



McDonald's at 7th and Market closed in December.

2 McDonald's close — what does it mean for Market St.?

Some see downward trend, others hopeful

BY TOM CARTER

THE Seventh and Market McDonald's was boarded up in December. Signs on the outside directed customers to the golden arches at the cable car turnaround. But, on March 6, the McDonald's at 33 Powell St. shuts its doors for good, too.

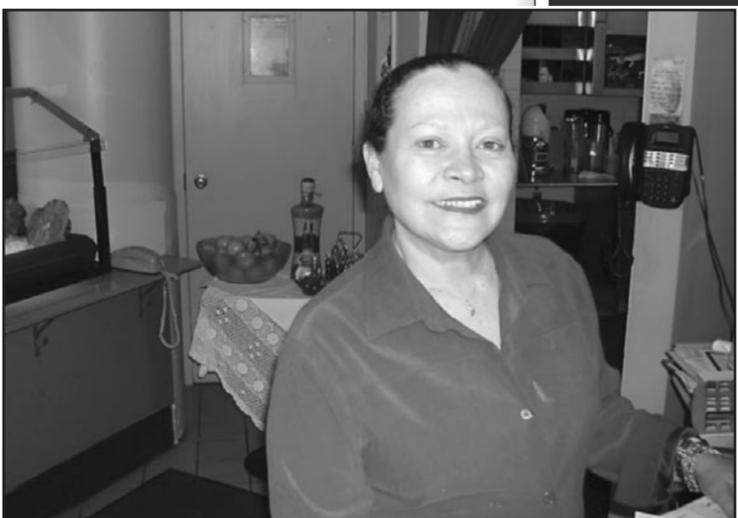
Eyebrows went up in the mid-Market business area. The street's swirling daytime populations of tourists, homeless, drug traffickers and just plain folks make for a curious challenge to businesses where posing the question "What's up?" is asking about the wrong direction.

"Sure business is down—people aren't moving around and they're watching their money," says Carl Mooney, a barber since he got out of the Navy in 1945. He occupies the second chair at Shaw's Barbershop near Seventh Street. "They're waiting to see what will happen when the war is over." Reassuringly he adds, "It won't last long."

Across Market at Pizza and Sub the guy behind the counter responds "low" to the question, How's business? A rangy young man saunters in holding a bill with two

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Elvia Santos struggles to make a go of her *Café do Brasil* on Market Street.



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

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Drop-in
center doors
to close

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NO WAR
TL religious
leaders say
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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

SRO SPRINKLER LAW



PHOTO BY MARK ELLINGER

The *Shree Ganeshai* at Sixth and Jessie has been cited for lack of sprinklers.

City turns up heat

90% of owners out of compliance with new ordinance

BY KAREN OBERDORFER

YOU could practically smell the smoke and hear the sirens' wail as the young woman recounted that first uncertain year, 1998, in her hotel room at the Seneca on Sixth Street — which endured monthly fires but had no extinguishers or sprinklers.

"We'd have to evacuate the building and the fire trucks came and I'd have to stay at a friend's house that night — I was just terrified that I'd go back and my room would be gone and I'd be homeless," Delphine Brody recalled.

Brody, who is a member of the San Francisco Mental Health Association, and other tenants and tenant advocates were testifying Feb. 6 at the weekly Department of Building Inspection hearing at which officers can hand penalties to property owners who violate building codes. The tenants and advocates wanted the stiffest penalty possible imposed on violators of the fire sprinkler ordinance, which residential hotel operators were to comply with before Jan. 1.

In the last 15 years at least 1,600 rooms in SRO hotels have been lost to fires, said Sam Dodge, program director for the Central City SRO Collaborative. Since 1997, 895

housing units have been destroyed and countless tenants displaced as a result of major fires, Dodge said. A fire sprinkler can contain a fire to the area it started in.

On the hot seat at this hearing was the owner of the Shree Ganeshai Hotel at 68 Sixth St., down from the Seneca and next door to the Baldwin House Hotel, which last year suffered a major fire that displaced 188 tenants. The Shree Ganeshai had not yet installed the required sprinklers.

Henry Kamilowicz, construction manager for Dipakbhai Patel, owner of the Shree Ganeshai, represented Patel at the hearing. He tried to justify why the hotel still had no sprinklers. The installers, he said, were confused about the regulations, and the Fire Department bureaucracy has hung things up, he said.

He also complained that there wasn't enough time to do the work — six months from passage of the ordinance to compliance.

"Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that is totally impossible," Kamilowicz insisted. That turned out to be a slight exaggeration.

As of Feb. 14, 90% of the city's residential hotels were still out of compliance with the ordinance, according to DBI. This is the second of two fire sprinkler ordinances,

both authored by Supervisor Gavin Newsom. The first was passed by the Board of Supervisors July 2001, the second a year later. The new ordinance affects 350 residential hotels. By Sept. 1, they were

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"There are people whose lives and property are threatened."

Mark Ellinger
SHREE GANESHAI TENANT