

# ✓ Sale of Cooper House final

## Los Gatos developer is owner

By MARIA GAURA 4-5-88  
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SANTA CRUZ — After months of rumors, delays and indecision, the historic Cooper House located on the Pacific Garden Mall has finally been purchased by Los Gatos developer Jay Paul.

"Finally and at long last," said Realtor Nance Lee McKendrick, who handled the sale. "This is good news for all of downtown."

The three-story former county courthouse was put up for sale last July at an asking price of \$2.5 million, and Paul's offer of "around \$2 million" was conditionally accepted in December. The intervening months have been spent on building inspections, negotiations and in settling a lawsuit filed against Steve Sanchez, the building's former owner, when another sale attempt fell through. The center will be closed today for a month's worth of remodeling, and a grand opening celebration is slated for May 5.

"They're going to do all of the needed maintenance and painting, and install new hardwood floors," McKendrick said. "It's going to be really first class. Years ago when Max Walden did it, it was kind of flaky and fun, pink and orange paint and kind of a carnival feel. This is going to be more of a classy look, a more subdued feel."

The handful of remaining Cooper House merchants were given a five-day notice to vacate on Wednesday to allow the renovation to begin.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Ronni Saulls, owner of Patti's Bloomers, moves her flowers outside Cooper House.

Though the notice to move came unexpectedly, several merchants expressed relief that the long drawn-out sale is over. Most of the merchants plan to move back in once the renovation is complete.

"We only had five days official notice," worried Louis Swisher, owner of The Crystal Kaleidoscope. "We had hints it was going to happen, but with all of the rumors we've had over time, we just figured we'd wait and see. I wasn't able to tell my customers or anything."

"I'll be right back in this spot,"

once the renovation is complete, Swisher said. "For now, I guess I'll just take a small vacation. In the short run it will be tough, but in the long run it will be wonderful."

Patti's Bloomers flower shop will continue to operate on the steps of the building during the renovation, and the Act Five cosmetic shop will keep supplying customers by way of special order and personal delivery.

"I'll be available for mail orders, and phone orders at home," said Sue Winters, owner of Act Five. "I could even do some delivery. I've got lots of regular cus-

tomers, and I don't want them to think I've gone out of business."

Customers can reach Winters for special orders at 425-5144.

McKendrick said she is seeking "quality shops" to fill the building's vacant rental space, and hopes to avoid "knick-knack" shops and a "tourist trap" feel for the center.

"We want something that local people will be interested in," McKendrick said. "The Mall is being turned into cookies and candy shops, we need more high-quality stores."

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The former Oak Room Restaurant has been leased by Double Rainbow, and will be re-opened as a breakfast, lunch, gourmet dessert and espresso eatery. The former Saloon has not been rented yet, but the owners want to lease the spot to another food-service business.

"Maybe food or a wine bar," McKendrick said. "No hard liquor. They want something that will be open after hours. Double Rainbow will be open till 10 p.m., it will give kids a place to go after hours, after the theater."

Paul has hired architect Lan McVicar to oversee the building's renovation, and has hired contractor Michael Bates to do the construction work. Bates worked with former Cooper House owner Max Walden on the original renovation.

Paul's development company has built several research and development parks in Fresno and the Bay Area, and is currently building the Pajaro Hills shopping center in Watsonville.

Built in 1895, the Cooper House served as the county courthouse until 1967. The building was slated for demolition in 1971 when it caught the eye of Max Walden, who had developed the Old Town shopping center in Los Gatos.

Walden purchased the building for \$70,000, restored the Victorian architecture and added lots of custom-designed stained glass. The center prospered until 1979, when Walden sold it to Stan Mattison and Russell DeLong of San Francisco.

The partnership traded the building to Steve Sanchez and family in 1986.