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Buddhist meditation center headed to Scotts Valley

by Joe Shreve

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The site of a former assisted-living facility is to become the new home of a Buddhist retreat in Scotts Valley, following a deal that was finalized June 1.

Following a five-year search, Redwood City-based Insight Meditation Center, a Buddhist organization, acquired the property of The Mansion at 1906 Glen Canyon Road for use as a Buddhist meditation retreat.



“It seemed like a beautiful place for our purpose,” said Gil Fronsdal, leader of the center. “It seemed like it would work well.”

The Mansion, a gated assisted-living home that specialized in caring for Alzheimer’s patients, closed at the end of May, and the property was sold. The owner, Dede Beam, had opened The Mansion in 1986, expanding the buildings over the ensuing 25 years. At its height, the facility had 20 rooms for older men and women in need of round-the-clock care, specializing in cases of dementia.

Over the coming year, Fronsdal said, The Mansion’s 18,000-square-foot building and the surrounding acreage will be modified to accommodate meditation classes, including 10-day silent meditation retreats.

Insight’s plans for the remodel include creating private rooms for 40 participants, adding a restroom and shower facility, remodeling the kitchen and dining room, and creating a meditation hall, a walking-meditation area, offices and interview rooms.

Fronsdal said in particular he was excited about designing the upper level of The Mansion building, which has never been fully completed, describing it as “6,000 square feet of blank canvas.”

As for the surrounding grounds, Fronsdal said, the center plans to replace what he described as water-intensive plants with a more drought-tolerant native landscape.

He said he looked forward to the prospect of becoming part of the Scotts Valley community.

“(The neighborhood) was very welcoming of us,” he said. “I’m very much aware that we are joining this community, and I hope we can become a contributing member of this community.”

Fronsdal, who has been a teacher with Insight Meditation Center for 21 years, described the type of Buddhism the center practices as “an American Buddhism” — Eastern teachings adapted for Western society.

“Some people aren’t sure what Buddhists are,” he said. “We’re just ordinary folks doing this thing.

“Anyone is welcome — it’s not an exclusive thing.”

Fronsdal said he hopes to welcome the first retreat group May 1, 2012.

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