

# GENTRY

PENINSULA

SEPTEMBER 2007

## the current talk

### *the first annual* DICKENS DESIGN TOUR



For the first time ever, the Annual Dickens House will open its doors one month early, inviting the public to view the home's exquisite interior renovations before holiday decorations and merchandise are added. Come walk through this historic Hillsborough estate and admire the aesthetics, architecture, and design.

**When:** September 18 – September 23  
**Where:** 108 Stonehedge Road, Hillsborough  
**Hours:** Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 AM – 2 PM; Sunday 11 AM – 3 PM  
**Tickets:** \$40 (valid for unlimited visits to the Holiday Boutique and Designer Showhouse beginning Saturday, October 20). Tickets can be purchased at the door or through reservation by email, [dh@smeds.info](mailto:dh@smeds.info), or phone, 650.342.5436 x219.

Proceeds from the event support the students and programs of St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School, providing an exemplary education to Peninsula children for more than 50 years.

## Inside The Walls

Many people contemplate renovating their home and, for the brave who pursue that desire, the elusive question sometimes arises: "What's inside the walls?" If you have ever taken a hammer to a wall, you've no doubt answered that question for yourself. Removing the skin of a building from the inside always reveals a narrative about the making of a building, a connection to the history of a place. That connection is certainly one of the most powerful and compelling aspects year's Dickens House.

Constructed in the early moments of the 20th century, on one of original subdivisions former rancho, 108 Stonehedge Road evokes a sense of stately grandeur and tradition emblematic of an even older era. Situated in the middle of its parcel, well back from the street, the home allows a graceful transition from the public realm one of family life. Moving around the site, the formality of the front yard yields to a more natural sense of space—with a stand of magnificent California redwoods.

The combination of Tudor-style proportions and Craftsman-style building elements further reflects the combination of formal and informal architectural motif. Conceived as two inter-connected structures, the main body of the home houses all the public and private spaces given to a family's life. The secondary building at the side was conceived as a service wing, housing the elements necessary to support life in the main house. The transformation of this home for the demands of a contemporary family was carefully calibrated to preserve its many unique qualities.

Some unusual conditions were discovered after demolition, which gave our construction teams further evidence of how much building practices have changed in a century. The most surprising was that the floor framing (above the kitchen) ran in the long direction of the wing, a single span of over 30 feet! This is perhaps surprising until you consider that the floor joists are old growth redwood, likely milled from the ancient stands of Marin County. Such large trees are a rarity in modern times; making such conditions seem extravagant to modern sensibilities.

As I always advise my clients, building well is only possible with a well-integrated partnership between the homeowner, the architect/designer, and the builder. Without all three, a building project will not achieve its best potential. I admire the courage of homeowners who place their trust in the professional designers and builders who conceive and realize the transformation of built space. Balancing design vision with the restrictions of existing conditions, budget, and building codes is a demanding challenge. I salute this year's designers for their beautiful contributions to the transformation of this fine example of our local history.

As you tour the home, notice the texture, color, and delight evident in the presentation of each room. Many months of hard work by many individuals have been invested in this transformation. I hope this project will yield another century of graceful living as its legacy to the future occupants.

Respectfully,  
**Mark Tetrault**  
Project Architect



*Letter from the architect*