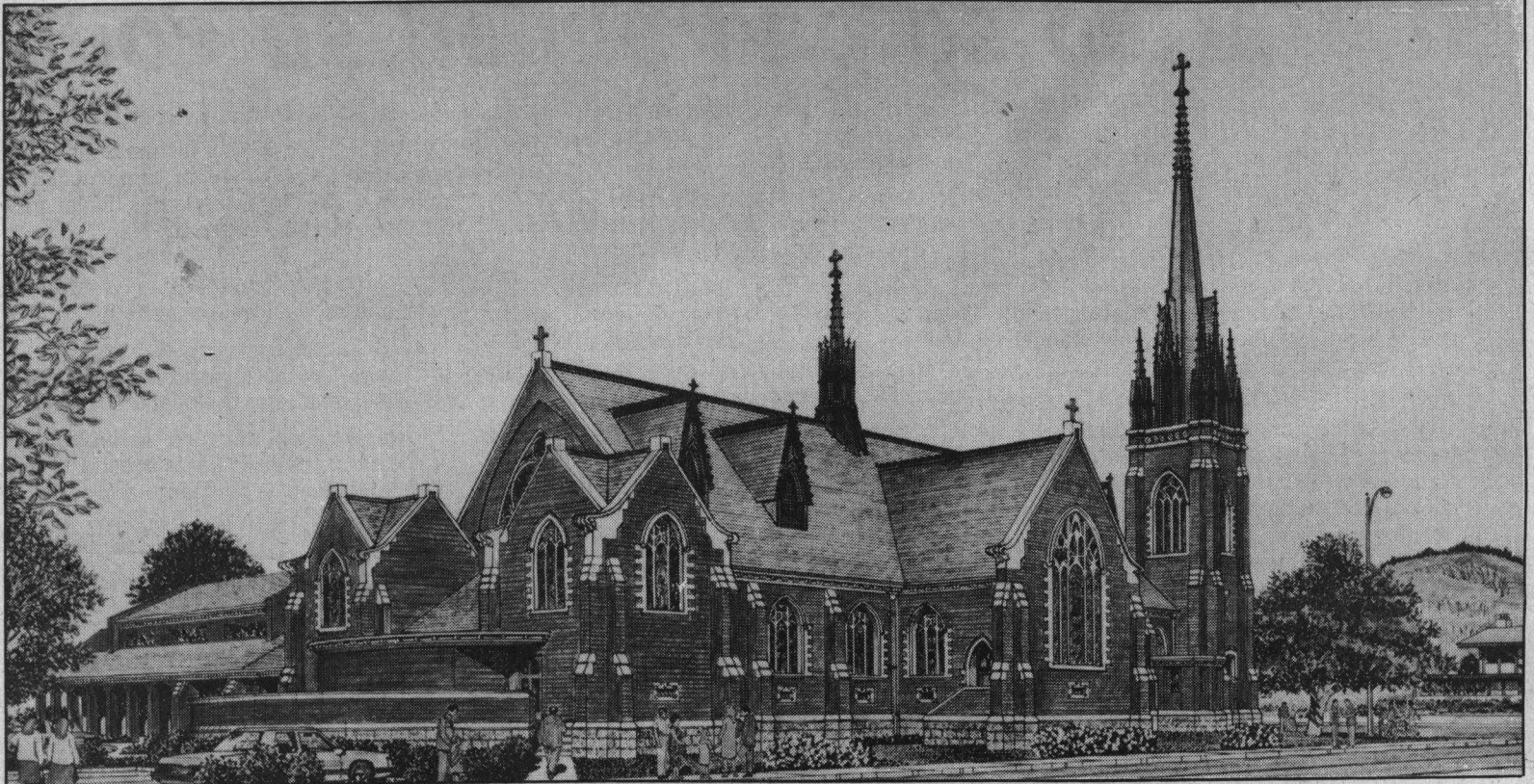


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An artist's drawing shows what the new St. Patrick's Church will look like from the Ford Street side. From the Main Street side it will look exactly like the old church.

Plans for renovated church ready

By SUSANNA HECKMAN
STAFF WRITER

By the end of February, St. Patrick's Church will submit final plans to the city for earthquake repairs that will make it safe to enter the sanctuary again, the Rev. Mike Miller said.

About 4,000 people a month worship at St. Patrick's, Miller said. For the last year and a half, however, they've had to meet in the Notre Dame School gymnasium while their church is surrounded by chain link fences and the steeple lies on the ground.

Plans call for the front of the church at Ford and Main streets — what some people consider to be the gateway to downtown Watsonville — to look exactly the same as it did before the October 1989 earthquake.

But there will be major changes inside and at the back.

Modern church directives call for some of the changes, and some of the changes are just practical ways of enlarging the sanctuary for a growing congregation, Miller said.

The church is already built in the shape of a cross, and basically the horizontal part of the cross will be extended. The extra space at the sides will be used for pews. The altar will be moved forward, so it is in the middle, not in front, of the congregation.

One of the most striking changes from the inside and outside is that the back wall of the sanctuary will be rounded. That was actually the way the church was originally built in 1903, and is a staple of Gothic architecture, Miller said. For

some reason, the wall was squared and made "more boxy" during renovations that took place in 1939, Miller said.

Miller said it will be years before the church begins fund raising and building the second phase of the renovations — the adjacent Serra Building, where meetings, classes and counseling took place before the earthquake.

A large, framed artist's rendering of what the renovated church will look like will be hung in the Notre Dame gymnasium during mass this weekend, Miller said. He hopes that it will ease the worries of the parishioners who have objected to the planned changes.

"The way the church was taken from people was so violent, so abrupt, that their first impulse was to restore the

church exactly as it was, including every shadow and every flaw," he said.

The architects were sensitive to restoring the flavor of the building, he said.

Construction should be well underway by summer, he said.

The church is halfway toward its goal of raising the \$2.5 million necessary for the renovations. A \$40,000 check from the Diocese of Monterey brought the total collected to \$1.2 million.

St. Patrick's first asked for contributions from other parishes throughout the country, and is requesting help from its own parishioners. Soon it will begin a fund-raising drive among other local residents and businesses as well as a grant-writing program.