

✓ Cooper House starts to fall



Demolition will take three days.

Symbol doesn't succumb easily

By GUY LASNIER
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Marlene Keeley and her daughter Lori had stood at the corner of Cooper and Front streets since 5 a.m. Thursday watching a wrecking crane that was poised beside the doomed Cooper House.



Lori Keeley says farewell.

Hundreds of others joined the owner of the Crepe Place restaurant during the day, forming a sort of death watch on the last hours for the premier symbol of downtown Santa Cruz.

The end came just before 2 p.m. when the crane dropped a several-ton chunk of iron resembling a chess pawn through the tile roof.

A lone saxophonist played taps.

Tears were joined by sighs and even curses.

The 94-year-old building did not yield easily to the wrecker's ball. Demolition crews will need several days to bring the three-story building down. The yellow brick former county courthouse was mortally wounded by the 7.1 earthquake Oct. 17.

The city decided it was too great a danger to leave standing. Owner Jay Paul, a Los Gatos developer who was renovating the building and planned to move his offices to its second floor, agreed to demolition Wednesday.

Most in town hated to see the building fall, although cheers broke out when the first blow was struck. Many believed it could be saved.

A Pasadena engineer who inspected the building last week with nine others, agreed it could be saved. "Sure it could have been done," said Michael Krakower. "It's just a question of how much you'd have to spend."

Krakower said the building was doomed after a

Please see DEMOLITION — A4



Crowds arrived Thursday to see the venerable old county courthouse go down. It will take up to three days to finish the job.

Photos by Bill L...

By 11 a.m., on Thursday...



The '06 quake took a chunk out of the Cooper House, which was finished off by the '89 quake. The Santa Cruz Historical Society

Demolition/ Symbol going down

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"cursory consensus" of the engineers who inspected it. "It certainly did not reflect a detailed analysis," he said.

Paul, whose office said he had no comment, spent about \$2 million to buy the Cooper House nearly three years ago and hundreds of thousands dollars since then in renovations. Santa Cruz contractor Michael Bates, who did the renovation work, said recent earthquake reinforcing saved many lives.

"The owner feels, I feel, everyone feels that it is possible it wouldn't be standing," Bates said.

Marlene Keeley and her husband, Gary, opened the Crepe Place on the first floor of the Cooper House last Memorial Day. After 16 years in Santa Cruz, the Keeleys lost their original North Pacific Avenue restaurant last December when tons of earth slammed into the rear of their building.

"We were just pulling ourselves up," Mrs. Keeley said as a dull thud came from the wrecking ball crashing into Cooper House walls.

Lori Keeley, the restaurant's general manager, said her family spent about \$200,000 renovating the restaurant. City officials would allow no one inside to retrieve belongings or furnishings or anything.

Will there be another Crepe Place?

"You betcha. If I have to set up a tent there will be a Crepe Place in Santa Cruz," she said.

Superior Court Judge John Marlo took a break from court dur-

ing the morning "to see the place where I tried my first case nearly 30 years ago."

Retired Judge Charles Franich, who sat in the courtroom when Judge Gilbert Perry was on vacation said the old courthouse "seems so small" compared with today. "It was very simple then, all the way around," said Franich from his Watsonville home.

It changed as Santa Cruz changed in the 1970s. Max Walden, another Los Gatos developer, saved the old courthouse from the wreck-er's ball nearly 20 years ago when he paid the county about \$70,000. Walden turned it into shops and a gallery and added a cafe with outdoor music in 1971.

Walden, now 65, could not be reached. Friends in Hanford, where he bought and converted a courthouse and jail, said when he was last heard from, he was in New Zealand.

Last night, a wake was held at Seabright Brewery with vibraphonist Don McCaslin and the band Warmth, fixtures outside the Cooper House. The place was packed with old mall regulars and employees from over the years.

Another regular, Will Sulzner, a large man with a gray ponytail and ever present sunvisor, walked along Front Street at about 2:30 p.m., Thursday, his usual hour for downtown Santa Cruz.

"I've come here every day for the last 11 years," Sulzner said. "The Cooper House and music has been a focal point of my life in Santa

Cruz.

"I'll miss it, but not for long," he said. "There'll be something else. There always is."

**HALLOWEEN
HAPP**

Tues. Oct. 3

• 6pm 'til...?

• Dance to "T

Severin

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At the
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