

Family builds their Camelot in Rumson

Vaccaro's 'castle' stops traffic, draws ogglers, comments

By PEGGY LYFORD

REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

RUMSON — Reactions to borough's first English Castle in 50 years have been as vast as the floor plan of the 6,000 square foot home.

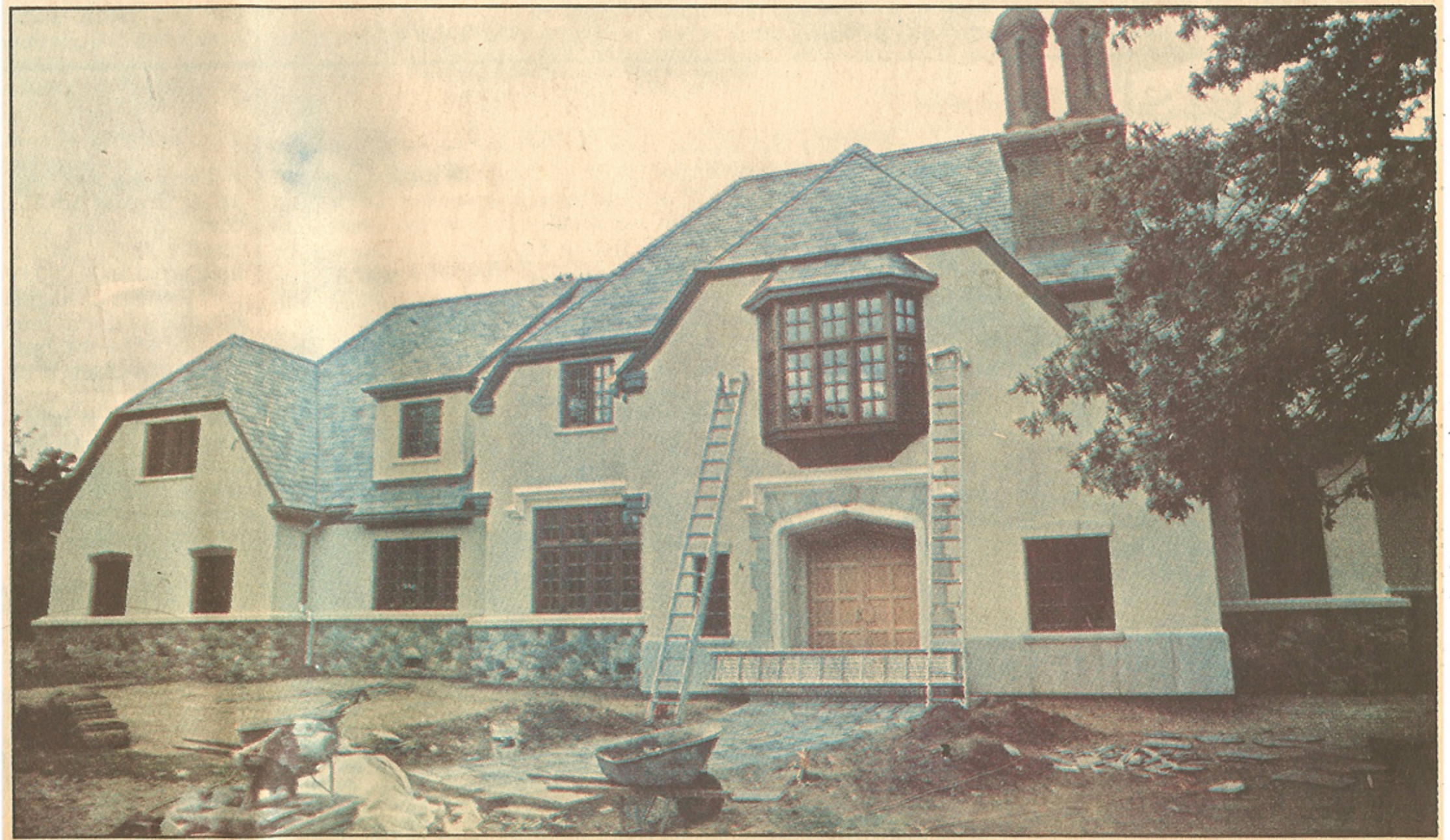
While most applaud the vision necessary to create the Frank Vaccaro family house on Bingham Avenue at Bingham Hill Circle, some lament the loss of a 30-year-old ranch that didn't overpower the neighbors or the acre-and-a-half lot.

Probably the most caustic comment came from a woman featured in 1986 Town and Country magazine article on Rumson who commented, "Glue-on stone! Can you imagine?"

Helen Vaccaro, the owner's wife, said that they have had a lot of favorable comment on the stone. "Everybody's loved it! But, the lady is entitled to her own opinion," she said.

Such is the response to anyone who dares to be different. And different the house is. Motorists screech to a halt, pull into the uncompleted driveway and stare at length. Most viewers are incredulous, but several have made informal offers. The response has been so "overwhelmingly favorable," she said, because "it's obvious that we're using only the best materials and doing the best job we can."

When the Vaccaros finish their home with English shrubbery and gardens appropriate to their construction, it's possible



THE REGISTER/MARTIN PETERCHAK

A REAL EYE-CATCHER — Frank and Helen Vaccaro are building this Rumson house that also become something of a tourist attraction. The house, still under construction, is such that people are driving up to it to stare, Frank Vaccaro says.

they can anticipate even more astonishment.

Owner-builder Frank Vaccaro said he and his wife decided to move from Staten Island to Monmouth County as many of his peers are retiring to California and Florida, and intends to semi-retire here. He was "too close to his work," he said. Meanwhile, he added, having decided on the style desired for their new home, they

"spent countless hours picking out the finest details of possible variations on baronial English country homes at the New York Public Library."

What lures passers-by? Vaccaro said: people are "attracted to the slate roof, twin chimneys and architectural detail of the front entrance, which has a 2-1/4-inch thick front door." They also "specified all-mahogany custom windows with no knots,

and all oak trim for the interior. Floors are 4" Nordic plsnk oak which is on styrofoam in the great room to give a floating floor," he said.

In addition, all exterior trim is cedar with copper gutters, flashing and nails. While the street-side has "fieldstone five feet up, the back of the house has six skylights. It will be surrounded by roses, lilacs, forsythia, daffodils, daisies, and lots