



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

'X' marks this restaurant for destruction as a wrecking troops moved in on Watsonville's Main Street Friday.

Main Street crumbles further

By JAMIE MARKS
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WATSONVILLE — The walls came tumbling down Friday.

Bulldozers, large cranes and tractors moved into downtown en masse to tear into more buildings damaged by last month's earthquake.

"You can sit in the City Plaza and see them tearing down buildings on all four sides," commented City Manager John Radin.

Saturday, Mayor Betty Murphy said 11 businesses would reopen downtown for the Christmas season in donated trailers. She offered no details to the meeting of local state and federal officials involved in recovery efforts here.

The latest downtown casualties of the earthquake were the brick Odd Fellows

building on East Beach Street and the Masonic Temple on Maple and Union streets.

The top of the Odd Fellows building toppled in the earthquake, killing one woman and injuring four others.

The Masonic Temple didn't look bad from the outside, but city officials said the roof had separated from the back wall by some 6 inches.

All but one of the buildings on the 300 block of Main Street, across from the City Plaza, fell to the wrecking crane last week. Even some of the buildings that had been thought to be salvageable were demolished because of damage from aftershocks.

The only building that will remain on the block is Monterey Savings, at the corner of Main and West Beach streets.

The Rev. Mike Miller of St. Patrick's

Church said Saturday he would read an announcement to parishioners today from the bishop in Monterey on the future of that quake-damaged structure. He declined to reveal the announcement's contents in advance.

The owners of the older buildings were trying to beat a 5 p.m. Friday deadline that was set by special legislation passed by the state Legislature Nov. 4. The law calls for demolition of historic buildings or buildings that are 50 years old to be reviewed by three agencies after the deadline lapses.

The historic review process could take an additional month or two to complete. It must be approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, State Historic Preservation Officer and a historic review panel.