

Salvage operation

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Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Merchants at Shandrydan store on Cooper Street move out some of their belongings.

Battle over demolition

Earthquake 1989 - City of Santa Cruz

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SANTA CRUZ — As more heavy equipment arrived for downtown demolition, one tenant of a condemned building was arrested and others pledged to seek a court order allowing them inside to retrieve business records.

And, a Scotts Valley woman launched an effort to save the Cooper House. Rondi Talent wants to raise \$1 million to help the new owner tear down the landmark former county courthouse and rebuild it over a steel skeleton.

"I just love that structure," Talent said.

Cooper House owner Jay Paul did not respond to Talent's efforts to reach him. His Los Gatos office had no comment on the campaign. Paul was in Santa Cruz meeting with city officials, where he signed demolition papers, according to a Downtown Association officer.

At the Hihn Building, at Lincoln Street and Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz police arrested Jeffrey Armstrong at 12:05 p.m. Wednesday after he spent an hour removing a desk, chairs, records and computer from his second floor office. Armstrong, 42, known as high-tech punster "St. Silicon," was nabbed at gunpoint as he prepared to carry his property down a stairway.

Armstrong was booked on misdemeanor charges of trespassing and entering a disaster scene. He was released on his promise to appear in court.

The building in which Armstrong had his office, also known as the Medical/Dental building, provided one of the most frequently photographed scenes from the earthquake when a section of the outside wall facing Lincoln Street collapsed, exposing an office. President Bush used it as a backdrop during an impromptu press conference last week.

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Mall/ Merchants might sue

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After his release from jail, Armstrong joined several other second-floor tenants in a Wednesday afternoon meeting with City Manager Richard Wilson in an unsuccessful attempt to get inside to get files and other records. Wilson said the city remains committed to its position the building is too dangerous to allow anyone in.

Attorneys Jack Jacobson and Hermia and Emily Kaplan said they will ask a judge today to delay demolition and to allow them into their offices.

Another tenant, building designer Gene Kodner said "I'm willing to jeopardize my life for my livelihood." Konder said he wanted to retrieve a checkbook and files.

Earlier in the day, police let merchants remove merchandise and other items from their businesses across from the Cooper House. The shopkeepers at Shandrydan and Shen's Gallery at 107 and 111 Cooper St. appeared to empty the shops in about an hour.

Other work crews continued to remove furniture from Spodick's General Furniture Co. at Elm Street and Pacific Avenue. Demolition had been scheduled to start Wednesday, but was later postponed until today.

Other store owners said they are trying to convince the city to allow them to privately demolish their buildings. If demolition can be done carefully, some inventory can be saved, according to John Liv-

ingston, owner of Logos Books and Records at 1117 Pacific Ave. and Neal Coonerty, owner of Bookshop Santa Cruz, 1547 Pacific Ave.

Coonerty said he was allowed inside for 15 minutes during which he retrieved financial records, employees' personal property and some mementos.

Merchants were being allowed into the buildings slated for the earliest demolition. Cooper House merchants were not being let inside, said A.C. Smith, co-owner of Bento Baki, a Cooper House restaurant.

Wilson said no demolition schedule exists but the city wants to move quickly. "The city issue is public safety," he said. "That's why the city is charged with acting in a timely manner."