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Downtown Residential Hotel Ordered to Vacate

City Attorney's Office helping residents find safe accommodations

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that a crumbling downtown single-room occupancy hotel is being vacated due to the existence of dangerous code violations, fire hazards, and deplorable living conditions. The City Attorney's Office, working with the San Diego Housing Commission, will ensure the remaining 69 occupants are relocated to habitable and affordable accommodations.

The original 72 occupants of the C Street Inn will also each receive a total of \$339,840 -- \$4,720 each -- in relocation costs. The property owner, Jack S. Rafiq, has appealed the City's order to pay for relocation, so the City is advancing the funds to the occupants, as allowed under the California Health & Safety Code. A hearing will be held at a later date to recover the funds from the property owner.

“Dozens of people were living in dangerous conditions in this squalid century-old building,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“All the occupants will be relocated to safe and clean housing, and we will ensure the property owner is held accountable.”**

The C Street Inn, located at 630-636 C St., is a six-story hotel with a basement, built in 1913.

The City's Code Enforcement Division conducted two inspections in March and April 2022 and documented numerous substandard building violations, including:

- Mold and rodent infestations.
- Lack of a fire alarm system, fire sprinklers, fire extinguishers, and smoke alarms.
- Hallways that were blocked by trash and rubbish.
- Numerous unpermitted plumbing modifications and electrical hazards, including an uncovered electrical junction box installed in a shower.
- Failure to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy which confirms the property complies with the City's safety requirements.

In addition to health and safety violations, inspectors determined the hotel constitutes a public nuisance. The San Diego Police Department has responded more than 190 times since May of 2019 to problems at

the hotel, spending more than 465 hours to address nuisance and criminal activity, including burglaries, public intoxication, exhibiting a deadly weapon, and disturbing the peace incidents.

In May 2022, Code Enforcement referred the case to the City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit. The unit issued a Notice and Order to Vacate and Repair Substandard Building and Abate Public Nuisance to Rafiq and his company, Jax Properties LLC, on May 25, 2022.

In addition to being ordered to pay for the residents' relocation benefits, Rafiq has been ordered to establish a round-the-clock fire watch until the building has been vacated and secured to ensure the safety of the occupants. Rafiq must also remedy the electrical hazards, treat the mold and pest infestation, obtain the required building permits, and repair the entire building.

The City Attorney's Office is continuing its investigation and reviewing the case for possible prosecution. This case is being handled by Deputy City Attorney David E. Miller of the Community Justice Division, under the supervision of Gabriela Brannan, Chief Deputy City Attorney in charge of the Nuisance Abatement Unit.

The City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit was established in 1984 to address nuisance properties and blight throughout San Diego. This unit works in partnership with the Code Enforcement Division of the City Development Services Department, the San Diego Police Department, the Fire-Rescue Department, other local agencies and the community to identify and aggressively address problem properties.

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