**Tenderloin single-family homes for sale**

Only 4 remain in neighborhood, 2 on the market

**BY TOM CARTER**

Two examples of the rarest of rare species in the Tenderloin — the stand-alone, single-family home — sport For Sale signs. Enrolled 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 600 Ellis St once known for its towering Northfork Island pine that Herb Caven 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 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, brick-red 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. 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: $955,000.

Back on Hyde Street, next door to 645 to the south, is a one-story...
Pet project at Boys & Girls Club
How dogs help Tenderloin kids learn to read

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

HAVE a kid who’s struggling with reading? Clutches up when asked to read aloud? The Tenderloin Clubhouse of the Boys & Girls Club may have the answer. Paws for Reading, a program where kids read to dogs.

"No kidding, it really works," new clubhouse Director Pat Zamora told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative in October. She was at the meeting to find out what people who live and work here know about the 11-year-old neighbor-
hood’s success with 

research that found children with lower self-esteem do especially well in the program because they forget about their limitations. Also, a study found children in a Salt Lake City Paws-like program for 13 months increased their reading by two to four grade levels.

Tenderloin Clubhouse members are primarily Chinese, Latino and African American. Like their peers in other clubhouses in the city, 95% are from low- or very low-income families.

Clubhouse information is at www.bgcsf.org or call 351-3125.

Tenderloin Clubhouse members learn how to tend a garden in the club’s courtyard, one of many activities for neighborhood kids.

GOOGLE PROJECT WIRES THE DAL'T

The Dal'T Hotel isn’t what you’d think of as a hotbed of cyber-technology, but it’s now wired up, actually wireless up, in ways that may turn residents in other SROs green with envy.

Consultant Michael McCarthy explained a pilot project operating at the Dal'T since summer. For his first month $120 a month for DSL and a $1,000 investment in hardware — all paid by the mega-search engine Google, which funded the project — he set up a wireless network that every resident with a computer at the 177-room, seven-story SRO can use to get access to the Internet.

"There’s one DSL line coming into the building," McCarthy said. "Then there are four small broadcast wireless units called repeaters in various locations in the building that are good up to 500 feet and, on each floor, a couple of mini wall plugs." Located high up on the wall so they won’t be messed with, the minis, about the size of a deck of cards, also repeat the Internet signal.

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Three years ago, Herb Guarz’s “tree in the Tenderloin” was cut down, left, at 606 Ellis St. Now, the century-old house is for sale.

Hommage to some century-old “Tenderloin”

In the process, the hotel became San Francisco Landmark No. 176. Other landmarks from the Cadillac’s era in and around the Tenderloin include St. Boniface Church (1880), and the Geary Theater (1910).

An older landmark, the venerable Hibernia Bank, constructed in 1892, was designed by Albert Pissis, one of the most influential architects in San Francisco’s history.

“More than any... single architect, Albert Pissis, which rhymes with crisis, changed the face of San Francisco in the two decades bracketing 1900, bringing to this strange frontier city the imperial pomp and gravity it so longed for,” notes San Francisco Architectural Heritage in its bio of the architect.

With its Sierra granite walls and gilded dome, Hibernia Bank established Pissis as one of the leading architects in the city before he died of pneumonia at 62. When it was still operating, customers hustled up the steps and once inside felt the wondrous effect of the soaring dome.

The historic landmark on the corner of Jones and McAllister now stands unoccupied, its gilded cupula in a state of ruin. Its marbled portico chained shut, obscured by a tall metal fence.

**BUILDING BOOM**

Using Anne Bloomfield’s 1983 survey of area buildings, produced to make the case for a hotel historic district, the Extra found that in that year, only 10 hotel and apartment buildings predated the quake and fire in the area bounded by O’Farrell, Mason, Golden Gate and Polk. (Bloomfield surveyed a larger area, up to Bush on lower Nob Hill.) By 1909, however, the year the Cadillac opened its doors, dozens of new buildings were up in the Tenderloin.

As the topography changed from north to south, so did the structures that went up after the earthquake. On the south slope of Nob Hill extending down to the edge of the Tenderloin, buildings were architecturally more interesting and structurally more enduring.

A hybrid apartment-hotel genre existed on the slope where a resident could get meals from a kitchen staff and have laundry done. It’s comparable to corporate rental housing today, says lower Nob Hill resident historian David Overdorf.

The National Register of Historic Places identifies the salient differences between the two “apartment-hotel districts” rebuilt during 1910-22. Lower Nob Hill is almost all residential, with no ‘leisure’ activity buildings. Less than half the buildings have storefronts and the most prominent style is ornamental brick. On average, the registered buildings are in ‘good condition.’

By contrast, the flatland of the Tenderloin has more nonresidential buildings. 75% have ground-floor storefronts. The style is plain stucco and unadorned brick, the leisure activity buildings included bars, restaurants, union halls, theaters, brothels. They are in ‘less good condition’ and have ‘more security gates, intrusive storefront changes and signs.’

A white-collar workforce occupied most of the lower Nob Hill apartment-hotels. Blue-collar workers stayed in the cheaper Tenderloin.

‘Most of the SRO residents were men,’ says Tenderloin Housing Clinic Director Randy Shaw. ‘They were seamen and truck drivers and restaurant workers — men who didn’t cook, who worked late, who needed good transportation to get around the city. SROs mostly were built to accommodate them for weeks or months, not as tourist hotels.

A distinct “psychological distance” existed between lower Nob Hill and the Tenderloin, the register says, as well as structural differences. If a Tenderloin building deteriorated, demolition was a common option.

“Inspectors looked at each building and assessed if it could be recovered,” said Bill Beamer, research assistant at San Francisco Architectural Heritage. He didn’t know why demolitions were more common in the TL.

One survivor is the nine-story Grant Building with its 2½-foot-thick brick walls, one of the first steel-framed buildings erected in San Francisco. Built in 1904, it survived the Big One and is home of The Extra. It was designed by Newton Tharp, constructed by the engineering firm of Washington Roebing, a civil engineer who helped complete the Brooklyn Bridge with his father, John Augustus Roebing.

The Grant Building, with approximately 45,000 feet of office space, is owned by Seligman Western Enterprises, a real estate and management company from Michigan.

**SROs BLOOM**

A year after the Great Fire, five hotels rose in the Tenderloin: the three-story Allen, the four-story, 57-room Kinney; the four-story, 49-room Page; Warrick, four stories; and another Albert Pissis design, the four-story William Penn Hotel, home of EXEx Theatre.

Buildings constructed in 1908 include the seven-story, 89-room Pacific Bay Inn, the West Hotel, where the Tea Room, a male strip club, is located; and St. Boniface Church.

The cornerstone for St. Boniface, built by German immigrants, was laid on Golden Gate Avenue July 29, 1900. The fire destroyed the church, ran by Franciscan monks since 1887, but it was rebuilt by the community in 1908.

The poor and homeless queue daily in front of the church, waiting to be fed at St. Anthony’s around the
Homage to some century-old Tenderloin survivors
to this strange frontier city the imperial pomp and most influential architects in San Francisco's history. Pity refutes half thetor's claim that all is buyer could build 10 stories high.

Before the 1906 earthquake, there were only four-story buildings on this block. The Trans bought the house in 2004 for $710,000 from Clarysse Caremere. The building, housed in 1907, had been a construction company and its San Francisco Dance Center, which offers classes for adults and a bachelor's degree in dance.

The Trans business, beneath a seven-story apartment building whose west side abuts 606 Ellis, is Happy Travel & Legal Services. It offers Vietnamese clerical work, taxi-filing, money orders, notarizing, visas, translations and more.

The Trans, owned by Anthony Paliarchiotis and his wife, have a property manager, and his wife, Georgie Paliarchiotis, 50. Florence died first, then George. A neighbor from the apartment house across Ellis Street said the Extra that 606 Ellis had for years been a little building in the concrete jungle.

"It had a sort of forested appearance, nestled down between big apartment buildings," said Jonathan Ruzicka. "I knew Mrs. Galiano, and I spoke to — I knew her husband but I don't know what he did for a living. After he died, she became a recluse.

Ruzicka said a tripod with multiple wires existed for years behind the Northlich Island pine that he believed the husband had planted. But it was taken out some time after a visit in with his mother, and before she sold it to the Trans.

The removal of the pine three years ago by the owners, though, was a chilling spectacle to residents. The tree was close to 100 years old and maybe 100 feet high. This is a huge landmark and Board of Supervisors protection. But, designated or not, under the bill a property owner would need a permit to cut down a significant tree or face a $200 fine.

"They want 61 million," Ruzicka said. "If I had it, I'd buy it — if the tree was still there.

But some of Ruzicka's neighbors liked the tree gone. "Some were delighted," he said. "They said it was much, much lighter now. I think it's a cultural ani... mosity toward trees. There's a prevailing feng shui to eliminate trees on the west side of a business to prevent bad luck.

City Planning has a living room, bedroom and kitchen on the second floor, and an in-law with kitchen and garage on the ground floor. The property is zoned RC-1, which means residential-commercial with building up to 40 feet high in a district that encourages a combination of high-density development and compatible commercial uses on the ground floor, the Planning Code says. Building higher than 40 feet requires Planning Commission approval.

"There's no variable to the height, " he said. "If they have an agreement it's news to the city because I don't see anything here. No approval. You can't go up higher than 40 feet unless you go down.

This reporter visited the property Oct. 1 for an appointment with agent John Kirkpatrick. But at the 5 p.m. appointment he wasn't there and Monica Tran, in maroon dress and decked out in abundant gold jewelry, appeared by chance. She didn't seem to know what I was hanging around. Once I explained I had an appointment and was a...
I went wandering. The second floor has a big desk and office chairs near the window in the long narrow front living room. A few green, red and gold Asian art objects are on the walls. There is a small bedroom with another desk in it, and a bathroom and medium-size kitchen. It felt like a residential business waiting for file cabinets.

Downstairs was an empty in-law with a little kitchen and bathroom. Tran painted with white wide molding on to its small storage room.

It all looked new, nothing redent of its age. I asked if she lives here and she said no she lives elsewhere. She said she didn’t know when the house was built. Call the agent, she said.

At the door, Mrs. Tran quickly put her heels back on and headed for her gray lexus SUV at curbside. Just before she hopped in, she turned and said she’d take a property trade — “in San Francisco” — for the place.

On Oct. 29, the Trulia real estate search web site reported the price had dropped to $1,399,000. The listing had been up more than 30 days.

The two-story building at 645 Hyde St. between Geary and Post has a charming mix of the present and past. The brushed brick exterior has only a few decorative touches such as tooth-like dentils of brick sticking out under a simple brick cornice. Giving an uplift is new white painted wrought iron that is over the street-level windows and door. Listed with Zeppelin Realty Estate, it’s open on Sunday afternoons.

Mortco real estate web site claims the area is 64% white and about 30% of the population makes $75,000 or more a year.

The house pales next to the Flemish Renaissance Ornamental house at 647 Hyde by eminent San Francisco architect of the post-earthquake era, Conrad A. Methofffisher. The two houses have their year of birth and location in common, and little else.

But location is everything. And lower Nob Hill is an address.

“Since before 1900 this hillside has been a psychological distance away from the adjacent Fillials, home of the Tenderloin,” according to a report to the National Register of Historic Places. “Its residents have always been careful to observe the social difference.”

Researchers into historic Tenderloin, the report said, have identified Post street as the neighborhood’s northern boundary but other researchers question it. The “rougher” TL has more storefronts, bars, restaurants, union halls and brothels, according to the report. By contrast, lower Nob Hill was mostly residential and its “heavily ornamented brick of the 1910’s” was kept in good condition compared with the plain brick and stucco of the Tenderloin. But where is the boundary?

Two of the report’s researchers put the boundary between Post and Geary.

“Don’t call it the Tenderloin,” said David Overdorff, owner of 647 Hyde, who was standing in his doorway one afternoon in October.

Overdorff bought his house in 1998. With other preservationists, he successfully got the lower Nob Hill Apartment Hotel District accepted in the National Register of Historic Places. The boundary is 570 slope acres from just above Bush Street down to Geary and — from west to east in a narrowing strip — from Polk Street to just beyond Stockton Street. It consists of 295 buildings, mostly three- to seven-story multifamily residential buildings with stylistic continuity. It was accepted from 1900 to 1925, including his, which, he said, ranks 4 on a 5-point scale.

“It makes no good sense calling anything other than what it is,” Overdorff reiterated, suggesting that a 4 on lower Nob Hill beats a 4 in the Tenderloin.

photo by tom castor

Across from the Gaylord Apartments, 611 Jose St. dodged the wrecker’s half six years ago is the only single-family wood house in the Tenderloin.
She was a charter member of Central City Democrats, belonged to the Central City SOU Collaborative, was a big advocate for women’s safety.

Three days before she died, she was manning the table at TAC’s ninth anniversary celebration. “She always put herself up front as a leader and helper,” Nulty said. “She was blossoming.”

Associate Pastor Foster Jennett appeared a little surprised to hear that. “Though she was active here, she still was more in the background; more humble, with unanswered faith. But here I’m hearing about all of her involvements — how lucky we all are to have had this woman in our lives.”

The celebrants of Marilyn Schick’s life sang along as Jennett played the flute. First: Children of the Heavenly Father,” a Swedish hymn, then “Jesus Remember Me.”

— MARJORIE BEGGS

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SAN FRANCISCO IS STILL THE CITY THAT KNOWS HOW
New boxing club to fight crime

BY PHIL TRACY

Cutting ribbons for a business venture just getting started come a dime a dozen, even in the Tenderloin. Still, the one that took place Oct. 23 at the Straight Forward Boxing Gym, located in the basement of 52 Mason St., to be judged a contender for the title “year’s most symbolic celebration.”

The Straight Forward Boxing Club is the first legitimate boxing gym in the Tenderloin to open its doors to fighters since the famed Newman Gym closed 15 years ago. It renews the link between the Tenderloin and boxing gyms, which goes back more than a century and is the latest effort to help restore street life to something more than ongoing warfare between competing groups of drug dealers.

The event itself was as unembellished as the gym’s name suggests. About 75 people surrounded the doorway, some standing in the street. Words were spoken of the boisterous role boxing has played in taming the wilder instincts of young men with little time and less control of their anger. Praise was heaped on Ben Baustia, founder of the 9-year-old club, and of the various fighters he has helped to bring along. The club motto — “We don’t break laws, we break jaws” — was evoked to general glee.

FREE RENT FOR A FEW MONTHS

The contributions of Julian Davis, executive director of the Tenderloin Economic Development Project in helping to negotiate a no-payment lease for the first few months, were acknowledged. Then Assemblyman Mark Leno, for whom Davis worked as legislative aide while he was with Western Addition, did the snipping, which was symbolically preceded by a 10-count from the crowd. Then everyone filed into the gym for refreshments and sodas, cookies, 15-minute video about the San Francisco boxing scene and a sparring display between two up-and-coming club members that did not fail to pay attention to it for more than a round.

Ben Baustia, 57, started his own boxing career working out of Newman’s Gym in the Cadillac Hotel back in 1985. As an entrepreneur, he would have to be characterized as a long shot. Boxing is not wildly popular these days. More people know whether Muhammad Ali was a weight underpants than who was the current world heavyweight boxing champion — or any other champion. Yet Baustia finished off whatever legitimacy the sweet science once had and martial arts boxing (includes kicking) is more popular than ever now called Mixed Martial Arts. Baustia acknowledges the charge: “They’re making a lot of noise within the last couple of years. They get more and more sponsors and more and more TV time. So yeah, they are providing competition.”

‘FLAVOR OF THE OLD TENDERLOIN’

Still, Western-style boxing has the lore, especially in the Tenderloin. When asked why Tenderloin Economic Development Project chose to back Baustia’s boxing gym, Davis talks about filling streetcorners with small businesses and Baustia’s track record of success, but then adds a nuance. It brings back some of the flavor of the old Tenderloin. There was a time back in the ‘20s when you had a lot of boxing clubs and the Tenderloin became famous for card rooms, boxing gyms and bars. It was the hip, happening place to be.

“50s. Newman’s Gym was fondly remembered as one of the places where Muhammad Ali (then known as Cassius Clay) worked out before he became the world champion. His former friend leader John Burton remembered it as the place where young men could meet single women, back then. While the gym was considered a haven for the pastime, when boxing was considered a harmless pastime. Then Mayor George Christopher rode into town on a wave of face-curtain Irish intolerance, vowing to root out the gambling dens and the gutter lie. The lastanything gambling establishments, a reputation which boxing clubs had earned as a result of a frivolous bet or two, and the sport and the gym was considered a slow death sentence.

Whether Baustia can succeed with an enterprise whose heyday is firmly planted in the past remains to be seen. Maria Wu, deputy director of the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, thinks he can. He department came up with $50,000 for the club. The money was earmarked particularly for juvenile violence prevention in the Tenderloin.

“We really do find this program breaks down the barriers between the Tenderloin and the broader community and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighborhood. Contact Jim Meko, 624-4339 or j.meko@comcast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th, Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday after the first Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Cooperative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Call 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses shares information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor’s Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, Room 401. Call 545-6708. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary’s Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings. 963 Mission Pedestrian Safety, 3rd Thursday, 10 a.m.; Senior Housing Action, 3rd Wednesday, 1:30; Information: 546-1333 and www.senioractionnetwork.org.

SUPERVISORS’ COMMITTEES

City Hall, Room 263 Budget and Finance Committee Daly, Duhy, Ammann, Makemson, Whitaker Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Land Use Committee Maxwell, Sandoval, McGoldrick, Monday, 1 p.m.

New boxing club to fight crime at the Tenderloin Police Station Community Room. Information: David Villa-Lobos, admin@communityLeadershipAlliance.net. Friends of Boeddeker Park. 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., 1254 Ellis. Contact for: Boeddeker Park events, activities and improvements. Contact: 552-4865.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m., 421-2926. Contact: 421-2926.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 1301 Eddy. Call 820-1412. Neighborhood planning.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Call Elaine Zamora for dates and times, 440-7570.

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