

# Grove House Opens With New Role, Family

Last-Minute Gift Rescues 73-Year-Old Arts and Crafts Home for Pitzer College

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CLAREMONT—Grove House, which served as a comfortable home for a number of families here for 73 years, is settling in on the Pitzer College campus for another long life of service.

Culminating a five-year effort, the two-story frame house, built in 1902 and a unique example of the Arts and Crafts style of architecture, was moved to function as a student center and coffee house.

But it was an uncertain transition, filled with hope, disappointment, problems and finally success, thanks to last-minute help from a benefactor.

The odyssey from 721 Harrison Ave. in Claremont, its original location, to the campus two miles away began in 1975 when Barry Sanders, associate professor of English at Pitzer, was a member of a committee seeking to improve the quality of life on the Claremont campus.

His students in an Arts and Crafts movement class proposed finding such a house and moving it on campus.

Two years later, in 1977, Grove House was acquired from Pilgrim Place, a community of retired Christian workers, for \$1.

Cut into three sections, the house was moved to its new foun-

**Built in 1902, the house is a unique example of Arts and Crafts architecture.**

ation but was sited incorrectly by 12 feet, Sanders said, prompting a still pending lawsuit by the college trustees against the architect and contractor.

The house was too close to a clock tower, the trustees said. As litigation continued and building costs soared, the trustees terminated the project after a committee was unable to raise sufficient funds to shift the house to its intended location.

Committee members, however, were able to hold off demolition by raising questions of environmental impact and the historical value of the house.

Then came an unexpected and welcome reprieve. The Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation of Kansas City, Mo., made a gift of \$100,000 to complete the move and to restore and refurbish Grove House and to provide a permanent maintenance fund.

Instrumental in the foundation gift was Sheila Kemper, a 1979 Pitzer graduate whose father is R. Crosby Kemper Jr., a foundation trustee.

Now nearly completed, the house was dedicated in February in a series of events that included what will become the annual Kemper Lectures, designed to bring together at Grove House students and interested persons from surrounding communities.

Grove House, Sanders said, is designed after the California bungalow concept of architecture, which grew out of the Arts

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and Crafts movement in England. The bungalow style was intended for comfortable middle-class living and was popular through the 1920s.

The Arts and Crafts movement, influenced by William Morris, English artist and writer, was further developed by Gustav Stickley, the American furniture maker.

Arts and Crafts referred not only to design of the house but to its furnishings as well, and is noted for its functional simplicity, Sanders said.

Sanders and his wife, Grace, collectors of Arts and Crafts furnishings, of which Mission furniture is an example, hunted such pieces throughout the East and Midwest for use in Grove House. Refinishing, done with the help of students, took up to 300 hours for some pieces.

Grove House, with an exterior of dark-stained wood, features a wide porch on the front and one side. Porch walls and piers are made of indigenous river stone, half salvaged from the old location and the others acquired in the Claremont area.

A fireplace of quarry stone was dismantled, the stones num-



AT HOME—Barry Sanders, associate professor of English at Pitzer College, directs Grove House student center.  
Times photos by Jack Birkinshaw



PERFECT MATCH—Barbara Kohlenberg, Pitzer College psychology major, relaxes in a Morris chair, a product of the Arts and Crafts period, beside Grove House fireplace. The stones were numbered upon removal from home before dismantling for the move, and then reassembled on the new campus site in Claremont.

bered, and then reassembled at the new site.

Typical of the Arts and Crafts style is the hammered copper and brass hardware on cabinets and lighting fixtures, all restored in Grove House.

Unquestionably, Grove House clashes with the contemporary design of other Pitzer buildings on the campus at 1050 Mills Ave. "But that is more of a hindrance," Sanders said.

It has attracted students in large numbers, from noon to midnight, he said. They can be seen talking and studying on the spacious porch, in the living room and the dining room, with its half-dozen tables and bright espresso coffee machine.

Only the kitchen was modified, enlarged and modernized to accommodate the diners.

"We're busy all the time," said Sanders, who, with his wife, oversees the operation of Grove House. Faculty members are frequently there to talk with students and various classes are held there, attracted by the relaxed atmosphere, he said.

Of the upstairs bedrooms, one, with its Mission-style bed and dresser, is reserved for campus visitors while another is occupied by a live-in caretaker.

Another, named for the late, nationally known poet, Bert Meyers, a Pitzer faculty member, contains a small library.

Also in Grove House is the Barbara Hinshaw Photography Gallery. Miss Hinshaw, of Sierra Madre, was killed in an automobile accident last summer.

Under terms of the Kemper Foundation gift, Grove House must include a women's center and this is also located on the second floor.

Still to be completed is the landscaping, which will include a small citrus grove to replicate the original setting.

Local historians say the 4,900-square-foot house was first occupied by the C. F. Loop family and was an imposing structure that reflected the prosperity and optimism of the growing town of Claremont and of its then new Pomona College.

The late Louise Richards Mead, a 1919 Pomona College graduate, at one time recalled her friendship with the family and

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going for "long rides with lunches on Saturdays, as far away as Lordsburg—now La Verne."

She would ride with the daughter, Mabel Loop, in a "wicker pony cart built for two" and drawn by a Shetland pony.

A Chicago attorney, George Hamilton, purchased the house in 1911 to accommodate his family of 10. He planted the orange grove on the property from which its present name is derived.

It was purchased later by the Arvid Zetterbergs, who were the longest term residents of Grove House. When the flood of 1938 severely damaged the citrus crop, the family began gradually to dispose of the groves. In 1975, the Zetterbergs sold the house to Pilgrim Place.

Sanders said Pitzer students had long wanted an activities center with a comfortable home-like atmosphere, "but that kind of ambience is difficult to create at today's building costs."

Grove House, he believes, fills that need. "The house has roots," he said. "It's made of heavy, solid natural substances that give a sense of continuity in today's rootless society."

