

## Eminent domain takeover urged for blighted Sixth St. hotel

SOMPAC votes to buy Defenestration site in rare city action

BY TOM CARTER

SoMa's Defenestration, forever out the window but never off the wall, might now fall to an untimely death.

The kooky vision of furniture and appliances anchored on the walls of the gutted Hugo Apartments at Sixth and Howard streets faces the specter of eminent domain as a blighted property. In December, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency acquired the power to use eminent domain in the area. But it can only be applied as a last resort when an owner refuses to improve the digs or sell at a fair market price — both have been the Hugo owner's stance in the past.

Redevelopment has used the power only once in the last 20 years, the agency says, though eminent domain is getting more use nationwide. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled

in June that local governments could seize a private property even for the "purpose of a profit-making private redevelopment." It didn't even have to involve blight.

In Hunters Point some fear that Redevelopment will exercise that power and

displace people under an ordinance proposed by Supervisor Sophie Maxwell.

Defenestration has excited thousands of tourists and residents since 1997 when sculptor Brian Goggin, his friends and neighborhood helpers lashed two dozen household pieces — from couches to grandfather clocks — outside the Hugo's gaunt windows. Goggin called it Defenestration. It means throwing persons or things out of the window such as rolling pins, TV sets, Catholics (at Prague Castle) and, in "The Exorcist," Father Merrin, compliments of the devil.

Goggin nailed down the concept so cleverly that it has been SoMa's famous absurdity for 10 years. Gray Line tours make slow bus sweeps past the Hugo.

"They (the artists) have been praised for the beautiful job they've done," says Henry Kamilowicz, a SoMa business owner who serves on the 21-member South of Market Project Area Committee, an advisory body to Redevelopment. He says he knows people who might be interested in buying the building. They say they'd willingly keep Defenestration, at least some of it, "if tastefully done" in a rehabilitated or new structure. "Can you imagine?" he asks, delighted at the thought.

But, regardless of the legions who have looked up at the four-

**"No one can deal with the owners. We've tried and tried."**

Charles Range  
SOMPAC MEMBER

### TOT PARK FINALLY FIXED

Reopens after being closed 5 months

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### 'I LIKE WASHING CLOTHES'

Laundromat opens — attendant on duty

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### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES TURN OUT

Central Committee hopefuls in TL

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**City Hall** stood tall, but shattered inside. Little around it survived in recognizable form.

# CENTRAL CITY

# EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

APRIL 18, 1906



PHOTOS COURTESY CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Downtown** became rubble, the few buildings still standing were hollow shells.

## Witness to destruction of entire central city

BY JACK LONDON

San Francisco is gone. Nothing remains of it but memories and a fringe of dwelling-houses on its outskirts. Its industrial section is wiped out. Its business section is wiped out. Its social and residential section is wiped out. The factories and warehouses, the great stores and newspaper buildings, the hotels and the palaces of the nabobs, are all gone.

On Wednesday morning at a quarter past five came the earthquake. A minute

later the flames were leaping upward. In a dozen different quarters south of Market Street, in the working-class ghetto, and in the factories, fires started. There was no opposing the flames. There was no organization, no communication. All the cunning adjustments of a twentieth century city had been smashed by the earthquake. The streets were humped into ridges and depressions, and piled with the debris of fallen walls. The steel rails were twisted into perpendicular and horizontal angles. The telephone and telegraph systems were disrupted. And the great water-mains had burst. All the shrewd contrivances and safeguards of man had been thrown out of gear by thirty seconds' twitching of the earth-crust.

By Wednesday afternoon, inside of twelve hours, half the heart of the city was gone. From every side wind was pouring in upon the city. East, west, north, and south, strong winds were blowing upon the doomed city. The heated air rising made an enormous suck. Thus did the fire of itself build its own colossal chimney through the atmosphere. Day and night this dead calm continued, and yet, near to the flames, the wind was often half a gale, so mighty was the suck.

Wednesday night saw the destruction of the very heart of the city. Dynamite was lavishly used, and many of San Francisco's proudest structures were crumbled by man himself into ruins, but there was no withstanding the onrush of the flames. Time and