



SANTA BARBARA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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To Encourage the Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites in the County of Santa Barbara

NEWS RELEASE

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Photos available upon request

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THE SANTA BARBARA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICIALLY PURCHASES THE SITE OF “JIMMY’S ORIENTAL GARDENS” - Local favorite serves as a link to the diverse communities that lived within the Presidio neighborhood

(SANTA BARBARA, CA, MARCH 13, 2007) – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) is pleased to announce that it has purchased the property at 126 East Canon Perdido Street in downtown Santa Barbara, the site of “Jimmy’s Oriental Gardens” restaurant.

The SBTHP officially closed escrow on Friday, March 9, purchasing the historic location, which includes the restaurant and an attached studio apartment as well as a three bedroom house and second story two bedroom apartment at the rear of the property. Owned and operated by the Chung family at the East Canon Perdido site since 1947, Jimmy’s Oriental Gardens was a longtime favorite for locals and tourists alike before closing its doors in 2006 with the retirement of owner Tommy Chung.

Funding for the purchase was secured through a commercial loan from Montecito Bank and Trust and low-interest loans from local supporting foundations, including the Santa Barbara Foundation, Hutton Foundation, Outhwaite Charitable Trust and Wood-Claeyssens Foundation. With their support the SBTHP was able to purchase the historic site and ensure the buildings’ preservation for future generations.

Opened in 1947 by Tommy Chung’s father, Jimmy Yee Chung, the Chung family and Jimmy’s Oriental Gardens have been a part of the diverse communities of people who have lived and worked within the center of the original Presidio neighborhood over the past 225 years.

After recently leading a video-taped tour of Jimmy's in which he described the evolution of the restaurant and shared memories from his childhood with SBTHP staff members, **Tommy Chung** noted that the preservation work of the SBTHP was a factor in the sale, commenting, **“As the last remnant of Chinatown Jimmy's serves as a visible link to the present and the past. It's one piece of the puzzle that makes up the history of Santa Barbara and the evolution of the Presidio neighborhood.”**

The SBTHP will be working with the California State Parks Department to incorporate the property into the Presidio State Historic Park. In cooperation with State Parks and the local community, the SBTHP will begin an immediate planning process for the site to insure that this important link to Santa Barbara's Asian history is interpreted and preserved for future generations. At the same time the SBTHP will address the urgent challenge of funding the substantial costs required to carry the property until it is sold to the State of California.

ABOUT the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation – Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase and other concerned community leaders, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation works to protect, preserve, restore, reconstruct, and interpret historic sites within Santa Barbara County. The SBTHP operates El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park under a unique operating agreement with the California State Parks Department. Within the park, the SBTHP is currently reconstructing a section of the North West corner of the Presidio, and is renovating a building on the Old City College site to house its expanded Presidio Resource Center. The Center collection includes research materials for interpreting the history of the Presidio area from the Spanish period into the Twentieth Century. The SBTHP intends to make research on Asian-American history a high priority of the Center, which will be open in its new quarters this summer. **For more information visit www.sbthp.org**

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