

Health clinic on-site makes \$95 million project tops in state

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Moving into 8,875 square feet of the main floor will be the Department of Public Health's Housing and Urban Health Clinic that is now at 238 Turk St. in the Windsor Hotel building.

It was the city's first public health clinic in 20 years when it opened in July 2000. With a staff of nine, it serves patients with addictions, mental disorders and HIV infection, all residents in 30 supportive housing hotels. In the past five years, 28 more sites were added, and the number of patients swelled.

Don Falk examines the atrium with its handsome architectural touches of the Italian Renaissance Revival period.

A staff of 27 will run the new clinic, which will have 10 exam rooms, a spate of nursing and counseling offices. Patients will be using the handsome auditorium and the fifth-floor gym as well. Staff house calls will be about 10% of the caseload, Director Dr. Josh Bamberger says, adding that

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Dr. Josh Bamberger
URBAN HEALTH CLINIC

he expects more than 1,000 unduplicated patients a year.

"That could grow in the next three years," Bamberger says. "It's the (nation's) first integrated medical center for the formerly homeless. We've got five part-time psychiatrists, acupuncture, massage and yoga, too. We can really get to the root causes of the trauma of homelessness. It (the Y) was designed to provide housing for the homeless after the (1906) earthquake and now we will provide that again. It's poetic."

Originally known as the Young Men's Christian Association, the YMCA held the popular fitness theme foremost when it built the Y as an affordable hostelry with 103 rooms for men. In time, age and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake took heavy tolls even as membership soared in the 1990s to 5,000, an all-time high, when it became obvious the place needed major fixing.

TNDC and AF Evans, a significant partner of nonprofits building affordable housing, bought the property in 2007 for \$12.2 million. Some of the funds came from the Mayor's Office of Housing. But times grew tough and last year AF Evans gracefully backed out of the deal. Shortly afterward, its for-profit subsidiary declared bankruptcy. TNDC gladly took on the task alone, pleased that the mayor's office wanted it to be showcase housing for the homeless.

Last year, as the Y began winding down, its era as a haven for thrifty travelers ended when the hotel section closed and soon after the small number of full-time residents vacated. Malcolm X and Willie Brown had stayed there on separate occasions.

Despite its magnificence, the building has no formal historic status. It is, however, in the Tenderloin's new historic district and remains a "local building of note on the preservationists' radar," says Blitzer.

TNDC is proceeding to protect the building's precious characteristics so it will qualify for the National Registry of Historical Places, says TNDC Executive Director Don Falk. To that end, TNDC has hired the project design team of Gelfand Partners Architects working with preservation specialists Fredric Knapp Associates.

The pool downstairs — its colorful period tiles a delight for swimmers for decades — was a conundrum. Retrofitting there will add more concrete for the building's support and squeeze the space.

"We're obligated to keep the pool, but not to run it," says Blitzer. "We don't have the staff for maintenance and we aren't set up to run a recreation facility. We're adding a lot of concrete to the walls and columns and some places we're going underground to add concrete."

"We talked about decking it over but at \$1 million that was too expensive. We'll drain it, and at the end of the day we'll close the door.



The Y, which was meant to promote young men's health, will have a medical clinic as a pillar of strength for its residents, and those from 51 SROs.

There are other opportunities in the building."

As an outstanding feature of the building's focus on health, it must remain for TNDC to apply to satisfy registry requirements.

"But the whole history is awesome — President Taft was there for the cornerstone," Falk said.

President Howard Taft and 2,000 onlookers attended the laying of the cornerstone and ribbon-cutting Oct. 5, 1909. Taft called the Y "a Great Character Factory." It opened Thanksgiving 1910. The cornerstone under the columns to the right of the front door reads: "THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE."

The Central Y replaced a YMCA at Mason and Ellis that burned down in the 1906 fire and earthquake.

The Y's outstanding exterior features, which can be cleaned but not altered to be designated as a historic building, include the symmetrical facade and its towering columns decorated with scrolled buttresses at the tops on either side of the doorway; the decorated arch above the door; the larger and fancier windows of the lower floors and horizontal belts separating the second and third, and third and fourth floors.

Another typical characteristic of the architectural style is different coloration for the lower floors. The Y's first four floors of rusticated grayish-lavender stone are a contrast to the yellowish brick floors above. The roof cornice is a masterpiece of detailed block-like modillions that support it with little dentils just below them.

To be sure, there are larger supportive housing projects in New York with services and medical offices, like the Y, renaissance buildings that were historically preserved when transformed.

"But ours will be spectacular," says Blitzer. "Ours is really special because it's whole-person health for those struggling with chronic conditions and it's a lot of units for desperate people — supportive housing on a large scale. It's the biggest in the Bay Area, probably in the state, and among the most ambitious anywhere."

Finding loans in the current business climate is hard enough; finding them for renovating a 100-year-old building for the homeless is another thing.

"The world isn't set up to help poor people," Falk said in October after one possible investor had spent three days vetting the Y. "We're looking for a tax credit investor and we've been turned down by many — too risky investing in a renovated building. They don't know what's behind the walls and it could mean more work."

"The climate is exacerbated by the way people see the Tenderloin. They'd rather do senior garden apartments in Danville."

The project got a boost in June when TNDC received \$17 million from the state, part of the \$2.9 billion Proposition 1C funds for Housing and Emergency Shelter voters approved in 2006. This was on top of \$10 million the state gave previously.

For months Falk has been seeking companies to buy low-income tax credits. He expected the construction loan would come from Citibank.

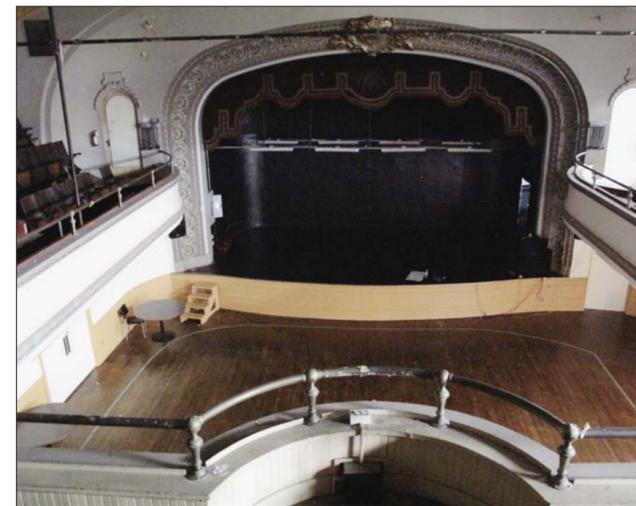
"But Citibank is saying the state isn't credit-worthy, and the bank needs a guarantee. So the Mayor's Office of Housing is seeing if it can come up with one."

Building plans call for the basement pool area to be mostly storage, maintenance and utility rooms and bicycle parking. Along with the clinic on the main floor will be 3,000 square feet for Wu Yee Childcare Center, which had been in the Y for years but vacated as the Y began shutting down. There will be a small tenant lobby, plus 1,500 square feet for retail.

The second-floor atrium will become the main residential lobby and the grand staircase that was removed from there in the 1950s will be rebuilt. Just off the atrium, a cafe with kitchen services will be able to accommodate gatherings in the nearby auditorium.

Ironically, historic pictures make the place look like the homeless are inheriting a private men's club. A 1929 photo shows the handsome atrium-lobby with a large rug in the middle, and solitary, suited men in easy chairs reading at its edges, looking as prosperous as Rockefeller. Another photo shows the chairs occupied and gathered in front of the giant, roaring fireplace for "a fireside chat."

A handful of SROs will be on the second, third and ninth floors. The other five floors, some with common lounges, will have 24 to 39 rooms each. Room sizes will range from 180 to 425 square feet. Each SRO room will have a phone, wood cabinets, ceiling fan, bathroom with grab bars and kitchenette for 172 formerly homeless occupants and two managers.



Common kitchens and dining areas will be on floors two and five.

Topping it off on the ninth floor will be a landscaped 2,260-square-foot roof deck with planter boxes for gardening.

The auditorium will get a face lift and provide meeting and entertainment space.

Tenderloin residences To be served by Y clinic

WHEN the renovation of the Y is complete, including the addition of the Housing and Urban Health Clinic, the clinic will serve patients from a total of 51 housing sites, plus the Y residents. Twenty-nine of those sites are in the Tenderloin;

- Aranda Hotel
- Arlington Residence
- Boyd Hotel
- Cambridge Hotel
- Camelot Hotel
- Civic Center Residence
- Coast Hotel
- Coronado Hotel
- Dalt Hotel
- Elk Hotel
- Elm Hotel
- Empress Hotel
- Graystone Hotel
- Hamlin Hotel
- Hartland Hotel
- Jefferson Hotel
- Le Nain Hotel
- Leroy Looper residence
- Lyric Hotel
- McAllister Hotel
- Mentone
- Pacific Bay Inn
- Pierre Hotel
- Ritz Hotel
- Union Hotel
- Vincent Hotel
- West Hotel
- William Penn
- Windsor Hotel

Warfield owner bankrolls Prop. D — \$455,000 so far

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was \$6,000 paid to the San Francisco County Democratic Central Committee, which resulted in a big-type endorsement by the San Francisco Democratic Party on Yes on D brochures. Two San Francisco law firms have received a total of \$46,000.

Dee Dee Workman, former San Francisco Beautiful executive director and president of the consulting firm Workman Associates, told The Extra that she joined the Prop. D effort to help obtain endorsements. Workman, howev-

er, wouldn't take credit for any particular endorsement.

"We all go as a team," she said, adding that the Prop. D crew had attended 30 to 40 endorsement meetings. "I know a lot of people, but that doesn't necessarily translate into getting their support." But, she allowed, "If I didn't know anybody, I probably wouldn't have been hired."

According to campaign finance statements, Workman earned approximately \$30,000 for her efforts. Of the people who endorsed the measure, she said, citing her

longtime activism, "I know them all." These include Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier, David Campos, David Chiu, Bevan Dufty and Sean Elsbernd, plus District Attorney Kamala Harris.

Workman's former employer, San Francisco Beautiful, is Prop. D's main opponent, and contributed \$30,900 to the anti effort, all but \$1,070 of the No on D contributions as of Oct. 17.

"We're going to win," law school dropout Addington said the Thursday before the election in a phone interview with The Extra. He

was speaking from the one-time office of Examiner Publisher Florence Fang, from whom his Warfield Theater LLC purchased the building in 2005 for \$12 million, according to a Business Times story.

He explained his Warfield LLC's "considerable investment" in Prop. D as "not that considerable relative to the multimillions" he and other property owners have invested in the area. His vision of a "unified signage program" offering advertisers "1,800 linear feet" of digital display space along Market Street initially, he said, might not generate much revenue, but in

time, it would come to be "a lot."

Addington said he first met Workman five years ago at the corner of Sixth and Market, when they were on opposite sides of his position for increased signage on Market Street.

Besides hoping to "restore interest in retail storefronts," he said, Prop. D includes monetary incentives to property owners to reopen shuttered theaters, or re-purpose those that have been converted to office or loft use for theater groups in need of performance space. The bigger slice of the advertising pie would be available to prop-

erty owners who have arts organizations at street level and for a ticket booth at Hallidie Plaza to help arts groups maximize their revenue. "The devil is in the details," he said.

As for the marketing campaign, he laid responsibility for the 1,000 or so posters and the four or five different full-color campaign flyers at the feet of his consultants, primarily Stearns. As to the flyers' distribution, he stated it was his impression that they were addressed to registered voters.

Mark Parsons contributed to this report.