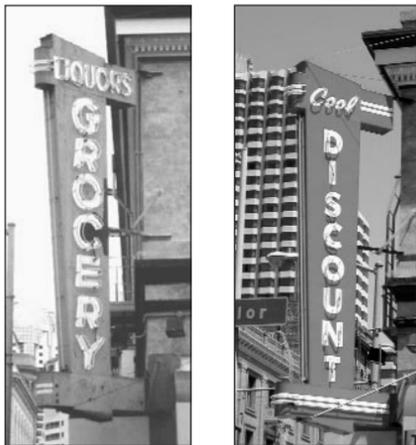


GOOD NEWS for...

HISTORIC NEON SIGNS Artisans have stripped bare the original, 1940s metal sign box that used to read "Liquors Grocery," hand-lettered "Cool Discount" and added new neon on top of it. The historic sign restoration at 199 Eddy is one of four that will be completed this year through TNDC's Façade Improvement Program. While other FIP upgrades require owners to match the costs, historic sign restoration is fully



funded — \$7,300 per project — through a community development grant from the mayor's office. In line for similar restorations are the Aldrich Hotel at 439 Jones, the Elk Hotel at 670 Eddy and the Western Hotel at 335 Leavenworth.

KIDS The free, eight-week Cops Read to Kids program started May 6. TL police officers read stories to 7- to 12-year-olds, then talk with them about practical concerns such as what to do if they find needles on the street or see someone with a gun, and how to be safe on buses, crossing streets and riding a bicycle. Kids are encouraged to get friendly with police, to wave them down if they're in trouble or just say hello if they meet. Held from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the police community room at 601 Eddy, the program was started a year ago by then-Capt. David Shinn. The cops demonstrate all the paraphernalia on their uniform and give kids a tour of the station. In past programs, they've brought in the bomb robot, canine division dogs, and bicycle unit officers; outside the meeting site, the kids got to talk to mounted officers and motorcycle cops. A second session of the program will start in July. Enrollment is limited to 30 kids. To sign up or for information: Jan Rasmussen, Neighborhood Safety Partnership, 553-1155.

TREES STILL LOOKING FOR HOMES North of Market Neighborhood Improvement Corp. and its Tenderloin Sidewalk Improvement Program still have some free trees to give away in its "Twenty Trees for the Tenderloin" planting project — a thank-you gift to TSIP supporters and others from lawyer and TL business owner Elaine Zamora. Friends of the Urban Forest will coordinate planting day and provide expertise on tree care and maintenance. Information: 440-7570 or ezamora@sbcglobal.net.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

This column needs regular infusions. If you have some good news (no events, please), send it to marjorie@studycenter.org.

Old Scientology site will morph into apartments

Interior to be gutted, renovated

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE old Church of Scientology building at 83 McAllister is about to undergo a sea change, according to Dan Paris, a designer with Group I, a small real estate development firm.

Vacant since late last year, the building will get an extreme makeover, Paris told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative in April, and will re-emerge as a 60-unit apartment building.

The historic five-story building, erected just after the big fire and earthquake in '06, was once home to the Methodist Book Concern, the church's publishing arm that was founded in 1789 in Philadelphia. The letters "M B C" are still visible below the building's cornice.

"We're going to gut and completely renovate the inside," Paris said, "but there'll be no exterior changes because the building has landmark status."

The units all will be market rate, except for the 12% that inclusionary zoning requires to be affordably priced. They'll be modest in size: 22 two-bedroom apartments, each about 550 square feet, and 38 studios at 275 square feet.

The building's mezzanine and ground floor, Paris said, will have both apartments and retail or commercial space; the basement will include a multipurpose room, gym, laundry and possibly more commercial space.

Paris said he expects no snags in the planning process for the \$3.5 million project. "We're hoping to have an EIR completed by the end of the summer, start construction this fall, and have the work done a year later."

There were few questions for Paris, who promised to come back to update the group on the project's progress.

STRIP CLUB Q & A

But there were lots of questions later in the meeting for Clint Ladine, operations manager for the San Francisco Rescue Mission, and Terrance Alan, owner of the strip club next door to the Mission.

The media had a little feeding frenzy there last month after Alan closed the 220 Club, a gay venue, and reopened it as Chez Paree, which fea-

tures female dancers. Kids from the Mission's on-site school paraded outside shouting "Shame" to construction workers going in and out of the club, while preachers condemned the club's goings-on as sinful and called for its closure.

When the supervisors said they couldn't legally close it, the Mission's Pastor Roger Huang on April 5 set up a chair in the plaza facing City Hall and began a hunger strike.

There was so much chatter in the neighborhood about the conflict, the Collaborative invited the two sides to its April meeting.

"I have no personal vendetta against Terrance Alan," began Ladine. "We're simply concerned with the state of the Tenderloin, and one of us is willing to lay his life on the line for his community."

Chez Paree, is, in fact, "a new venture," Ladine opined, which, if it were, would mean it falls under the TL moratorium on new adult entertainment venues within 1,000 feet of existing ones. "This is a watershed case. . . an opportunity to transform the Tenderloin."

Alan gave a short history of small theaters in the Tenderloin, as many as 50 in the early days of the last century. 220 Jones, he said, was one of them, and in the 1950s it became the first adult theater in the neighborhood. The building's use was "grandfathered in, and that law is just as valid as the [moratorium]."

Alan said he bought the building from the original owner seven years ago, just about the same time the Rescue Mission moved in. "At one point they accosted my patrons," he said, "grabbed their ankles, spoke in tongues. . . [but] we've had a truce for a few years, until now."

"What are your employment practices for the women in the new club?" asked Lynn Valente, associate director of the Market Street Association.

"They come to work as performers," Alan responded, "more of a burlesque show. They don't pay a stage fee. There are no private rooms and no prostitution."

"Why doesn't Pastor Roger ever come to our community meetings?" wondered resident John Nulty.

"He wears many hats," Ladine said. "We're understaffed at the Mission. But you're right, we do need to get involved."

Someone asked if the Mission's objections had anything to do with Alan's "gay orientation."

"I love gay people," Ladine said.

"I love Terrance Alan."

Apartment manager Jim Thompson asked Ladine if his presence at this meeting meant he was joining the community. "Or will you just disappear again?"

"I'll be here — I'll be the liaison," Ladine promised.

WHAT'S THE VISION?

Richard Allman, who was chairing the meeting, asked the adversaries to describe their "ideal vision for the street."

"We have hope for the future of the Tenderloin," Ladine said. "People may come and say negative things about the neighborhood, but we see exciting new businesses opening. We don't want it to continue as a red-light district."

Alan said he sees excitement, too, and has saved the best for last: "I'm in negotiations to demolish 220 Jones in



PHOTO BY MARJORIE BEGGS

S.F. Rescue Mission's Pastor Roger Huang faces City Hall

three to five years and replace it with a 10-story building for musicians — housing, performance, rehearsal and recording spaces."

One of his partners, he said, is SoundSpace, a 3-year-old nonprofit that works to find permanent or long-term-lease arts spaces in San Francisco.

In early May, The Extra visited Pastor Roger Huang on his hunger strike in front of City Hall. "I'm out here 24 hours a day," he said. "I sit here during the daytime and sleep over there on the grass at night." His wife has been on the hunger strike with him since the beginning, but only sits with him 10 hours a day, he explained, "so she can take care of business at the Rescue Mission."

On day 29 of his hunger strike, Huang said he'd continue until the Chez Paree closes or moves. ■

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