

Capitola Theater Destined for Changes

by Joel Moreno

The arched roof and friendly lady who has greeted patrons of the Capitola Theater for decades are going to be a thing of the past as Capitola's landmark movie house is likely to change hands.

Audrey Jacobs, whose family has owned the theater since its construction in 1948, accepted an offer from an unnamed buyer to purchase the 27,000 square foot lot at 120 Monterey Avenue. The property has been in escrow since February 6, and the buyer has until the end of October before escrow closes.

Todd Prindle of the Wilson Brothers real estate agency in Santa Cruz, who is representing the buyer, said they met Jacobs'

asking price of \$1.6 million. The buyer plans to further develop the property to increase its commercial opportunities.

A redesigned or remodeled theater is probably going to be incorporated with a hotel and some additional parking. A restaurant or some small shops may also be considered for the site.

The city Planning Department has the lot commercially zoned with an emphasis on tourist development. Before he takes any formal proposal to the Planning Department, the developer plans to run his specific ideas past the Capitola Chamber of Commerce and various citizens groups, according to Prindle. Advance meetings have already been held with city officials.

"A lot of people are very

sensitive to that theater. They want to keep a movie house. It's always been very much part of Capitola," Prindle said. "So in June, we'd like to get people's ideas about the plans."

The existing theater is in a fairly dilapidated state and a new theater might be built to replace it, he added.

Some residents are likely to push for the preservation of the building, and Prindle said the developer has not ruled that option out. There is the possibility of salvaging the building by adding structural improvements but it depends on the community interest, Prindle reported.

Plans are sure to be scrutinized by the Capitola City Council. They will have the final say on whether any project proposal can be implemented, and their approval might include stipulations from the city's architectural and site review committee appointees. □