

# Market Street renaissance

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

At 1117 Market sits American Conservatory Theater's Costume Shop — really a performance space — in a three-story building from 1920.

Next door at 1125 Market, once the Embassy Theater that was razed after the '89 quake, is a hole in the ground, visible through some holes in the wooden fence stretching to the adjacent boarded-up old Strand Theater.

City Planning documents show that one day this will be a 12-story building, with 16 parking spots and a roof garden and courtyard for green space. The property was purchased in December by San Francisco's MacFarlane Partners for \$7.8 million, *Business Times* said.

The *Extra* in 2010 reported that the Strand site, at 1127 Market, was valued at \$1,363,953 for the land and nothing for improvements. But ACT is thoroughly renovating the 12,300-square-foot movie theater into a 299-seat live theater with dressing rooms, rehearsal space, offices and a restaurant. It'll be worth a bit more then. The plans at Building Inspection have the project estimated at \$10 million.

At 1145 Market, John Jensen of Colliers is trying desperately to find tenants. The 12-story building has several floors vacant. The sparkly Caffe Trinity, under new management again this year, awaits customers off the street.

The nine-story 1155 Market, formerly the PUC building, still has PUC and Human Rights Commission offices on the ninth floor. The Los Angeles investment firm Laurus Corp. bought the building for \$27 million in 2011, then leased three-quarters of it — 103,000 square feet — back to the city and county of San Francisco.

Planning Department documents indicate millions of dollars of work performed there in the past six months, including elevators, tenant improvements, lobby, parking entrance, ducts,

electrical work, sprinkler and exterior work too.

Next door, the old Del Webb Townhouse has been demolished and Trinity Properties has begun the third and fourth phases of its massive Trinity Place apartment complex. A 550-unit, 22-story building will rise with an entrance on Eighth Street, followed by one with 492 units fronting on Market Street. The Department of Building Inspection has the project estimated at \$79 million. When done, the project will total 1,900 dwelling units. The overall investment is thought to be around \$500 million, according to *Beyond Chron*.

Across the street, on the east side of Eighth, sits the Orpheum Theatre, with a curtained-off corner space at 1192. The 32,000-square-foot building went up in 1925 and is valued at more than \$8 million, the land \$3 million-plus.

Next door is the Art Institute of California building, which wraps around to another doorway and lobby facing directly out at U.N. Plaza and its three-days-a-week farmers' market, food trucks and craft vendors, as well as the carousing at the fountain. Permits show \$152,000 worth of recent improvements. The Art Institute has its culinary school at 10 U.N. Plaza, where a Carl's Jr. downstairs does a tidy business.

Across Charles Benham Place is the 1926 landmark Renoir Hotel at 1108 Market that recently sold to the Kor Group, which reportedly raised \$40 million from Chinese investors to refurbish it into a 135-room boutique hotel. The six-story brick triangle is the old Shaw Hotel that in the '30s and '40s catered to rich tourists.

Little has changed from Eighth to Ninth. The Whitcomb Hotel, a community landmark, anchors the southwest corner, and across the street is Sam's Diner, a fixture for decades.

Most storefronts on the north-side block have been subject to turnover



PHOTO BY MARK DONEZA

**The empty space** in the lower center will become apartment buildings, the huge Trinity Place development at Eighth and Market, years in the making.

over the years with Wells Fargo's Civic Center branch the biggest and most stable property.

Ninth on up to Van Ness Avenue has become the center of tech, with Twitter leading the way to the old Furniture Mart, followed quickly to the same 1355 Market St. address by Yammer and One Kings Lane.

A huge housing development called NEMA is going up across 10th Street from Twitter with 719 units of market-rate apartments.

The next big thing is the million-square-foot building at 1455 Market that Square is taking over as the dominant tenant. (See sidebar.)



The three long blocks of Market that start at Fifth play a critical role in the boom.

That first block is becoming the westward thrust of downtown with

the dominant Market Street Place like a Westfield Centre annex.

The revitalization of the Warfield Building and remake of the Renoir Hotel promise to make major differences. And when Trinity Place's units are ready for occupancy and ACT brings the theater district all the way down to Market Street, these blocks hold great promise.

Call it a boom — or not — these blocks haven't seen this much action in more than 40 years. Even when all the property changed hands for the dot-com boom, no buildings were demolished.

So much is in motion there can't be any turning back. ■

— *Brian Rinker did much research for this story.*

# Merchants mostly hopeful

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

street, defecating in the open."

Pearl's, here 20 months, is a favorite target for robbers trolling for cell phones.

"They take phones right off the table," Yi says.

New businesses coming in, and the strolling street ambassadors hired by the Central Market Community Benefit District, where she once served on the board, give her hope, she says, but quickly adds, "They don't stop crime."

Yi would love to see more tourists, but believes they are afraid to come her way.

"Weekends aren't busy," she says. "My other locations are, but not here."

The ambassadors have weekends off.

## PIPER'S JEWELERS: 'THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED'

Across Market Street and a few doors west at Piper's Jewelers (1066A), Al Choi's expansive smile fades as he contemplates Market Street.

"Things haven't changed," says the manager of the 50-year-old family business where both of his parents work. "The streets are dirtier. I'm wondering what the city's waiting for."

Piper's is sandwiched by shops that have been closed a year or more.

"It's trash and bottles and people using it as a public toilet," he continues. "Sometimes it seems we're the only section in the block that gets trashed. But it should be cleaned up every day." His lease remains the same. "It's only the trash that goes up. And the feces and urine. Half the block has been

boarded up."

He wonders: If the city had kept the environment clean, would so many businesses have closed?

Three community ambassadors in yellow and black stick their heads inside the door, wave and go on.

## KAPLAN'S: 'TAKES TIME'

Back across Market at 1055, the venerable Kaplan's Surplus & Sports Goods has a steady stream of customers, one bursting through the door saying over his shoulder to his female companion, "This is where I used to come as a kid."

It's the same clientele of locals and tourists, says owner Zane Kaplan, 87, perched behind the cash register where his granddaughter, Paige Abrams, 23, is helping out. He works in the store six days a week and on Sundays does paperwork at home. His father started the business in 1945 at Eleventh and Market, but the rent got bumped up so the business moved to 1055 in 1965 and bought the building, forever immune to rent raises and seemingly impervious to dips in the economy.

"We do very well during the Burning Man days," Kaplan says. "Most tourists don't know the street and it's a rough area. But we don't know what's going to happen. They say they're going to do this and that, but it all takes time and money."

He rings up a pair of pants for \$32.20. "Carhartt's," he says. "We were the first or second store to carry them in the 1980s."

## SHEIKH: 'I CAN'T WAIT'

Dumaz Atkins came from Chicago five months ago to manage Sheikh



Carolyn Diamond, Market Street Association

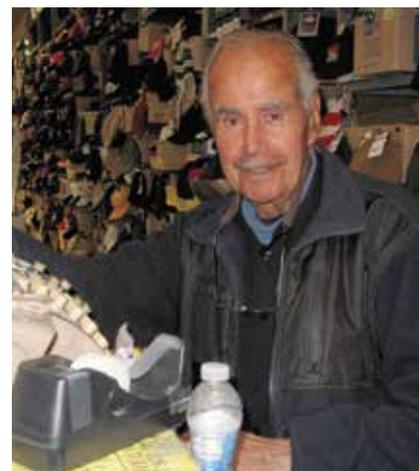
Shoes in the middle of the 900 block of Market, an island framed on either side by tall, half-inch plywood entombing bygone businesses.

Atkins said he had to call the cops on an unruly customer recently who was high on something and the cops came and said, "That's what you can expect in the Tenderloin." He didn't know what they meant. But he's catching on.

"I didn't understand," he said. "But if they want to do it (dope), then do it privately and not so that it affects other people. I get a lot of tourists here, and that's not the impression I want to give them."

Sheikh owns the four-story building, another business that is well-seated for any boom that might occur.

"I look down Market past Fifth Street and see all those people," Atkins says. "But they stop at Fifth. It's rumored that a mall is coming in next door. Well,



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

Zane Kaplan, Kaplan's Surplus & Sports Goods

I can't wait."

## DOLLAR STORE: 'WILL GET BETTER'

The Dollar Store has been at 1131 Market about five years, a family business that leases and has a second store on Ninth Street.

"A lot of stores lost their leases," says manager Damen Arman, 25. "The rent goes up every year, but we're okay." He says his lease runs at least through 2016.

His steady business is largely students from the art academy across the street and a surprising number of tourists who find their way past stained streets and groups of idlers to his door, hellbent on bargains — "30% to 40% are tourists," he says.

"Things will get better," he says. And Market Street Place down the street will help. ■