

✓ Felton Plans for new Felton hall get OK

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FELTON — The Felton Community Club on Monday approved plans for a new community hall that will replace the previous structure that burned down two years ago this week.

The new building will stand in the same place as the old one did for 65 years — on the corner of Kirby Street and Highway 9. It will be a single-story building incorporating an offset entrance foyer, a main hall that will hold a maximum of 268 people, a kitchen, stage, a meeting room that will hold a maximum of 64 people, lots of wood on the outside and skylights on the roof.

Now that the plans are approved, they will go to the county planning department for review, according to Nick Nichols, community club president.



Architect's drawing of planned Felton community hall.

The architect, Jeff Oberdorfer, will still make some refinements to the plans suggested by the board.

The recession has created a favorable climate to reconstruct the hall.

"It's a real good time to build things because of lower construction bids," he said.

Nichols predicted the building would cost about \$350,000 to build.

Plans to replace the hall have been around since it burned down in August 1990, a few feet from the mostly volunteer fire department next door. No cause has been determined for the fire.

A series of workshops were held in 1991 to give the community opportunities to provide input. Those workshops produced a preliminary two-story design, but the refined

design is one story with high ceilings. The club and Oberdorfer have had "a lot of dialogue," he said.

The new hall will be about 5,500 gross square feet. The old building was about 4,600 square feet.

The old building was a multi-purpose building, hosting wedding receptions, antique auctions, graduation exercises and a variety of dances on the wooden floor.

A wooden floor is part of the plan for the building, to keep dancers from the Felton area happy.

The club still needs to raise about \$100,000 to pay for the new building. The club was given \$216,000 from Transamerica Insurance Co. for the damage done to the old building. The original cost of the building, which was built mainly with volunteer labor in 1925, was \$5,160.80.

Nichols said the group will look for grants to help pay for the reconstruction.