

Prognosis not good for SC Trust Building

SANTA CRUZ — The fate of two earthquake-damaged buildings on the Pacific Garden Mall owned by a man recently lost at sea now rests with the man's family.

The late Stewart Kett owned the Trust and Elks buildings, and the buildings are now in the hands of his family, according to Kett's son-in-law, Ruben Fuentes.

The future of the buildings was thrown in doubt by the drowning of the 63-year-old Kett

on Jan. 27 in a boating accident.

But Fuentes said the family plans to restore the Elks Building, which housed several businesses including the Pacific Cookie Co. and Camouflage.

The fate of the Trust Building, at Pacific and Soquel avenues, hasn't been decided.

"We're going to hold onto the Trust Building, but no final decision has been made yet," Fuentes said Friday.

The engineer hired to evaluate
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Trust/ Building may be demolished

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what's needed to restore the Elks Building has been backed up with work in Watsonville, so Fuentes said he will look for another consultant to "complete what was started with the Elks Building."

Until the Elks Building is fixed, Ferrari Florists, which shares a common wall with the Elks Building, can't re-open.

City officials aren't requiring the Trust Building's demolition, but the prognosis is dim, Fuentes said.

"The general consensus is the building is damaged ... way beyond 50 percent," he said. "No one has assured me I can restore

it to a safe condition."

The main concern is safety, he said. The building is built of unreinforced masonry on the street side.

"The only reason the Trust Building didn't collapse is because of the configuration of the interior walls, which held it together. Now they've been compromised, I've been told," Fuentes said.

"It has a brick veneer and a brick wall, and although I know there are epoxies that can be used in order to tie it back, I'm not convinced it would be binding in the event of another big earthquake," Fuentes said.

— Jamie Marks

REFERENCE