

Local News



Tribune Photo by Raleigh Souther

HISTORIC HOME — The Grove House, moved across Claremont to Pitzer College after being threatened with demolition, now serves as a campus

center for a variety of activities. Built in 1902, it was saved as a result of an effort to bring the atmosphere of the era while providing a meeting place.

STUDENTS RELAX IN GROVE HOUSE

Old Home Gives Pitzer College New Look

By MARK ADAMS
Tribune Staff Writer

Set at the north end of a campus full of modern angles in its building design, the rambling wooden house appears as if it serenely looked on as the college was built around it.

Actually the Grove House, built at another location in 1902, was one of the last additions to the Pitzer College campus in Claremont.

It was dedicated on the campus in 1980 after a long and difficult journey from its original site.

Originally known as the Zetterberg House, the 4,500-square-foot structure was slated for demolition until a group of students on campus decided to move it across town to the college, both to preserve a piece of turn-of-the-century architecture and

to give Pitzer something it had been lacking — a comfortable place for the campus community to gather.

A class called The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1876 to 1916, taught by Barry Sanders, was responsible for the restoration idea.

The original class members involved in the project had graduated by the time the rechristened Grove House opened its doors on the site of an old citrus orchard, but new students had carried on the efforts to see a dream become fact.

The idea of moving the house, after receiving the approval of the board of trustees, was implemented with grants from many sources, including the John A. McCarthy Foundation of Los Angeles, and con-

tributions from campus groups and individuals.

Problems arose when the house, which was moved in three sections, was accidentally placed off-center at its new resting place, and work stopped while negotiations between the involved parties consumed two years. By the time work was ready to resume, building costs had skyrocketed and money was gone. The board of trustees decided to demolish the house unless funds could be found to complete the restoration.

Sheila Kemper, a Pitzer student, was concerned enough about the house and its fate to ask her father to finance the restoration, and he agreed.

R. Crosby Kemper III gave the college money to relocate the house,

restore it and furnish it with mission-style furniture from the Arts and Crafts period of American architecture.

People involved with the restoration of the Grove House say it brought something else to Pitzer College — community and spirit.

"The students here really take pride in the house," said Jane Holcomb, dean of students. "In a sense, it's a museum, but it's an alive museum."

On a recent sunny weekday, the rooms of the house were filled with students munching pastries and drinking coffee in the dining room.

Some were alone, bent over textbooks or reading the newspaper. Others were in friendly groups, talking softly as they ate.

Frank Bain, a student who works on campus, said he spends a lot of time at the Grove House studying. "I like the atmosphere, and the food is better here than at the cafeteria," he said.

The dining room is staffed by work-study students, and the food is cooked in the main kitchen on campus, although many dishes are prepared for the house by its patrons.

The spacious structure houses many campus-related activities, including a women's center, library, reading room, art and photo gallery, and coffee house. Poetry readings, concerts, lectures and a place to just sit in a rocking chair and think are all attractions that draw community members.

Student managers run the many activities at Grove House under the direction of administrators. Volunteers are always needed to help with upkeep and activities, and are encouraged to drop by and offer assistance.