

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

The building site next to Los Pinos restaurant has been vacant since the 1989 earthquake.

After 18 years, downtown lot to be filled

Earthquake - City of Santa Cruz - Rebuilding

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Construction begins on retail space and plush townhomes

By **JONDI GUMZ**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Mix the Italian roots of Santa Cruz with its Victorian past, add a touch of luxury, and that is what is under construction at 2027 North Pacific Ave.

A three-story building, with first-floor retail space and townhomes with turrets and balconies on the upper levels, will fill the vacant lot next to the Los Pinos restaurant. Los Gatos architect Daryl Fazekas, who is traveling in Denmark, is the designer.

The site is one of several holes in the downtown landscape being filled in. Two others have been vacant since the 1989 earthquake.

Construction is under way for a four-story office building with ground-floor retail

on property at Church Street and Pacific Avenue owned by Louis Rittenhouse. The completion date is November 2007.

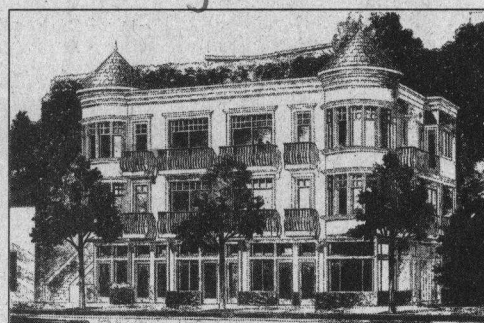
Construction is expected to start next year on a condo-retail-restaurant project at the north end of Pacific Avenue. Developer Bolton Hill plans to build up to 60 condominiums with street level retail and restaurants near Lulu Carpenter's cafe.

The site at 2027 North Pacific Ave. was the home of the Crepe Place restaurant until Christmas Eve 1988, when the cliff behind the building collapsed. In 1991, tons more rock fell, and the building was demolished.

Now after 18 years, the location is ready to spring to life.

The owner is from Tokyo and familiar with Santa Cruz, said Scott Walton of Wescoe Inc., the Santa Cruz firm that is putting up the building designed by Fazekas and approved by the city a year ago.

"The cliff has been taken care of," Walton added. "We bought the job with the permits ready to pull. It's really unique."



Balconies and turrets are featured on the three-story building under construction at 2027 North Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz.

Contributed graphic

He estimated construction would take eight months. He did not have any information on the leasing rate. No leases have been signed.

Currently, the ground-floor retail is designed as "one big space," Walton said, although it could be retrofitted for tenants seeking smaller shops.

The upstairs will consist of four two-story townhomes.

"They are going to be plush," Walton said.

The other partners in Wescoe are

Scotts Valley contractor Mark Discoe, who serves as president, and Santa Cruz resident Mark Westberg, former owner of Barossa Grill.

Wescoe has two other contracts signed for projects downtown and nearby. One is to build 17 apartments at 517 Cedar Street; another is to build three houses at Third and Laurel streets.

"We're looking for more spots to build," Walton said.

Sentinel staff writer Shanna McCord contributed to this report.