

5-16-94

UCSC music center back to drawing board

By KATHERINE EDWARDS

Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Long-contested plans to build a 400-seat recital hall and music complex at UC Santa Cruz are again on hold.

Every bid to build the project has come in over the \$9.7 million budgeted — the lowest of them \$1.8 million more than what the university can afford to spend, campus officials said.

That means the complex, which has been criticized in the past for its looks and location at the top of the Great Meadow, will have to be scaled back.

"It's disappointing, frankly," said Ed Coate, vice chancellor for business and administrative services. "What we're doing is literally going back to the drawing board. The architect has the responsibility to bring the project in within the (financial) limits and he is working with us to figure out what we can do to reduce costs."

Opponents who fought for the complex to be moved and redesigned two years ago say they will be watching how it's changed now.

"When they start stripping a building, it's not just beauty, it's the function that gets lost," said economics Professor Robert Adams. "... I worry a little that

'We have to come up with \$1.8 million in savings or we don't have a building.'

— *Ed Coate, UCSC vice chancellor for business and administrative services*

what they build for less is even less desirable."

The 36,000-square-foot complex includes a 400-seat recital hall, with lobby and orchestra pit, several rehearsal studios and office space. It would be built on four acres at the crest of the Great Meadow by Meyer Drive.

The university revised the center's plans once before. In 1991, the Board of Regents rejected the original design, comparing it to "a pile of concrete."

The university changed it by dropping the height of the building, dressing up the outside, and pushing back the site to the top edge of the meadow.

But two subsequent estimates of the project's costs

"were way off," Coate said. The cost of excavating the site to lower the building, and of the colored concrete that most of the complex would be built with, were much higher than expected, he said.

To cut costs planners are considering raising the building, using less expensive materials, and simplifying things like the air conditioning and duct work, according to Coate.

The changes would not affect the required acoustics or lighting in the hall, which have been approved by a design committee, Coate said.

"We're hoping that we can take out enough things that would have been nice but aren't absolutely essential, and that bidding conditions will be a little better when we go back out," hopefully in July, he said.

Coate said the new changes would not put the complex back to the bare design rejected by the regents.

"We're walking a very tight line," he said. "We have to come up with \$1.8 million in savings or we don't have a building."

If the university can't make the cuts, he said, it can either ask the state for more money, which it is unlikely to get, or go back to the design review committee and change the complex itself.