

# DAILY BREEZE

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## Demolition begins on long-abandoned San Pedro courthouse

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*The start of demolition on San Pedro's long-vacant courthouse in San Pedro on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The lot will eventually be home to an 8-story residential-commercial development at the corner of Sixth and Centre. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)*

The walls of San Pedro's abandoned courthouse, in the heart of downtown's arts and cultural district, finally came down Wednesday, Feb. 9 — with the help of a Caterpillar excavator.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who represents the historic port town, counted down through a megaphone as demolition crews readied themselves. On Hahn's zero-count, crews sent an excavator's arm crashing through the 53-year-old building's windows.

Glass shards flew every which way. The bricks crunched as they tumbled down. The metal supports shrieked.

And with that, the walls were gone. And so too was the courthouse's downtown reign.

"Regardless of what your memories are with this building, it served our community well for as long as it could," Hahn said at the demolition site. "And today, we are

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officially closing the door on that chapter of this property and opening the door to the next one.”

That next chapter is a mixed-use development that will add apartment units and retail options.

Residents have waited for years to see progress on a project to replace the courthouse since it closed in 2013 because of budget constraints. The courthouse sat vacant with no plans to replace it until 2016, when the state declared it surplus property – opening the door to redevelopment ideas.

- Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn speaking at a press conference kicking off the start of demolition on San Pedro’s long-vacant courthouse in San Pedro on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The lot will eventually be home to an 8-story residential-commercial development at the corner of Sixth and Centre. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)
- Supervisor Janice Hahn, bull-horn in hand, kicking off the start of demolition on San Pedro’s long-vacant courthouse in San Pedro on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The lot will eventually be home to an 8-story residential-commercial development at the corner of Sixth and Centre. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)
- A press conference was held for the start of demolition on San Pedro’s long-vacant courthouse in San Pedro on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The lot will eventually be home to an 8-story residential-commercial development at the corner of Sixth and Centre. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)
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### **Expand**

A year later, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors swooped in, agreeing to spend \$5.2 million to buy the property. Then, in 2018, the board entered into an exclusive agreement with developers Genton Cockrum Partners.

Since then, public agencies and organizations from across the county – including the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, Hahn's office, the Los Angeles Department of Public Works and LA city – have worked to get the project off the ground.

And the plans are grand:

Officials on Wednesday once again touted the eventual construction of an eight-story, 300-unit apartment complex. One-fifth of those units – or 60 apartments – will be designated as affordable housing for those making 80% or less of the LA area's median income.

The apartments will range from studios to three bedrooms.

“It was really important to me that this project included apartments that people can afford,” Hahn said.

And, Hahn said, input on the project from San Pedro locals was critically important.

At the direction of Hahn's office, Genton Cockrum Partners and the LA Department of Public Works held several community meetings to find out what San Pedro residents wanted out of the project.

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“All of that feedback contributed to the project that gets underway today – one that lives up to our community’s values by being both union built and union financed,” Hahn said. “These new apartments are going to mean more people calling downtown San Pedro home and walking around our community, shopping in local businesses and dining in our local restaurants.”

The project developers have partnered with the Los Angeles/Orange County Building and Construction Trades Council – a group more than 100,000 workers across 48 local unions and districts in various trades – to contract all labor for the project.

The project itself, Hahn said, is financed by the [AFL-CIO’s Housing Investment Trust](#).

The labor federation’s investment trust, according to its [website](#), works closely with developers and government agencies to identify and finance redevelopment projects aimed at preserving or creating affordable housing.

“We look forward to working with Genton Cockrum Partners and the County of Los Angeles,” said Ted Chandler, senior managing director of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, “and appreciate their commitment to building mixed-income housing, and building it with 100% union labor.”

The building’s 20,000 square-foot ground floor, officials say, will be reserved for retail shops and a food hall meant to attract visitors and revitalize the surrounding area’s economy.

Los Angeles City Councilman Joe Buscaino, for his part, described the coming project as continuing a years-long effort to redevelop and revitalize the port town. “This here courthouse property,” Buscaino said, “is the center point of this renaissance that’s taking shape in San Pedro.”

Buscaino also mentioned plans for a potential labor museum on the building’s ground floor – but didn’t elaborate on the details.

The demolition is expected to take 30 to 50 days, with construction on the new development set to begin in late summer. The construction project will take two years to complete.