

# ✓ Rubble sparks dispute

City's salvage deal with Graniterock draws sharp criticism

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SANTA CRUZ — Owners of demolished downtown buildings could find themselves in the ironic position of buying back their own bricks someday from demolition salvagers.

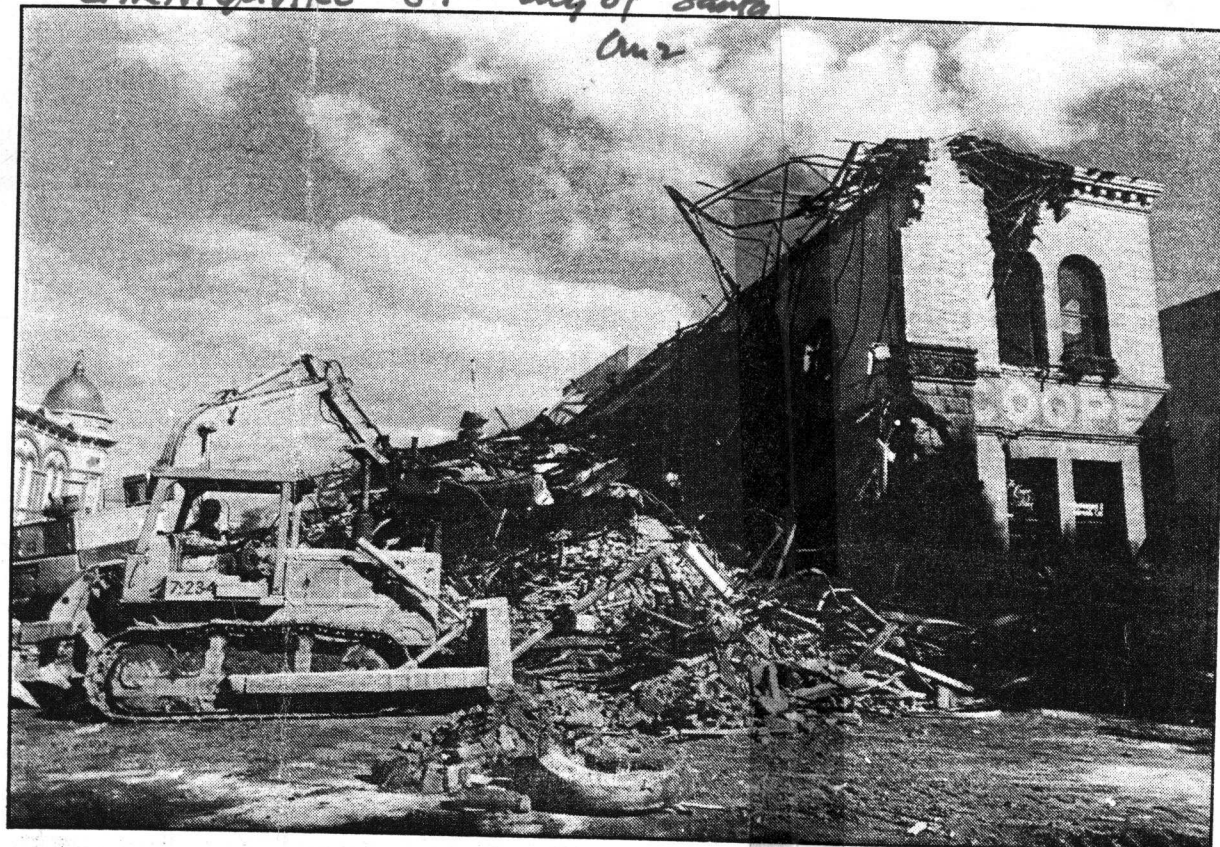
Under an arrangement approved by the City Council last week, Graniterock concrete company will receive brick from the falling buildings at a ¼-acre piece of land the company has leased from the city for \$1 a month.

There, at 773 River Street, next to the city's shelter for the homeless, Graniterock plans to clean the salvageable bricks and stack them on pallets for resale, said Dave Busch, general manager of building materials for Graniterock.

The salvage arrangement — not to mention Graniterock's virtually free use of city land for the venture — has other local masonry firms irritated.

"It's a space for a for-profit company. It's a poor decision. I have a real problem with it," said Rick Santee, owner of Central Home Supply. "Graniterock has property all over the place where they could bring the brick."

Busch said that although the company has the \$1 lease on the



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

The razed Cooper House's golden bricks have become much sought after by souvenir hunters.

**'I don't understand ... why these bricks don't belong to the building owners.'**

— John Troutman, masonry supply company manager

believes quake victims or the building owners should be getting salvage profits.

"What I don't understand is why these bricks don't belong to the building owners," said John Troutman, manager of Antolini's masonry supply company.

"Unless the city has some sort of eminent domain for safety or something, the owners should at least have the compensation, I think."

Troutman said he believes the bricks should have been auctioned off at market value, and the profits should have been given to the owners.

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city property, it hasn't been using the land for the salvage work so far because it is too muddy from recent rains. Graniterock trucks have been bringing the brick to other Graniterock locations, he said.

Laura Brown, assistant city manager,

said she proposed the 90-day, \$1-a-month lease deal to the City Council because Busch told her the arrangement would save the city money in clearing away demolition rubble.

Another masonry seller said he

velopers could end up buying back the salvaged bricks when they rebuild the fallen Pacific Garden Mall buildings.

But he said the salvage deals will result in only a small profit for Graniterock, as little as 10 percent, because the company will have to spend a lot of time and money sorting, cleaning and stacking the brick.

Most of the brick is quite damaged and will be unsuitable for sale or use, he said.

Busch declined to reveal details of the purchase deals, but said Graniterock mainly has been purchasing the bricks from the demolition companies on a subcontract basis.

However, he said, at least one building owner, Cooper House owner Jay Paul, has also negotiated for a cut of the salvage price.

Busch said he has received many calls from people who want the golden bricks from the city's fallen landmark, which was felled by a wrecking ball over several days last week.

## Bricks/ Salvage profits are point of contention

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ers of the devastated businesses, or put into a downtown quake relief fund.

Assistant City Manager Brown said Monday she did not know who is the legal owner of salvageable materials following a city-paid demolition, and city attorneys would be looking into the matter.

Busch said he also did not know, but believes demolishers and/or the city may have some right to keep salvage profits since the demolitions are being paid for by the city and the federal government.

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials said last week FEMA picks up 75 percent of the demolition tab on city-ordered demolitions resulting from severe earthquake damage.

Old brick in good condition is more valuable and more prized than new brick.

Good used bricks sell for 50 cents to 63 cents each at Central Home Supply, depending on quality and quantity purchased.

Busch acknowledged that de-