



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Rear of Old Soquel Plaza was the first structure in Soquel to fall because of quake damage.

Soquel structure demolished

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SOQUEL — Soquel lost its first building Monday because of damage from the Oct. 17 earthquake.

Old Soquel Plaza at 2715 Porter St., across from Soquel Elementary School, was partially demolished Monday morning. About 40 percent of the rear portion of the two-story building was removed, said owner Brian Herman. He has already vowed to rebuild.

Heather Mauer, executive director of the Asbestos Victims of America — which was housed downstairs in the building since 1981 — was saddened as she watched the demolition. The large crane bit into the building easily, "picking it up like cards," she said. The demolition was completed within a few hours.

Linda Adams, an employee at The Plumbing Bureau — located in

the front portion of the building that escaped major damage — continued to work as the demolition went on. She said she didn't like being in the store then "because everything shakes."

"It's pretty eerie," Adams added. "We're staying close to the doors."

The partial demolition had been delayed for a week because asbestos was present. The Monterey Bay Area Air Pollution Control District ordered asbestos removed from the rear, upstairs portion.

The portion taken down reportedly was one of two additions to the original building, which was built before the 1906 earthquake. At one time or another, the building was said to have housed a church and a hotel.

Both the original building, and the other addition housing the Plumbing Bureau, survived the

Oct. 17 temblor. The Plumbing Bureau lost its entire storeroom.

Businesses forced to leave the building include the Asbestos Victims of America, Vocational Training Institute, Geri Wadsworth Realty and Judy Miller law offices.

Businesses expected to return to the building include Monterey Bay Investment Properties, Santa Cruz Counseling Center and Mary's Creative Secretarial Service.