



AFTER LOMA PRIETA - A SPECIAL "QUAKE" ISSUE

This special supplement will be dominated by news about the Loma Prieta earthquake. The 7.1 Richter Scale "seismic event" continues to command our attention and you should recognize your own need to prepare for a similar quake in your town.

Historic preservation suffered big losses in terms of buildings demolished and public perceptions about old buildings. In the small town of Hollister, eight buildings went down quickly, including a major historic landmark, the I.O.O.F. hall. Santa Cruz lost half of the historic downtown Pacific Garden Mall buildings, including the one-of-a-kind Cooper House. Salinas began demolishing the Cominos Hotel, which preservationists had temporarily saved earlier last Summer by going to court, two days after the quake. Downtown Watsonville has the look of an old prize fighter's teeth, San Francisco, Los Gatos, Oakland and other towns lost some architectural gems, and many treasures continue to be at risk.

(1) emergency inspection teams with no experience with or appreciation for historic buildings were "red-tagging" (meaning "unsafe to enter") structures after cursory looks

(2) that a Declaration of State of Emergency suspends CEQA and many other protective review processes, and that cities can rush to demolition with very little concern for the historic importance of the buildings involved

(3) that local historic preservation commissions, preservation-minded staff and, in some instances, supportive City Council members are not involved in crucial decision-making

(4) that the media prejudged buildings by translating red-tagged to mean condemned, thus further discouraging efforts to save buildings and adding to the "liability-conscious" mentality and pressure to demolish when there was any doubt about life-threatening conditions

In the early days following the quake we learned: (5) that written materials from respected



In Hollister a "demolish now, apologize later" mentality dominated the first post-quake days and the I.O.O.F. building (above) was a major loss. The Lodge members, denied an opportunity to even retrieve records and regalia --- and still unconvinced that demolition was the only option --- may sue for damages (photo by Luis Sanchez, courtesy of Dan Craig).

(continued from page 1)

organizations and many additional rumors encouraged cities to demolish now and apologize later in order to avoid liability and ensure FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) reimbursement

(6) that the availability of funds for emergency stabilization of damaged buildings was not known to exist and that funding for rehabilitation only went far enough to bring a building safely "back into service", not to restore real damage to historic materials or design

(7) that merchants, anxious to get back into business before Christmas, pressured cities to demolish adjacent buildings so that the commercial area could be reopened to traffic

(8) that citizens interested in helping save threatened historic buildings couldn't get good information about which buildings were truly threatened, or who was in charge, who decided, and on what basis

(9) that preservationists' concerns did not rank very high on the scale of critical issues for most decision-makers during the emergency.

We can also report that local preservationists mobilized quickly and, despite desperate odds, made a difference. Within a short and intense week after the quake, we began to get our story out through the press, to button-hole City officials and elected representatives, contact property owners, put useful "don't panic" materials in the mail and slow the demolition derby. We are also pleased to report that cooperation and mutual aid within the preservation community — state, local and federal, private non-profit or public agency — was extraordinary. We are proud of our actions and reactions, but we know we all can do better next time. This issue will focus, primarily, on what we learned during this emergency and what we can do to improve on our performance the next time the earth shakes.

EMERGENCY LEGISLATION - SB 3x

SEC. 6. Section 5028 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

5028. (a) No structure that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, on the California Register of Historic Places, or on any local public register of historic places, and that has been damaged due to a natural disaster, including, but not limited to, an earthquake, fire, or flood may be demolished, destroyed, or significantly altered, except for restoration to preserve or enhance its historical values, unless the structure presents an imminent threat to the public of bodily harm or of damage to adjacent property, or unless the State Office of Historic Preservation determines, pursuant to subdivision (b), that the structure may be demolished, destroyed, or significantly altered.

(b) Any local government may apply to the State Office of Historic Preservation for its determination as to whether a structure meeting the description set forth in subdivision (a) shall be demolished, destroyed, or significantly altered. That determination shall be based upon the extent of damage to the structure, the cost of rehabilitating or reconstructing the structure, the structure's historical significance, and any other factor deemed by the State Office of Historic Preservation to be relevant. In making that determination, the State Office of Historic Preservation shall consider the recommendation of a team selected by the State Office of Historic Preservation composed of three residents with historic preservation expertise who reside in the affected county. The determination of the State Office of Historic Preservation shall be issued no later than 30 days after the structure was damaged, or 30 days after the receipt of the application, whichever occurred later.

The language above — Section 6 of SB 3x (Marks) — began hitting the streets just prior to the Governor's signature on November 6, 1989. A small piece of the emergency legislation passed in response to massive earthquake damage may be the most important lawmaking we have seen in many years. SB 3, as it is generally called, gives the State Office of Historic Preservation mandatory review of proposed demolitions during an emergency. But, it is not so simple:

(1) a property deemed an imminent threat to life and limb or to adjacent property by the local

(story continues on page 3)

(new emergency legislation - continued)

jurisdiction is not protected...unless someone can prove in a very short time, and usually under impossible circumstances, that the building is not an immediate threat to fall and injure someone or damage another structure;

(2) OHP would seem to be empowered to deny a demolition not immediately necessary but it is not clear what constitutes "listed" historic property "on any local public register;"

(3) if OHP were to deny demolition approval, would the California Environmental Quality Act necessarily apply when so many local jurisdictions do not require environmental review for demolition permits? This potential problem is magnified if a local jurisdiction refuses to even notify OHP of a potential demolition;

(4) many communities seem to interpret a declaration of emergency to mean any "hazardous" building is an imminent threat during the emergency and should be demolished quickly, before the state of emergency lapses. Buildings which could probably have been preserved, if they had been stabilized and isolated, never got the benefit of an SB 3 second opinion from OHP;

(5) and, OHP administration of SB 3 and federal "Section 106" requirements (which become effective 30 days after the quake) have severely cut into staff time and OHP abilities to carry out other program mandates.

SB 3 was emergency legislation passed to deal with hasty, unnecessary and/or "pretext demolitions", the latter term applied when a building someone already wants to demolish is destroyed using the "disaster" (earthquake, fire damage) as the pretext.

SB 3 has perplexed and, in some cases, irritated local government. OHP has attempted to do what the law requires but points out that

the lack of funding to do it means staff must be reassigned from ongoing programs. SB 3 lacks clarity as to what constitutes a historic property and is silent about appeals, either by preservationists who sense pretext demolitions, by local officials or by property owners who fear liability problems if a damaged building is left standing. Finally, buildings damaged during a disaster seem to have far more protection from needless demolitions than the same buildings would have before or after the emergency. On the other hand, SB 3 is a powerful piece of legislation and, if its deficiencies can be corrected, could herald a new level of protection for historic property in California.

A committee which includes CPF, OHP, the National Trust, State Historic Building Code Board, Department of Parks and Recreation legislative analysts and A.I.A. has been meeting regularly to forge a consensus for new language to amend and improve SB 3. Previous discussions about C.E.Q.A. coverage in last year's State Register bill (SB 1188) have also entered the discussions and may affect the outcome. While there has been agreement among all committee members on substantial issues, the introduction of a bill to improve SB 3 — one with full Administration support — is only a hope for the future at this time. You can be sure we will keep you informed.



A building in Watsonville "red-tagged for months and nearly demolished for no apparent reason.

CPF SUPPLIES STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS TO FIVE TOWNS HARD HIT BY THE EARTHQUAKE

The California Preservation Foundation has taken the lead in providing technical assistance to five quake-ravaged towns. Kariotis and Associates, Structural Engineers with offices in South Pasadena and a reputation for excellence which stretches worldwide, have been dispatched to save historic buildings damaged by the Loma Prieta earthquake. John Kariotis, Nels Roselund and Mike Krakower of the firm have targeted the inspection of historically important buildings determined to be "at risk" and threatened with demolition. Downtown property owners in Los Gatos, Hollister, Watsonville, Santa Cruz and Salinas can make use of free, on-site consultations to determine the extent of damage and rehabilitation strategies.

Accompanying the engineers is Tim Gohr of Eagle Builders, Hawthorne contractors who specialize in seismic strengthening; Tim's role is to translate the engineers' rehabilitation recommendations into cost estimates for work and material. Architects Jan Pregliasco (Petaluma), Dan Peterson (Richmond) and Wayne Donaldson (San Diego) have also been on hand to provide additional advice on design, code compliance, Tax Act certification and political manoeuvres. CPF supplements these reports with information on funding, financing ideas and incentives.

Funded by the Department of Commerce and the National Trust Critical Issues Fund (CIF), the project has two additional components which should be beneficial to you in your town:

(1) The teams' reports will be a valuable source of information on the real magnitude of damage and cost of repairs — and so far our information is that damage and repair costs are far below original estimates — and the basis for comparative case studies. Team members and staff from Commerce, the Trust and CPF are also gathering information on state and local policy, legal and operational procedures and the thinking process during the emergency so we can develop a "disaster preparedness" manual for general distribution in the Spring.

(2) Two workshops on disaster preparedness — one in San Francisco on Wednesday, April 25, just prior to the Annual State Preservation Conference, and the other in Southern California in mid-May — will present our findings and recommendations.

Reports from the field indicate this technical assistance service has turned around some building owners and city officials about the rehabilitation possibilities of threatened structures. The teams, providing the best exper-

tise available, solid California experience, practical information and useful suggestions — followed by believable numbers — have not been afraid to get dirty and have met with trust and appreciation.

What we are trying to discover is why things happened the way they happened. In the early days following the quake local preservationists, OHP, the A.I.A., National Trust, National Park Service and CPF all felt we were poorly prepared. While there were incredible efforts and cooperation — almost the stuff of legend — and we feel we responded quickly and with effect, we also had problems getting good, current information, were out of the decision-making loop, were uncertain what the rules of the game were and, as a result, missed some opportunities and lost some buildings we might have saved.

We have learned a great deal in three months since October 17, 1989, 5:04 p.m., and we hope to pass on this information to you, in this newsletter, with the disaster preparedness workshops, and by means of the manual. The Foundation is attempting to secure additional funding to provide this service to the City of Oakland. Major buildings are at risk and most of the city's SRO hotels are still red-tagged and vacant.

STATE AND NATIONAL PRESERVATION PARTNERS RESPOND TO THE EARTHQUAKE

The National Trust, State Office of Historic Preservation and National Park Service all played key roles during the critical first days following the Loma Prieta temblor.

* NPS sponsored teams of engineers, architects and planners to view damage and make recommendations in nine communities, surveying nearly 100 damaged buildings within a month of the quake.

* OHP organized the NPS teams and has been feverishly involved since in making sure FEMA and SBA both do their parts in following Section 106 regulations, and in setting up and managing the demolition review process required by SB 3x.

* The National Trust Western Regional Office has been everywhere, defending threatened buildings, helping to fund and design the CPF/Commerce Department technical assistance project, setting up the "Historic Property Stabilization Loan" program and working through its Washington D.C. headquarters to secure adequate emergency relief money from Congress for California.

This brief review only skims the surface of what each of our preservation partners has done but we do want to extend our thanks and gratitude and express our admiration and appreciation for their high energy level and continued dedication during some difficult times.

THE EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE IN OAKLAND

The Oakland experience since the earthquake provides an interesting case study of preservation action. Friday, the third day after the quake, a group of private citizens met for the first time, alarmed about the sudden appearance of red-tags on buildings. This loose group soon became a coalition, the Oakland Preservation Action Team (OPAT) --- Oakland Heritage, the East Bay A.I.A., Oakland Design Advocates, the National Trust and the California Preservation Foundation.

Through coordinated and concerted effort the coalition was able to gather good information, provide advice to business people and to homeowners, work for a preservation policy statement from the City and convince the press that preservation issues deserved equal coverage. In two special instances OPAT may have reversed thinking which was about to conclude that demolition was the only way to repair the damage.



City Hall (left), the Broadway Building (center) and CPF's Cathedral Building (right): historic photo (circa 1914) courtesy of the Oakland Museum

City Hall was significantly damaged and rumors — untrue, it turned out — were flying that this major historic structure was doomed. Initial plans were to dismantle the clock tower, but now the City has adopted a much more cautious, exploratory approach which may not require any demolition at all. The City was requesting FEMA money so Section 106 and OHP review of plans was required. But a committee from OPAT was also created, by the City Manager, to assist in development of repair and restoration plans.

The Broadway Building was a greater challenge for OPAT. Taldan Investment of San Francisco owns the building and, claiming earthquake damage was severe enough to preclude repair, filed for a demolition permit. The City placed the structure on its "Study List" for designation as a Landmark, thus delaying demoli-

tion 60 days. If the Broadway Building were to be designated a Landmark — it is one of Oakland's finest buildings and certainly meets and exceeds all criteria — another delay period would follow.

In this case OPAT team members approached Taldan with offers to help, to help them assess the true level of damage and do a feasibility study on the rehabilitation. Armed with copies of engineering reports showing that damage was not severe and with information on tax credits and other financial incentives, OPAT was convinced the building could be saved. OPAT hoped to convince the owners of that, too, and that a handsome profit would result.

Taldan chose to oppose the designation instead and ran into another, stronger, OPAT presentation before the Planning Commission and Landmarks Board. Both City bodies suggested to the owners that demolition was out of the question until an alternative development proposal based on firm commitments was presented for review. Designation of the Broadway Building was put on hold, but Taldan had to agree to withdraw its request for a demolition permit.

OPAT was delighted with the outcome. The Landmarks Board had pushed for designation and the Planning Commission wanted, at least, a project in hand rather than two in the bush before permitting demolition and another vacant lot. While the Broadway Building is hardly "saved", there is time, now, to study and seek a feasible alternative which could preserve the building as part of a larger project.

OPAT organized quickly and worked hard for months. While members probably wished for more time and fewer meetings, the cooperative effort produced positive results. CPF and the Trust played important roles but major credit for OPAT successes belongs to Larry Mortimer (Chair) and members of Oakland Heritage Alliance. Many others, including city staff and officials, helped if only by being receptive to the ideas and opinions from OPAT. But it was only possible because a group of hard-working, dedicated private citizens, meeting regularly to plan strategy, made themselves a force in Oakland. Preservationists in other towns can learn from this experience.

California At Risk - 1989 (draft) should interest people. In this report the State Seismic Safety Commission (1900 K Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95814) outlines problems, initiatives, progress and its future agenda for dealing with a very broad range of questions related to earthquakes. This is the Commission's roadmap and for \$15.00 you can learn how far they have come and where they want to go.



Photo: Richard Eisner, Bay Area Regional Earthquake Preparedness Project

“Living on the Fault Line” Four CPF Workshops Planned for February & March, North & South

For years, the impact of building codes on historic resources has been a topic about which many preservationists have chosen to remain blissfully ignorant. A crisis is typically what jolts us into cracking the binding of one of the code books on the shelf, but even in the heat of an urgent situation, deciphering the series of standards, provisions and rating systems is tough going.

CPF's recent experiences following October's earthquake clearly demonstrated that this lack of understanding can place us at a distinct disadvantage when faced with building inspectors and city officials; in the scornful words of one unnamed city manager, "let me tell you one thing about those history people: they are simply never going to understand issues of life safety." Indeed, it is hard to convincingly argue for the necessity of using "historically-sensitive" structural engineers to assess damage, for more flexible performance standards, or for creative methods of funding seismic retrofit without a basic understanding of the underlying principles of building codes.

In the coming months, preservationists will have a rare opportunity to spend the day discussing the latest developments in building codes, seismic safety and earthquake preparedness with chief policy-makers. CPF has planned a series of four workshops to address these issues entitled "Living on the Fault Line," with the co-sponsorship of the California Seismic Safety Commission, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the International Conference of Building Officials, the State Building Standards Commission, the State Historical Building Code Board, and the State Office of Historic Preservation. The schedule of the programs is as follows:

Bakersfield on February 22,
at Beale Memorial Library, 701 Truxton Avenue;

Oakland on February 23,
in the Metrocenter Building Auditorium, 101 East Eight Street;

San Diego on March 1,
at the War Memorial Building, 3325 Zoo Drive in Balboa Park;

Los Angeles on March 2,
in the Temporary Central Library Auditorium, 6th floor, 433 Spring Street.

In the morning portion of each event, sponsoring organizations will clarify their interpretations, mitigation, and application of current building codes and policies and provide a glimpse of their agenda for the 1990s. The afternoon programs will be devoted to issues and case studies particularly relevant to each region.

The workshops should appeal to a diverse audience of preservationists, architects, building officials, planners, structural engineers and city administrators.

Registration each day will open at 8:15 a.m. Sessions run from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., with a break for lunch. The price of the workshop is \$110 (\$75 for CPF members), which includes admission, lunch, and a binder of speaker abstracts. Also included are several other important publications, such as the State Historic Building Code, proposed UCBC revisions and new Seismic Safety Commission materials.

Deadline for registration by mail is February 15. Walk-in registrants will be admitted, space permitting. A late registration fee of \$10.00 will be charged at the door.

Local co-sponsors of the workshop series include the City of Bakersfield, the Bakersfield Downtown Business Association, the Kern County Museum, the City of Oakland, the East Bay Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, Oakland Heritage Alliance, the City of San Diego, Save Our Heritage Organisation, Hollywood Heritage, the Los Angeles Conservancy and the Los Angeles Public Library.

Preservationists can no longer afford to underestimate the profound ways in which building and seismic codes can shape the built environment, both for better and for worse. Who knows, you may find yourself settling down with a copy of the State Historic Building Code or the latest report by the Seismic Safety Commission on the next rainy afternoon. Better yet, you may find yourself with something to say about them.

CPF'S SEISMIC SAFETY AGENDA FOR 1990

* CPF wants to see adequate funding and adequate guidelines to ensure that seismic retrofit be sensitive to the design integrity and historic fabric of vintage buildings. Seismic strengthening is necessary but we are concerned that requiring work, which can be expensive, without providing the financial means to do the work, will force far too many property owners to opt for demolition.

We were encouraged to see the City Council of Salinas, in a unanimous decision early this month, adopt the Uniform Code For Building Conservation (UCBC) for future seismic retrofit work on URMS; the UCBC allows for more sensitive treatments for historic buildings. At the same meeting the Mayor urged using \$1,000,000 from FEMA reimbursements to assist property owners pay for seismic strengthening.

* CPF is quite concerned about information the Office of Emergency Services (OES) distributes for disaster evaluations of damaged buildings in its training sessions and manual (ATC-20). Many public officials based initial evaluations on the guidance provided by this manual, and there is nothing in this material to suggest that historic buildings are important to the community and deserve second opinions by technical experts with a trained eye (see next story).

* CPF was discouraged to learn that preservation concerns seldom entered into decision making about damaged buildings until late in the process, often too late to change anyone's opinion. State disaster planning regulations need some specific language requiring a preservation component and provision of appropriate expertise during the emergency.

* CPF would like to see significant incentives provided — we are recommending 50% tax credits — for seismic strengthening. We feel meaningful carrots will encourage the private sector to do the necessary work before the damage is done. A credit of this size would have an effect on state revenue but "after the fact" bailout measures readily approved by the Legislature and Administration in the November emergency session had a much greater impact on the state revenues. This is a "pay me now or pay me later" and a big credit is justified.

* CPF is calling for language in State codes to better define "imminent threat" and what review is appropriate before historic buildings are hastily, and often unnecessarily demolished.

Earthquakes are a fact of life in California. The Loma Prieta may have spared your town but what about the next one? We urge you to take your concerns — and we hope our observations reflect your concerns — to your

City Council and State Senate and Assembly representatives now. Call CPF if you need a script to help you prepare for these visits. Now is the time!

THE BOOK TO READ AND CHANGE !

ATC (the Applied Technology Council), a nonprofit serving the structural engineering profession, publishes a strong list of material on seismic safety and masonry buildings. ATC-14, *Evaluating the Seismic Resistance of Existing Buildings* (\$50.00), is an excellent study funded by the National Science Foundation.

However, during our earthquake-response investigation we learned the ATC-20, *Reports on Procedures for Post Earthquake Safety Evaluation of Buildings* (\$30.00 plus tax) provided many cities with the methodology used to evaluate post-quake damage and ATC 20-1 *Manual: Post Earthquake Evaluation of Buildings* (\$15.00 plus tax) was often the field manual used by inspectors during the first few days of damage assessment. "Rapid evaluation", often no more than a five-minute job, often done by people with little of the necessary understanding of or sympathy for vintage buildings or "archaic" materials, too often led to red-tagging and hasty demolitions.

Reading both publications explained what happened during initial damage assessment, and why. We hope these guides can be updated and "sensitized" before the OES distributes these publications again. For copies, write ATC, 3 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 275, Redwood City, CA 94065 (415/595-1542)

MORE D.C. DISASTER \$\$\$ FOR CALIFORNIA

Disaster relief voted by Congress gives California an additional \$300,000 for historic preservation from an amount given over to the President's Discretionary Fund. The National Trust staff in Washington was instrumental in getting Senator Pete Wilson's support for California's share, and \$100,000 will be allocated to the Trust for use in California. Hans Kreutzberg argued well for the \$200,000 OHP will receive.

OHP's plan is to join with the State Department of Housing and Community Development to study seismic strengthening needs and the economic ramifications for SRO housing. OHP estimates inexpensive housing for over 200,000 people is at risk and hopes the technical damage reports and rehabilitation feasibility studies can be used with HCD Funds to leverage additional financing and return these units to use as low and moderate-income housing.

Prepared by California Preservation Foundation
(a private, non-profit preservation organization)
1615 Broadway, Suite 705, Oakland, CA 94612

EARTHQUAKE SHAKES SACRAMENTO

The Legislature's Emergency Session following the quake produced many bills of great interest but only a few — those agreed upon by both Administration and Legislative leadership — passed in a fevered three-day session. Several bills will have an impact on historic resources.

SB 3x (Marks) and **AB 41x** (Farr) contain the OHP review of demolitions already discussed but these companion bills also created the California Natural Disaster Assistance program for Rental Properties (CALDAP-R), a loan program with a 3% interest rate for repair or replacement of damaged rental housing. **SB 4x** (Greene) and **AB 44x** (Hauser), 41.5 million for housing rehab loans to disaster victims.

Both CALDAP loan programs come into play only when applicants do not qualify for other state or federal assistance, insurance or conventional loans sufficient to repair earthquake damage. Both loan programs supplement FEMA and SBA grant or loan assistance provided during disasters. Both programs are available only for earthquake-related repair in the Loma Prieta ten-county damage zone; for more information contact State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, P.O. Box 952054, Sacramento, 94252-2054 (916/445-0877).

SB 1x (Mello) and **AB 42 x** (Vasconcellos) created a 360 million fund for emergency repair and replacement of public facilities, a 25% match to FEMA's 75% share.

SB 10x (Morgan) and **AB 39x** (Seastrand) allocated 1.47 million for repair of damage to park facilities, including \$170,000 specifically for historic preservation projects such as the Oakland and Gilroy City Halls.

Other bills introduced and still alive are:

SB 27x (Mello), the same bond act for seismic work vetoed by Deukmejian last session, was approved by the Senate (34-0) on Friday, January 12.

SB 25x (Torres) and **AB15x** (Cortese) would allow a \$1000 state income tax credit for seismic work; both are moving toward passage but, we are told, the Department of Finance (as usual) is opposed.

SB 5x (Alquist) would require a survey of "High Occupancy Buildings" and notification of life safety deficiencies; this concept, which goes one step further than **SB 547's** similar seismic survey, will probably persist whether or not this particular version passes. The impact may be enormous if mitigation is mandated; if not, getting insurance could become a major problem.

SB 8x (Roberti) would raise existing PROP 77 authorization of 150 million to a 450 million dollar level, and would set up deferred-payment loans for rehabilitation of "hazardous" buildings for emergency shelters, new rental housing. Passed the Senate and should pass Assembly. Will go to voters if signed by the Governor, but California's existing level of bond obligation is a problem for the Administration lately.

AB 17x (Cortese) requires redevelopment agencies to mandate and fund seismic retrofit (using tax increment) and this bill also requires that the State Historic Building Code be used for work on historic buildings.

SB 20x (Alquist) would make possible a full economic impact study of earthquakes;. There is much speculation in this area and many figures circulate; we would hope there is a good and hard look at the long-term effect of demolitions in economically weak downtowns (such as Watsonville) which, we think, may never return to even the previous state of poor health. Existing rent levels are too low to encourage lenders to finance reconstruction. Unnecessary demolitions, using the pretext of earthquake damage, is a handy excuse for creating empty parcels for new development; in some communities these vacant lots may never see new development and will contribute to the further decline of the downtown.

The Seismic Safety Commission discussed its 1990 agenda with us in Sacramento in mid-January, and several important bills are of interest to CPF:

SB 1250 (Torres), which would create 250 million in bond financing for seismic strengthening of public facilities, is currently headed for Assembly Ways and Means and Administration support is expected.

AB 1497 (Hauser) would give the California Housing Insurance Fund Agency (CHIFA) the authority to guarantee construction loans (an insurance policy, essentially, to cover the gap from the time a building is identified as hazardous and the time it is retrofit).

A Costa bill which would provide better bond security so funds already approved in 1982 (**AB 604**) can be allocated for seismic work on unreinforced masonry buildings; another bill to exempt seismic retrofit work from property tax assessment increase (no auther yet) would require a constitutional amendment.

The next legislative session may be of enormous importance to historic preservation; if requirements for new seismic compliance and/or funding increases start moving, the bills must be sensitive to the impacts on historic buildings --- and there's no guarantee they will be. Get ready to act!