



# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: September 23, 2024

## RUSSIAN HILL DOG GROOMING

*Application No.:* LBR-2024-25-005  
*Business Name:* Russian Hill Dog Grooming  
*Business Address:* 2178 Bush St.  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Patricia Montgomery, Secretary  
*Nomination Date:* July 18, 2024  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Dean Preston  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Russian Hill Dog Grooming is a professional dog grooming business that provides state-of-the-art, safe, professional dog grooming for all breeds. The business believes that regular, thorough grooming is an essential element to every dog's health and well-being. Since 1994, Russian Hill Dog Grooming has kept generations of dogs in optimal hygiene and looking fabulous at the same time. The core philosophy of the business is to gently attend to any and all breeds of dogs and provide the utmost level of competent care.

Russian Hill Dog Grooming was founded by spouses Patricia and Leonard Montgomery in 1994 at 1929 Hyde Street in the Russian Hill neighborhood. Leonard Montgomery is a nationally certified dog groomer, the only person in the Bay Area with that distinction. In 2008, a second larger location opened in its current location at 2178 Bush Street. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first smaller location closed. The second location, 2178 Bush Street, remains open as the flagship store. The business receives customers from all over the Bay Area and western states. Local celebrities are also regulars at the business.

### CRITERION 1

**Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, Russian Hill Dog Grooming has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1929 Hyde St. from 1994 to 2020 (26 years)  
2178 Bush St. from 2008 to Present (16 years)

### CRITERION 2

**Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, Russian Hill Dog Grooming has contributed to the history and identity of the Russian Hill neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the craft of dog grooming.

**Legacy Business Program**  
Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
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- The property is associated with Japanese American history. The property was surveyed as part of the Planning Department's San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey) effort. It was found to be eligible for listing on the California Register for its association with Japanese American history in San Francisco. It is individually significant under Criterion 1/A (Events) as one of the Japanese and Japanese American community's first affordable housing developments as part of the Redevelopment era.
- The business has been referenced in the media by San Francisco Chronicle, The Nob Hill Gazette, KRON 4, SFist, Pooch & Harmony, Expertise.com, and various magazines and shows.
- With regard to racial and social equity, Russian Hill Dog Grooming is a minority-owned business. The business is a member of the Russian Hill Neighbors Association, Fillmore Merchants Association, and San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce. The business has provided grooming services for Muttville and Guide Dogs for the Blind. The business has also participated in charity and block party events hosted by multiple SPCAs. Local schools including Saint Peter and Paul School, Claire Lilienthal Elementary School, the Cathedral School For Boys, the Bay School of San Francisco, and San Francisco University High School have received donations.

### **CRITERION 3**

**Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, Russian Hill Dog Grooming is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Russian Hill Dog Grooming qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Retro neon sign.
- Hand painted logo.
- Crystal chandelier.
- Fillmore poster wall of dogs.
- Bright custom green Dutch door.
- Best dog grooming providing special attention to customer service, dog love, detail, and supervision.

### **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Dog grooming.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Russian Hill Dog Grooming currently located at 2178 Bush St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
Legacy Business Program

#### **Legacy Business Program**

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# Small Business Commission

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

September 23, 2024

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**Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Russian Hill Dog Grooming, currently located at 2178 Bush St.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 23, 2024, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Russian Hill Dog Grooming in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Russian Hill Dog Grooming.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Retro neon sign.
- Hand painted logo.
- Crystal chandelier.
- Fillmore poster wall of dogs.
- Bright custom green Dutch door.
- Best dog grooming providing special attention to customer service, dog love, detail, and supervision.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Russian Hill Dog Grooming on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Dog grooming.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 23, 2024.

---

Katy Tang  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes –  
Nays –  
Abstained –  
Absent –

**Legacy Business Program**

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# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2024-25-005  
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*Business Address:* 2178 Bush St.  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Patricia Montgomery, Secretary  
*Nomination Date:* July 18, 2024  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Dean Preston

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes  No

1929 Hyde St. from 1994 to 2020 (26 years)  
2178 Bush St. from 2008 to Present (16 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes  No

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** July 24, 2024

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
Legacy Business Program

## Legacy Business Program

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## DEAN PRESTON

July 18, 2024

Office of Small Business  
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application  
City Hall, Room 110  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: *Letter of Nomination for Russian Hill Dog Grooming to the Legacy Business Registry*

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing today to nominate Russian Hill Dog Grooming in District 5, known across the Bay Area for its dog grooming services, to the Legacy Business Registry.

Russian Hill Dog Grooming has played a vital role in the community, actively participating in the Russian Hill Neighbors Association and the Fillmore Merchants Association. The first shop was established in 1994 at 1929 Hyde Street in the Russian Hill neighborhood, by groomer Leoanard Montgomery and his wife Patricia Montogemery. They later opened their second—now only—location in District 5, at 2178 Bush Street, in Lower Pacific Heights. Russian Hill Dog Grooming has kept its original ownership for 30 years, continuing to provide generations of dogs with optimal hygiene and fabulous looks at the same time.

In 1995, just a year after it opened, Pat Steger of the San Francisco Chronicle described Russian Hill Dog Grooming as "a legacy in the making." The shop has catered to many notable San Francisco residents and dignitaries, including Charlotte and George Shultz, Senator Dianne Feinstein, author Danielle Steele, Vanessa Getty, conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, Jony Ive and Heather Pegg, the Dolbys, and the Trainas. Local celebrities such as Neil and Pegi Young, opera singer Susan Graham, actress Charlize Theron, and dog trainer Cesar Millan, have also had their pets groomed there.

When people visit Russian Hill Dog Grooming, they often mistake the shop for a human hairstyling salon. It features a retro neon sign, a hand-painted logo with the owner's beloved poodles, crystal chandeliers, fresh flowers, and creamy white wainscoting that complements the Victorian feel of the neighborhood. The interior displays local dog-themed art and photography, attracting visitors who come to view the art and the "Fillmore poster wall of dogs," an homage to the nearby Fillmore music venue. The building, once an art studio, retains an artistic touch. Its exterior is marked by a bright custom green Dutch door, which was especially beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic for easy outdoor access for drop-offs and pick-ups, allowing customers and neighbors to visit and hang out comfortably.

*Letter of Nomination for Russian Hill Dog Grooming to the Legacy Business Registry*

*July 18, 2024*

*Page 2*

Russian Hill Dog Grooming's emphasis on quality, creativity, and value of craft is a gleaming example of what a legacy business is. This shop brings joy to its customers and vibrancy to the neighborhood, helping capture the love a person has for their pet in artistic and creative ways.

It is my distinct honor to nominate Russian Hill Dog Grooming to the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean Preston", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dean Preston  
District 5 Supervisor



# Legacy Business Registry Application



## Business Information

**Business name:** Russian Hill Dog Grooming

**Business owner name(s):** Leonard and Patricia Montgomery

*Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business*

**Current business address:** 2178 Bush Street

**Telephone:** (415 ) 931 – 1108      **Email:** info@russianhilldoggrooming.com

**Mailing address (if different than above):**

**Website:** russianhilldoggrooming.com

**Facebook:**      **Twitter:**

**7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN):** 0 4 7 6 2 1 4

**Do any of these describe your business?** (select all that apply)

*Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant-Owned Business            | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by Person with a Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ+-Owned Business               | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned Business            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Business* | <input type="checkbox"/> Woman-Owned Business              |

*\*Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

## Contact Person Information

**Contact person name:** Patricia Montgomery

**Contact person title:** Secretary

**Contact telephone:** ( ) –      **Contact email:**



## Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

**Original San Francisco address:**  **Zip Code:**

**Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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**Other Address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location:** **From:**  **To:**

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## Applicant Disclosures

### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name: Patricia Montgomery

Signature: *Patricia Montgomery*

Date: 02/09/2024

# **RUSSIAN HILL DOG GROOMING**

## **Written Historical Narrative**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming provides state-of-the art, safe, professional dog grooming for all breeds. The business believes that regular, thorough grooming is an essential element to every dog's health and well-being. Since 1994, Russian Hill Dog Grooming has kept generations of dogs in optimal hygiene and looking fabulous at the same time. The core philosophy of the business is to gently attend to any and all breeds of dogs and provide the utmost level of competent care.

#### **b. Describe whom the business serves.**

Customers of Russian Hill Dog Grooming represent all of the Bay Area, including all zip codes and residents of San Francisco, the Peninsula, North Bay, and East Bay, as well as other Western states, such as Washington and Montana. The typical customer is a discerning one and quite often a long-term one, receiving their pet grooming needs spanning many generations. General demographics include all ages, all genders, and, as the pet clientele represents, all inclusive.

#### **c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.**

Precision pet styling.

### **CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years**

#### **a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming was founded in July 1994 at 1929 Hyde Street in the Russian Hill neighborhood. The founders of the business were spouses Patricia and Leonard Montgomery, who married in October 1993. The original location was a tree-lined, historic block on the cable car-lined Hyde Street near Union Street.

In June 2008, a second larger location opened at 2178 Bush Street near Fillmore Street in the Pacific Heights neighborhood.

Both locations operated consistently until the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 forced the closure of the original (much smaller) location. The Bush Street location was then completely renovated once the two locations merged.

Patricia and Leonard Montgomery are still the owners of the business. They also raised two boys in San Francisco, while tending the business.

**b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.**

1994 to Present: Patricia Montgomery; Leonard Montgomery

**c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.**

The business had two locations but consolidated in June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic closure and loss of business. Its flagship location moved from 1929 Hyde Street to 2178 Bush Street.

**CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community**

**a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming took an important role in membership and participation with The Russian Hill Neighbors Association and the Fillmore Merchants Association.

In 1994, the business was just the second grooming shop in all of Russian Hill, Cow Hollow, Nob Hill, Telegraph Hill, Pacific Heights, and the Marina. Its success was immediate, influencing many other grooming shops in those neighborhoods to open and grooming shops as far away as Germany and Japan to initiate consultations. Those business owners quite literally said they aspired to reach the success and professionalism and quality that Russian Hill Dog Grooming is known for. The business has an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

San Francisco Chronicle's Pat Steger once wrote "Russian Hill Dog Grooming is a legacy in the making." That was in 1995, one year after the business opened.

**b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?**

Significant San Francisco residents and dignitaries have been patrons, including Charlotte and George Shultz, Senator Dianne Feinstein, author Danielle Steele, Vanessa Getty, conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, Jony Ive and Heather Pegg, the Dolbys, and the Trainas. Local celebrity musicians Neil and Pegi Young, opera singer Susan Graham, actress Charlize Theron, and dog trainer Cesar Millan have had their pets groomed at Russian Hill Dog Grooming.

**c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming has provided grooming for Muttville, an elderly pet adoption agency, as well as Guide Dogs For the Blind. The business has participated in multiple SPCA charity events in addition to local block parties. There have been a number of local schools receiving donations, including Saints Peter and Paul School, Claire Lilienthal Elementary School, the Cathedral School For Boys, The Bay School of San Francisco, and San Francisco University High School. The business is also a participating member of the San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce.

**d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming has been referenced in the media numerous times over the years. Following are key media references.

- The business was featured in an expose in the San Francisco Chronicle titled “Tails Of the City,” May 17, 2002, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Tails-of-the-city-Russian-Hill-dog-groomers-2822085.php>.
- The business was given a lengthy expose, “Five Questions: It’s A Dog, Dog, Dog, Dog World” in The Nob Hill Gazette, February 3, 2022, [https://www.nobhillgazette.com/departments/five-questions-it-s-a-dog-dog-dog-dog-world/article\\_fd20d2cd-5461-56e8-bc4f-5bde11cbdd4e.html](https://www.nobhillgazette.com/departments/five-questions-it-s-a-dog-dog-dog-dog-world/article_fd20d2cd-5461-56e8-bc4f-5bde11cbdd4e.html).
- Business owner Leonard Montgomery was featured in a KRON Channel 4 News report on local businesses.
- Customers’ dogs have been featured in a variety of magazine photo shoots.
- Business owner Leonard Montgomery participated in a starring role in a Hollywood-produced pet makeover reality show pilot.

**e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?**

The business owner, Leonard Montgomery, has been awarded the National Dog Groomer Association title “Master Groomer” and is nationally certified – the only person in the Bay Area with that distinction. That Certificate of Excellence is stamped with the American Kennel Club approval.

Russian Hill Dog Grooming boasts a top (4.7) rating in Google Reviews. It is also listed as a top pet groomer in the following:

- SFist, “16 Best Dog Groomers & Pet Spas in SF,” <https://sfist.com/dog-groomers-san-francisco/>.
- Pooch & Harmony, “13 of the Best Dog Groomers in San Francisco,” <https://poochandharmony.com/best-dog-groomers-in-san-francisco/>.
- Expertise.com, “Best Dog Groomers in San Francisco,” <https://www.expertise.com/ca/san-francisco/dog-groomers>.

**f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

If the business were to close, the Pacific Heights neighborhood, which is heavily populated by boutique chain stores, would lose a touch of individuality and flair. There are many business owners in the neighborhood that regularly get their dogs groomed. Russian Hill Grooming's freshly groomed dogs walk the streets and the neighborhood all day, everyday, and often get stopped with the question, "Does Leonard groom your dog?" Most customers are able to walk to their grooming appointments, and because there is a loading zone for dog parking, there is plentiful time at drop-offs and pick-ups to love, pet, and cuddle. Often the entire family will pick up the dog, and it's always a wonderful occasion.

**CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business**

**a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming has a decor that quite literally is mistaken for an upscale human hairstyling salon. It is bedecked with a retro neon sign, a hand painted logo with the owners beloved poodles, crystal chandeliers, fresh flowers and flowerbed, and creamy white wainscoting that suits the Victorian vibe of the neighborhood. The interior showcases local dog artists and photographers. Folks stop by to view the art and the "Fillmore poster wall of dogs" that is an homage to the Fillmore music venue located just blocks away. Its art is intentional, as the location had once and previously been an art studio. The exterior features an iconic bright custom green Dutch door that allows for customers and neighbors to visit and hang out. It was a lifesaver during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow for easy outdoor access for drop-offs and pick-ups.

**b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.**

Russian Hill Dog Grooming is committed to quite simply being the best and taking the time required for special attention to customer service, dog love, detail, and supervision.

**c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?**

The plan for Russian Hill Dog Grooming is for it to be in business indefinitely. However that happens, it is the only option.

**d. What challenges is the business facing today?**

The biggest challenge is payroll costs. The starting salary at Russian Hill Dog Grooming has always been highly competitive for retention and due to the difficult nature of consistent training, certification, and the very specialized task of dog grooming. It represents half of the operating costs. Because housing is high in the Bay Area, the salaries need to be commensurate.

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**Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:**

**a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.**

Dog grooming.

**b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 2178-2182 Bush Street is "A - Historic Resource Present." The building appears to be eligible for the California Registry as an individual property through a survey evaluation in April 2024.

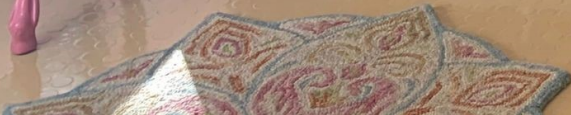




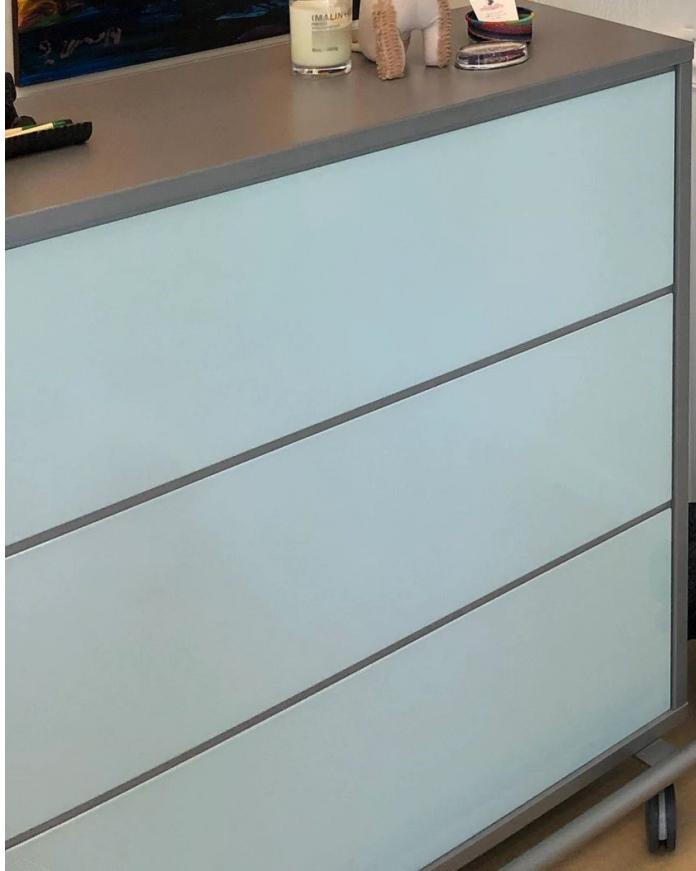




















# SFGATE

[NEWS](#) | [BAY AREA & STATE](#)

## Tails of the city / Russian Hill dog groomers attract high-end clientele

By Dave Ford, Chronicle Staff Writer

May 17, 2002



Chronicle/Julie Plasencia

Leonard Montgomery, master dog groomer and co-owner of Russian Hill Doggrooming, gives "pumpkin" his regular grooming and summer cut. (JULIE PLASENCIA/SFC)

With her blond streaks, fashionable sunglasses and stylish, cream-colored suit, [Lisa Kozel](#) is every inch the Russian Hill mom.

But her maternal urge doesn't just extend to her son, Paul, 6. When she sees Blizzard, her 1 1/2-year-old bichon frise, bounding toward her across the gray rubber-matted floor of the Russian Hill Dog Grooming salon, she utters the coos of a mom's melting heart.

"Oooh, here he is!" she cries, eyeing her fluffy, newly bathed pooch. "He's all spiffed up. Believe me, he did not look like this when I brought him in."



Seferino Romero carefully puts the finishing touches on the cut of this standard poodle at the Russian Hill Doggrooming Salon in San Francisco. (JULIE PLASENCIA/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE)

Kozel is just one of about 800 regular customers (of a total 3,000) whose dogs and cats receive top-notch treatment at the salon, opened in July 1994 by groomer [Leonard Montgomery](#) and his wife, Patricia.

It's where the creme de la creme of [San Francisco society](#) -- and such entertainers as [Neil Young](#) and [Don Johnson](#) -- bring their pets to be pampered. And the regulars rave.





Chronicle /Julie Plascencia

A satisfied customer struggles with her freshly groomed dogs leaving the Russian Hill Doggrooming Salon in San Francisco. (JULIE PLASENCIA/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE)

"I love it," Kozel says. "I think Leonard's an artist. He's just so good."

Leonard came to San Francisco from Colorado Springs, Colo., in 1988. He and Patricia, who moved here a year later, met in 1990, married in 1993 and live on Russian Hill with their sons Adam, who turns 3 this month, and Marc, 4 months.

But it was their standard poodles, Filbert, 10, and Josephine, 7, that spurred the couple's interest in dog grooming. They found the current location -- a former dry cleaner that had been vacant for seven years -- and set up shop. They advertised with neighborhood door hangings and sat back and waited.

A good three seconds later, they were in business, and word spread. Now they bathe and groom up to 40 dogs per day, operating on a kind of revolving-door policy to keep pets from languishing in one of the shop's 14 kennels any longer than necessary.

"We're always fighting the clock in here," says Patricia, who answers phones and acts as air traffic controller for the furry set.



In the early days, the couple included pet pickup and delivery in their services, but it didn't last long. "We'd go to pick up a cat, and it wouldn't be in its carrier," Leonard says. "It'd be under a bed."

"You'd have to lift a lot of beds," Patricia says with a laugh.

Leonard was in charge of deliveries and managing the shop. But one time, while attending a dog show, he realized something was amiss with the groomer they had hired to shape and fluff the salon's pooches.

"I thought, 'Gee, these dogs (at the show) look different from how our dogs look,'" Leonard says.

So he learned how to bathe, brush, clip and shave dogs, taking grooming lessons from [Ann Martin](#), a judge for dog grooming competitions. He also learned from [Nancy Kallenbach](#), another groomer.

After a battery of tests in the fall of 1995, he was recognized as a National Certified Master Groomer by the [National Dog Groomers Association of America](#) Inc. The organization, founded in 1969, has a mission that includes "promoting and encouraging professionalism and [education](#) in order to upgrade the image of the pet grooming profession," according to its Web site.



Groomers Helen Marchenko and Jorge Vazquez bathe clients in custom tubs as part of a full day spa treatment for the dogs. (JULIE PLASENCIA/SFC)



Chronicle / Julie Plascencia

One and half year old Charlie Margaux point to his favorite store front, Russian Hill Doggrooming Salon, on his regular walk with his nanny in San Francisco. (JULIE PLASENCIA/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE)

The Montgomerys' shop is a cozy affair, with two work stations in the front room -- a delight for passers-by, who ogle the clipping action through the open top of the salon's Dutch front door. In the back room, pets are bathed and then dried with one of six high-velocity dryers.

With their handheld rubber hoses, the dryers operate like reverse vacuum cleaners. The drying action separates the pet's hair, allowing groomers to see cuts, ticks or other problems that might escape a pet owner's notice. And they're a lot safer than the heat dryers of old, Leonard says, noting that tragedy could strike if a groomer got busy and forgot a pet was under the heat.

"You would have dogs who died," he says, scrunching his face.

The Montgomerys have a full-time staff of six, most of whom Leonard trained.

His attention to detail draws huzzahs from customers old and new.

"I'm so impressed," says [Leigh Stilwell](#), who moved with her husband, Jay, to Russian Hill from Washington, D.C., eight months ago. "The staff really seems to

care about the dogs. The culture of it is friendly. I'd think anyone who loves their dog would want that."

Leonard, who grooms eight of Danielle Steel's nine dogs -- though he's never met the San Francisco writer; the pooches are dropped off by her driver -- says catering to a clientele accustomed to VIP treatment has its stresses.

"A lot of customers want their dog right away," he says. "They used to have an in-home groomer, and they don't like their dogs being in the kennels. So you could have seven or eight 'right away' dogs, then a VIP customer will just drop in and want their dog done immediately."

Pet owners are a persnickety lot, and, in some quarters, grooming is frowned upon as frivolous or, worse, painful for animals. But the Montgomerys defend the practice as a path to positive pet health. And they hope the pooches they groom serve as four-legged ambassadors to the city's groomer-averse pet owners.

"Living in San Francisco, you go to coffee shops and you sit outside, and you want your dog to look good," Leonard says. "But it's a statement. Other people are seeing that grooming is good."

May 17, 2002  
Dave Ford



# LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: AUGUST 21, 2024**

*Filing Date:* July 24, 2024  
*Case No.:* 2024-006770LBR  
*Business Name:* Russian Hill Dog Grooming  
*Business Address:* 2178 Bush Street  
*Zoning:* NCD (UPPER FILLMORE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District  
 40-X Height and Bulk District  
*Cultural District:* Japantown Cultural District  
*Block/Lot:* 0660/017  
*Applicant:* Leonard and Patricia Montgomery  
 2178 Bush Street  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Dean Preston  
*Located In:* District 5  
*Staff Contact:* Maggie Dong - 628.652.7426  
 Maggie.Dong@sfgov.org

**Recommendation:** Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

## Business Description

Russian Hill Dog Grooming is a professional dog grooming business that provides state-of-the art, safe, professional dog grooming for all breeds. The business believes that regular, thorough grooming is an essential element to every dog’s health and well-being. Since 1994, Russian Hill Dog Grooming has kept generations of dogs in optimal hygiene and looking fabulous at the same time. The core philosophy of the business is to gently attend to any and all breeds of dogs and provide the utmost level of competent care.

Russian Hill Dog Grooming was founded by spouses Patricia and Leonard Montgomery in 1994 at 1929 Hyde Street in the Russian Hill neighborhood. Leonard Montgomery is a nationally certified dog groomer, the only person in the Bay Area with that distinction. In 2008, a second larger location opened in its current location at 2178 Bush Street. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first smaller location closed. The second location, 2178 Bush Street, remains open as the flagship store. The business receives customers from all over the Bay Area and western states. Local celebrities are also regulars at the business.

## Staff Analysis

### Review Criteria

**1. When was business founded?**

The business was founded in 1994.

**2. Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?**

Yes. Russian Hill Dog Grooming qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Russian Hill Dog Grooming has operated continuously in San Francisco for 30 years.
- b. Russian Hill Dog Grooming has contributed to the history and identity of the Russian Hill neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Russian Hill Dog Grooming is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

**3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?**

Yes. The business is associated with the craft of dog grooming.

**4. Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?**

Yes. The property is associated with Japanese American history as the community's first affordable housing developments as part of the Redevelopment era.

**5. Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?**

The property was surveyed as part of the Planning Department's San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey) effort. It was found to be eligible for listing on the California Register for its association with Japanese American history in San Francisco. It is individually significant under Criterion 1/A (Events) as one of the Japanese and Japanese American community's first affordable housing developments as part of the Redevelopment era.

**6. Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?**

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

**7. Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?**

Yes. The business has been referenced in the media by *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Nob Hill Gazette*, *KRON 4*, *SFist*, *Pooch & Harmony*, *Expertise.com*, and various magazines and shows.

## Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Russian Hill Dog Grooming is a minority-owned business. The business is a member of the Russian Hill Neighbors Association, Fillmore Merchants Association, and San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce. The business has provided grooming services for Muttville and Guide Dogs for the Blind. The business has also participated in charity and block party events hosted by multiple SPCAs. Local schools including Saint Peter and Paul School, Claire Lilienthal Elementary School, the Cathedral School For Boys, the Bay School of San Francisco, and San Francisco University High School have received donations.

## Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

### Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 2178 Bush Street (2008 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 1929 Hyde Street (1994 – 2020)

### Recommended by Applicant

- Retro neon sign
- Hand painted logo
- Crystal chandelier
- Fillmore poster wall of dogs
- Bright custom green Dutch door
- Best dog grooming providing special attention to customer service, dog love, detail, and supervision

### Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

## Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

### ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation





# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. ###

**HEARING DATE: AUGUST 21, 2024**

*Case No.:* 2024-006770LBR  
*Business Name:* Russian Hill Dog Grooming  
*Business Address:* 2178 Bush Street  
*Zoning:* NCD (UPPER FILLMORE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District  
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*Located In:* District 5  
*Staff Contact:* Maggie Dong - 628.652.7426  
[Maggie.Dong@sfgov.org](mailto:Maggie.Dong@sfgov.org)

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR RUSSIAN HILL DOG GROOMING CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2178 BUSH STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0660/017.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 21, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.



THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Russian Hill Dog Grooming qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Russian Hill Dog Grooming.

*Locations*

Current Locations:

- 2178 Bush Street (2008 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 1929 Hyde Street (1994 – 2020)

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

- Retro neon sign
- Hand painted logo
- Crystal chandelier
- Fillmore poster wall of dogs
- Bright custom green Dutch door
- Best dog grooming providing special attention to customer service, dog love, detail, and supervision

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business on August 21, 2024.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

Resolution No. ###  
August 21, 2024 Hearing

CASE NO. 2024-006770LBR  
Russian Hill Dog Grooming

ADOPTED: August 21, 2024