

# Santa Cruz/Monterey

EARTHQUAKE 1989 — WATSONVILLE —

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## Watsonville High School to be demolished

### Repair of quake-damaged building too expensive

By Bob Johnson  
Special to the Mercury News

After standing for 73 years as a beloved landmark, the two-story main building of Watsonville High School on East Beach Street has joined the list of casualties of the Loma Prieta earthquake.

Trustees of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District voted Wednesday night to

demolish the earthquake-damaged building, which is called 1917 after its date of completion. In its place the district will erect a two-story building of similar proportion, style and decorative detailing.

The board was forced to reach its decision by overwhelming financial realities: Rehabilitating 1917 or rebuilding it while retaining the exterior walls would cost an

estimated \$6 million — more than a new building would cost and far more than could be financed under state guidelines. And the district had been warned that even a rehabilitated 1917 would still fall short of modern building standards.

"The end product after rehabilitation would be a 70-year-old building with a partially new structural framework," dis-

trict architect Thang Do wrote in a report. The report was considered by the board and by a committee of community residents and staff members that recommended demolition.

"The building would lack many features that would be present in a building constructed today, most notably the ones relating to energy saving, such as insulation and double glazing," he wrote.

Earthquake damage to 1917 was originally thought to be minimal, and both students and administrators continued to

use the building until spring. But the building was evacuated over Easter vacation after engineers discovered that the concrete in the exterior walls was not as strong as modern standards demand.

It will cost an estimated \$5.25 million to build the modern replica of 1917 — \$250,000 more than a bare-bones replacement — and the district hopes to receive fast-track treatment in its application for state money.

Classes and administrative offices are using portable buildings in the meantime.