter Street," said Bernau.

Finally, the Leidesdorff Building will feature an industrial appearance with a historically-accurate design, with a brick façade, heavy timbers, and a metal roof. The building will offer outdoor dining, offices, and 13 one-bedroom apartment residences.

The Railroad Block redevelopment project also will include a public plaza encompassing 2.6 acres, or 54 percent, of the 4.9-acre project site.

"Frankly, this is the most important part of the project," said Bernau. "The plaza and associated elements will provide the draw that will help support Historic Folsom Station and the balance of the district. With its public market area, outdoor amphitheater, interpretive area, restored depot, and turntable and steam locomotive pavilion, the plaza can provide a wonderful venue to attract residents and visitors alike."

As someone whose family grew up in Folsom (his grandfather worked as a guard at Folsom Prison for several years in the 1930s and 1940s and his mother lived in Folsom around the same time), Bernau is acutely aware of the importance of history and of providing a project that Folsom can be proud of for decades to come.

"There is a tremendous obligation to deliver a wonderful project that complements the existing Historic District," he said. "However, we have an excellent team and continue to have many individuals and community organizations that are making positive contributions during the design process. Therefore, the stress is minimized and I look forward to getting up every morning and working on all the various details of the project."

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