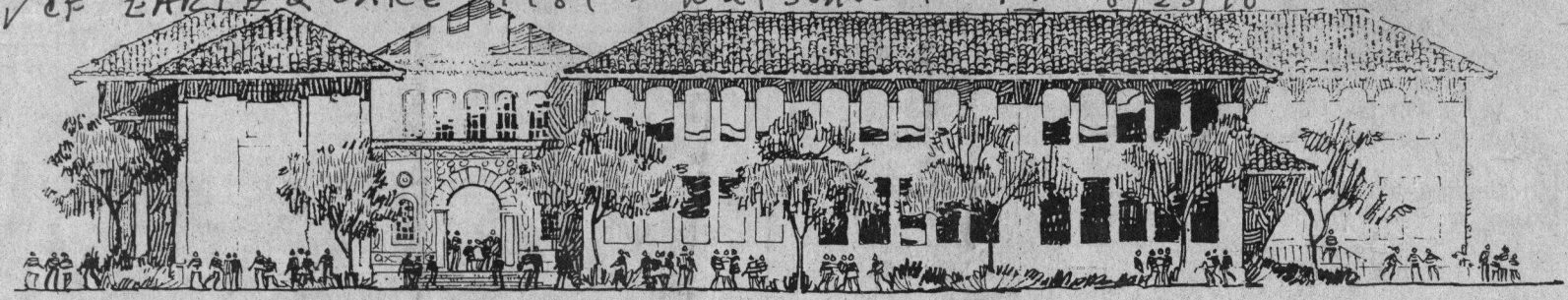


✓ CP EARTH & QUAKE 1989 - Watsonville CP 8/23/90



An architect's conceptual drawing shows how a new high school building might look.

# ***It's official:*** High school's main building coming down

By SOPHIA TRIPODES  
STAFF WRITER

The Pajaro Valley school board last night decided officially to tear down the main building at Watsonville High School, bringing to a close a long struggle over the fate of the historic building.

The trustees unanimously approved an advisory committee's recommendation to demolish the earthquake-damaged building and erect a new one that would retain the architectural flavor of the original. The 1917 building would cost too much to save, it was decided.

The committee reached its recommendation earlier this month after wrestling with several options, including full restoration of the building or keeping the structures's facade and building behind it. Engineering inspectors closed the building, which held 13 classrooms, an auditorium and administrative offices, in April after finding severe damage caused by the Oct. 17 quake.

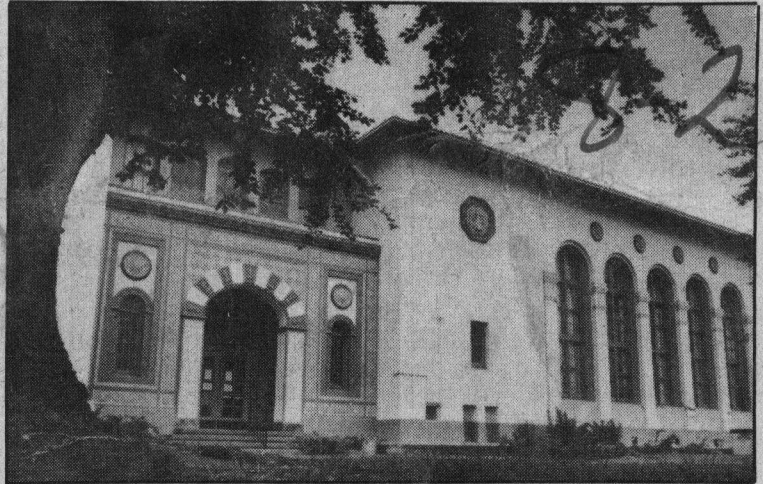
"In my heart I was determined to save the building," said Gerry Martin, president of

the Watsonville High School Foundation, who attended the committee's meetings and delivered its recommendation to the board. The building is "historically and aesthetically satisfying," but trying to restore it would not best serve future students, Martin said.

Board members were optimistic that parts of the original building, such as bannisters, wooden pillars, and other architectural elements could be incorporated into the new building.

Trustee Dana Sales, who graduated from Watsonville High School in 1974, agreed that although destroying the building was "an emotional issue," the board had made "an excellent" choice in deciding to rebuild.

Starting from scratch might be an opportunity to improve upon the original building, with the possibility of more classrooms and a larger quad area, said district architect Thang Do. To create additional space the building could be constructed closer to the street and the auditorium could be built underground, suggested board members.



Kurt Ellison

The 1917 building was closed in April.

To complete the building within two years, the board must submit preliminary plans to Sacramento next month to qualify for a \$50 million fund set aside for emergency relief. The board must apply for the grants in three stages and could be refused funding at any point in the project, Do said.

Constructing a new building while retaining characteristics of the original could cost up to

\$250,000 more than the initial \$5 million estimate. It was suggested that extra funds might come from local contributions and that money could be saved by using material from the original building, such as windows and carpeting.

If Watsonville High School receives pilot funding for the project next month, demolition of the 73-year-old building could start in August or September of 1991.