

# Tenderloin single-family homes for sale

Only 4 remain  
in neighborhood,  
2 on the market

BY TOM CARTER

**T**WO examples of the rarest of rare species in the Tenderloin — the stand-alone, single-family home — sport For Sale signs. Engulfed in a sea of businesses, SROs and apartment buildings, only four single-family homes remain in the 50-block Tenderloin as residences. Now, two are for sale.

One is a two-story, painted brick, 100-year-old home at 606 Ellis St. once known for its towering Northfork Island pine that Herb Caen wistfully called “the tree in the Tenderloin.” The pine’s untimely demise in 2004 caused some neighborhood heartburn and led to a city ordinance that now requires

a Department of Public Works permit to cut down any “significant” tree on private property.

The lot is 2,100 square feet, according to a TRI Coldwell Banker flyer. The home was built in 1907 but modern touches have erased any distinguished hints. The yellow brick building with

a picture window in front has about 1,600 square feet and sits well behind a green and gold trim iron fencing. What would be a front yard is all concrete slab.

The owners, who bought it for \$710,000 three years ago, are represented by TRI Coldwell Banker, which is promoting the space as suitable for up to a 10-story structure, two stories over the neighborhood height limit. It went on the market at \$1,599,000, but a month later, in late October, the price dropped by \$200,000.

The other home for sale is also 100 years old and exudes an aura of history. Unofficially, 645 Hyde St., between Post and Geary, is the demarcation point where the Tenderloin gets its blue-collar architecture that was born of the post-quake rebuilding, and where — if you are going uphill — it takes on the comfortable middle-class airs of lower Nob Hill.

The two-story, brushed red-brick carriage house built in 1907 has 1,672 square feet, three bedrooms, 1½ baths, a wood-burning fireplace and a full basement. Inside, exposed old brick mixes well with new hardwood floors, granite countertops and wall-to-wall carpet upstairs. Moreover, it has two small parking spaces on the property in back on Meacham Place, a dead-end street that is gated and neat as a pin. In the early 20th century, the street was convenient for men traveling on Post Street to sneak down unseen to the back door of the fancy whorehouse next door. Asking price: \$965,000.

Back on Hyde Street, next door to 645 to the south, is a one-story

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## SPECIAL ISSUE



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

*Hibernia Bank at Jones and McAllister, damaged in the '89 quake, stands empty and deteriorating.*

# The survivors

## Homage to some century-old gems of TL buildings

BY MARJORIE BEGGS  
AND JOHN GOINS

**A**CENTURY and a year ago, the earthquake and three-day fire destroyed nearly every building in the Tenderloin. Today, only a handful of pre-1906 structures survive. But the rebuilding began almost immediately. By 1907, 40 new Tenderloin

buildings had risen phoenix-like from the ashes and rubble of the Great Quake. Five of them were single-family homes that are still standing. The rest were mostly apartment buildings and SROs.

One was the Cadillac Hotel, whose 100th birthday was celebrated Sept. 19.

Seated at the 1884 rosewood Steinway concert grand piano in the hotel lobby, pianist Taylor Chan opened with “It’s a Wonderful World”— and, for that moment, it seemed blissfully true. The late afternoon light shone warmly on scores of cheerful neighborhood residents. In the crowd was Mayor Newsom and Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin who schmoozed and dipped into trays of hors d’oeuvres.

The handsome hotel at 380 Eddy St. has an erratic history. Wealthy visitors stayed there when it was new and its brass chandeliers and marble sinks gleamed. The hotel even had its own furrier.

Designed by architect Frederick H. Meyer, the Cadillac’s ground-floor storefront once housed Newman’s Gym where Golden Gloves champions squared off. Muhammad Ali boxed there. So did future District Attorney Terence Hallinan. When the hotel began falling into disrepair, it was briefly owned by Donald Fisher, future founder of the Gap.

In 1977, Leroy Looper’s Reality House program for addicts and criminal offenders bought the by-then-grungy, 160-room flop-house. Looper fixed it up and turned it into housing for ex-prisoners and seniors, and the Cadillac Hotel became a catalyst for restoration of the Tenderloin’s SROs and a national model of supportive housing for at-risk populations.



SOURCE: EARTHQUAKE.USGS.GOV

*The Hibernia Bank, built in 1892, was scarcely standing after the '06 quake.*

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