

Building a House

2025-26

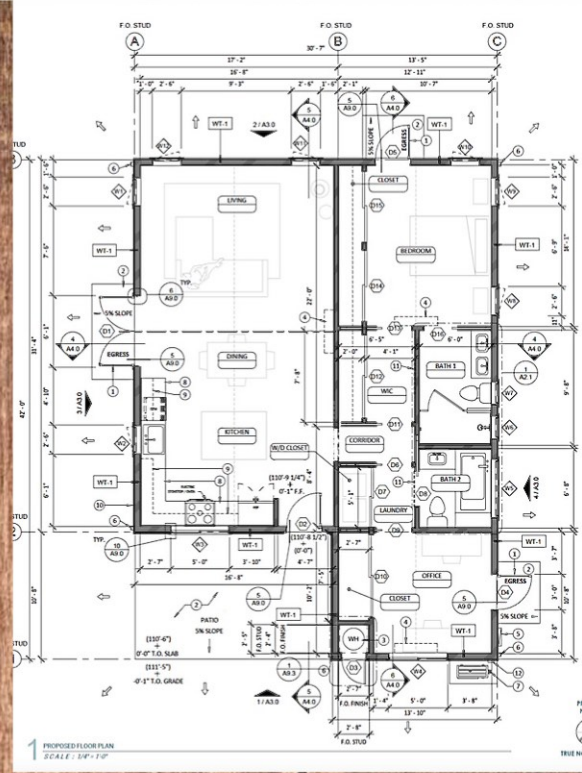
Cindy Castillo



The Idea

The back third of my Deodara property had remnants of fruit trees and vegetable gardens, weeds, a very large old prickly pear cactus and echos of horses from my childhood. Since Mom's death in 2006 the house had been rented but no tenants made use of the back with its long driveway from the street. It was a buffer, a quiet space with a large oak tree and two large redwood trees. When Daniel and Star wanted to find a place with some yard space I though it was time to see if I could build a house back there. At one time I thought I might build a small unit for myself, but this was an adventure even more exciting!





Making it Real
I mended the fence, cleaned up the weeds, and had the oak and redwoods trimmed in 2023. When attempts were thwarted to split the lot in late summer 2024 a designer and contractor were hired to build an ADU. We submitted our plans to Los Altos in November '24 and they were approved in March '25. Fencing around the heritage oak and redwoods was required by the city. Clearing began right away!





Prep A clean slate emerged. The ground was leveled, forms made, plumbing installed, gravel and rebar applied for strength and the foundation was ready to be poured.



Foundation
The cement truck parked on the street and the hoses carried the cement to the back. After hardening, the wood foundation beams were bolted on.





Walls

Studs go up, roofline takes shape, outer walls are covered, water and sewer lines are buried to connect to the main house, and windows are delivered for installation.



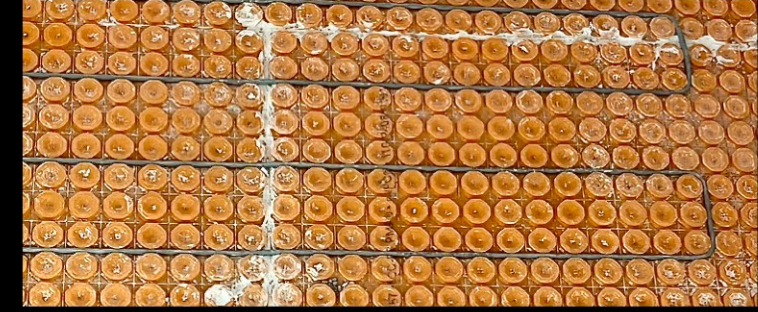
Windows etc..

Windows are installed, electrical is wired, mini-split pipes are in place, plumbing continues, fire suppression sprinkler system is installed, roof is covered and fascia boards in place, and outer walls are prepared for stucco.





Wall Prep Mud inside. Second coat of stucco outside. RedGuard in bathrooms for waterproofing. Orange under heated flooring.



Details Electric lines in bathroom flooring. Inside walls sanded and cornered. Baseboards, pocket doors and tracks delivered. Bathroom tile started. Outside frames and doors painted. Jose and Jose restoring main house backyard after months of no irrigation due to trenching.





Finishes come alive!

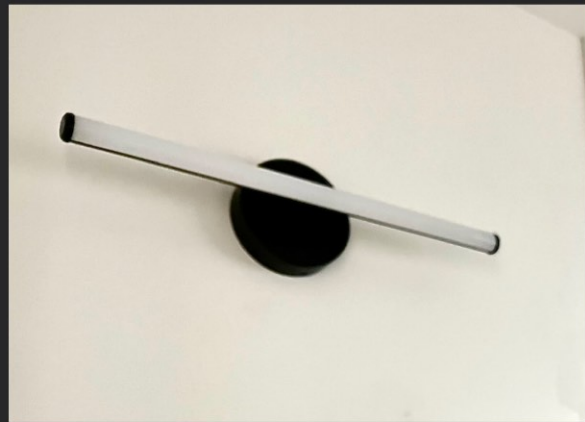
Third coat of stucco with Oak Moss color. Both bath tiles up and grouted. Floor installation starts. One day, six workers, four trucks and lots of debris!



Kitchen Cabinets! Gutters, downspouts, kitchen cabinets, pocket doors, baseboards, door frames all shaping the interior.

Grass green again and new mailbox in place. Boxes start arriving!





Fixtures
 Lighting fixtures,
 bathroom
 cabinets, kitchen
 countertops and
 major appliances
 are arriving!
Bad news!
 Power pole must
 be replaced.
 4-7 weeks!





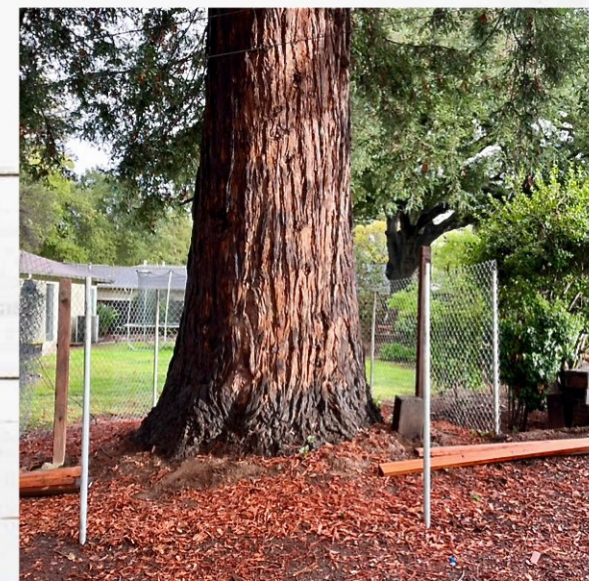
New Fence

Almost 200' of fencing was installed in two days, the first day during an atmospheric river!

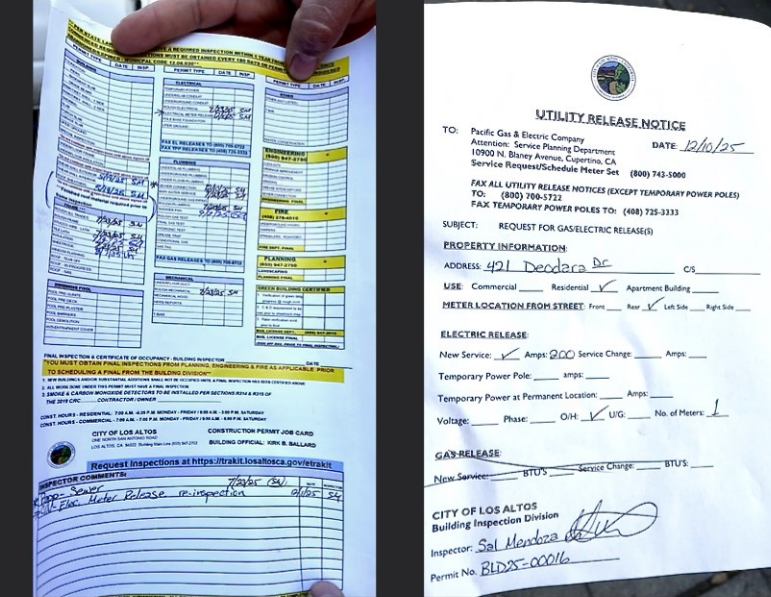
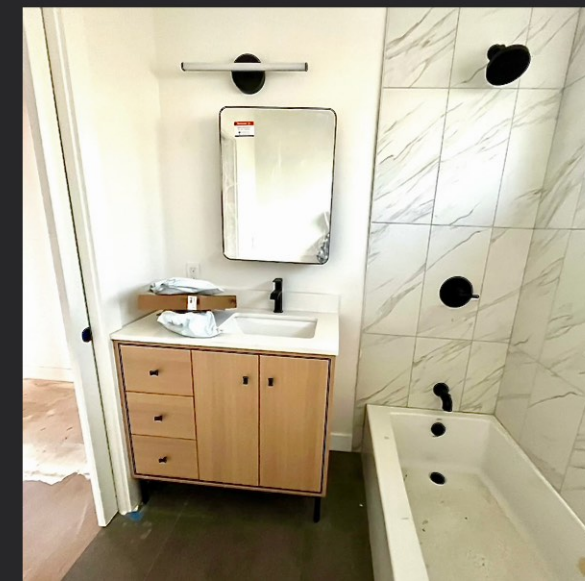
Both house and ADU will enjoy the redwood trunk.

Street access directly to the ADU with short walls hiding garbage totes.

Artwork at top of stairs provides interest from both sides. Original railroad ties all saved in place.



Meter Release Doors painted, mirrors hung, laundry installed, brick laid. PGE insists on replacing our power pole...scheduled Jan 8, cancelled Jan 6, wait, wait, wait, rescheduled 2 months later on March 17!





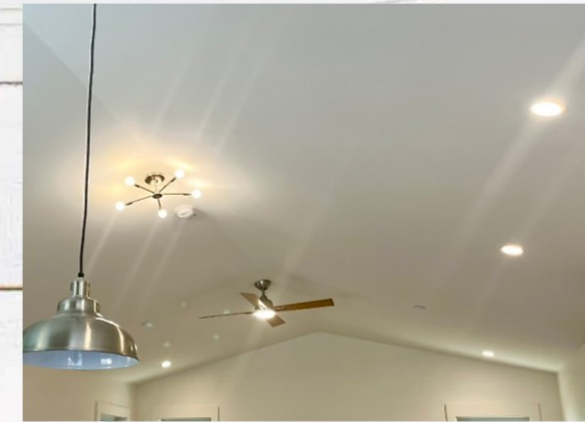
Still Waiting.... Kitchen appliances installed. Still waiting for power from PGE.





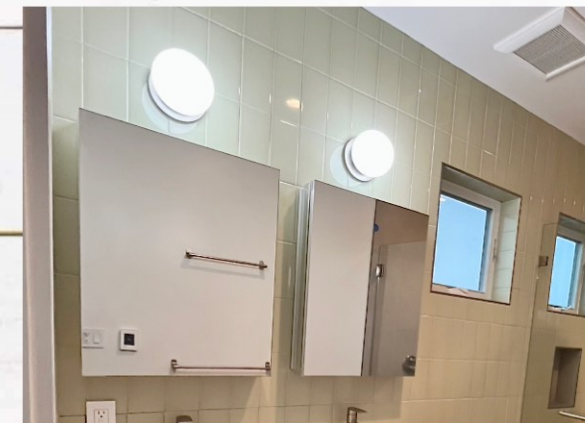
Pole replacement

March 17 PGE contractors came before 8 am. Fencing was removed, the pole was transported to the back on a robot, dressed up with essentials, and set upright by the crane. Crews connected wires to the new pole, except for the internet cables, and a meter installed. Fence guys put the fence back by 5 pm.



Power!

Lights are on, mini-splits are working, fire alarm system is checked, power wash is done, punch list is almost completed. It has been exactly one year since our permit was approved. Inspections, both building and fire, are scheduled for Monday. Can we pass them both? No.





Move In! Comcast installed and a new punch list emerges.....electrical issues, vent issues, light issues, and trenches surround the house connecting all downspouts to a dry well below ground to hold rain water on site.

Driveway
Driveway widened at street to facilitate full vehicle width. Dry well buried with valve.





The End?

There is no real end. But we are close! The punch list is mostly done. Cal Water must replace the street water meter before final building, engineering, and fire inspections can be signed off. There are some projects for AFTER final inspections with circuit breakers and a sub meter. New furniture is coming in. Accumulated "stuff" has to find a home or be tossed. Construction has started on the Canto condo to replace patios and stairs so timing of the move to the ADU was perfect! Plans are starting to formulate for landscaping the yard, maybe this summer.

Welcome Home!





421 Deodara



421 A Deodara

This property was purchased by my parents, Wilma and David Wolgast, in 1968 and was home to me and my sister until we left for college. After their divorce, Mom lived here alone until she passed in 2006 but Daniel and David were regular visitors. Jose and I lived here a few years in the 1980s before purchasing our duplex. Some of Jose's siblings also lived here as did my friend Nicholas. It is heartwarming to know that Daniel, with Star, will be living here as the third generation!

