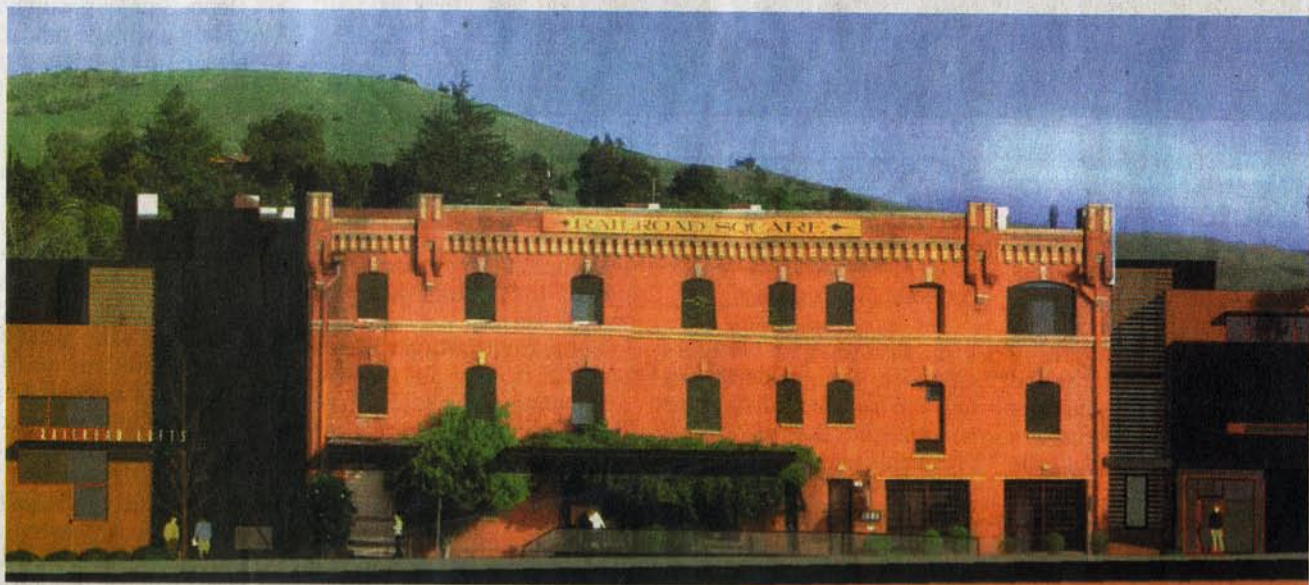


# BIZ BUZZ: SLO'S RAILROAD SQUARE TO BE REVITALIZED



IMAGES COURTESY OF GARCIA ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Developers envision a reinvigorated railroad district for San Luis Obispo. The project, as viewed from Santa Barbara Street, features a retrofitted and remodeled Railroad Square building with modern additions on either side.

## 'To relive the old glory days'

The Santa Barbara Street project will feature 'fairly boxy' buildings that incorporate some of the rooflines already in the neighborhood

Real estate developer **Rhamish Marshall** says a historically significant — but empty — three-story red brick building in the railroad hub of San Luis Obispo is making progress toward becoming vibrant again.

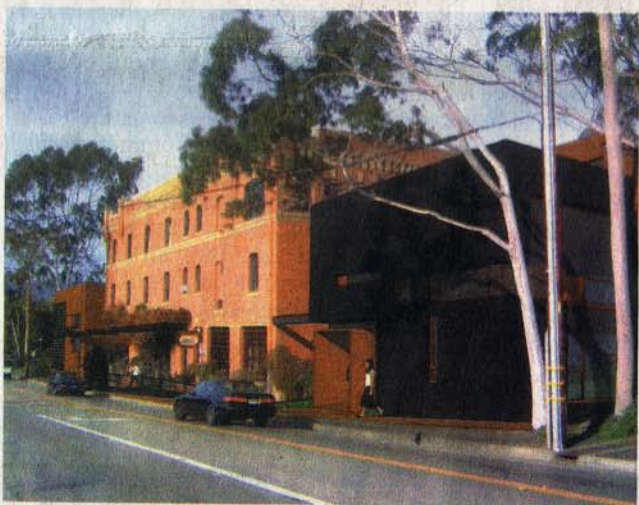
Marshall and a group of partners doing business as Depot Square LP have taken a 50,000-square-foot commercial and residential project at 1880 Santa Barbara St., dubbed Railroad Square, through preliminary development approvals. They will request city building permits for the project within a week, said **Carol Florence**, principal of Oasis Landscape, Architecture and Planning, who is helping Marshall shepherd

the project through its planning stages.

The total cost of the project is still under review, Florence said.

The first phase of the project will concentrate on the seismic retrofitting and renovation of the 23,000-square-foot Railroad Square structure, built about 1912 and gutted by a devastating fire in 2002.

The rehabilitation of the building has been "a long time coming," said **George Garcia**, head of Garcia Architecture and Design, which helped design the project and was one of the 30 commercial tenants forced from the building after a transient accidentally set a fire in 2002. The blaze



Top, the Railroad Square building in the early 20th century. Above, a rendering of one of the new additions.

caused more than \$1 million in damage, bringing the structure to the brink of demolition before the owners decided to renovate it, rather than raze and rebuild it from scratch.

Two wooden buildings attached to the brick structure in the mid-1900s will

be demolished and replaced by four detached buildings in the second phase of the project, Garcia said. Those buildings will be separated from the older building by walkways and courtyards and will house

Please see BUZZ, C2

