

Coastal Commission OK

Old Sisters Hospital Will Be Demolished

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It appears a Santa Cruz landmark — the old Sisters Hospital at West Cliff Drive and Bay Street — will be demolished.

It only took the Central Coastal Commission a few minutes this morning to unanimously approve the demolition permit. Executive Director Ed Brown termed the administrative permit a "routine" matter, in adding that no development has been proposed at this time on the two-acre parcel.

Approval is subject to a 10-day appeal period. The parcel is owned by the Dream Inn, located across the street, and any future development would require a separate coastal permit.

The long-abandoned hospital is now nearly covered with weeds. Passersby have to look hard in order to notice the building. It was far different years ago, however, with most old-time Santa Cruzans having been born there.

The Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Dominic of Adrian, Mich., operated Sisters Hospital from September 1941 to December 1967. It closed only four days before the new Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital opened.

More than 31,000 patients used the facility during the years it was operated by the Dominican Sisters. Thousands of operations were performed in the tiny surgery room. In 1966, alone,

1,300 operations were performed.

Previously, the hospital was known as the Hanly Hospital. Its 25-bed capacity was built in 1925 by Mary Jane Hanly who earlier operated a hot baths business on the beach.

Its only other competition, as far as is known, was the old Mission Hill Hospital and the Seabright Sanitarium — both torn down years ago.

The Coastal Commission's approved demolition permit does not authorize removal of any significant trees more than 10 inches in diameter. Trees close to the building will be protected from inadvertent damage through wrapping of trunks with material, bridging of major roots and other appropriate measures.

The only person speaking with concern to the demolition was David Bockman of the Santa Cruz Regional Area of the Sierra Club.

Terming it a highly visible sight, Bockman said demolition would only make it appear to be a "graveyard of a hospital." He urged the appearance be improved after demolition.

Assistant Executive Director Les Strnad replied that no conditions have been recommended for landscaping the site following demolition. In calling the parcel "unsightly and unkempt" now, he added that the city of Santa Cruz would be responsible to abate any nuisances following demolition.

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