

San Francisco Chronicle

Zaentz Media Center building sold Famed recording artists used the Berkeley studio

Marni Leff Kottle, Chronicle Staff Writer

Thursday, February 8, 2007

The Saul Zaentz Media Center in West Berkeley, where artists including jazz great John Coltrane and rocker Neil Young recorded albums, was sold to a local developer for more than \$20 million.

Wareham Development purchased the 2.64-acre site, which takes up a block between 10th and Parker streets, from an affiliate of the Saul Zaentz Co. The property includes a two-story building with recording studios and a seven-story tower with theaters and a sound stage.

The complex is still used by musicians and moviemakers, including the Concord Music Group, which acquired the **Fantasy Records** label in 2004. Other tenants include Farallon Films and Firelight Media.

Over the years, Carlos Santana, Aerosmith and Green Day have also used the facility, according to **Wareham** partner **Chris Barlow**. **Wareham** was drawn to the property in part because of its history and will continue to call the complex the Saul Zaentz Media Center.

"Our absolute goal is to create a world-class media center and to develop it on a campuslike basis around there," **Barlow** said.

The Saul Zaentz Co., which will keep its space in the Berkeley building, grew out of **Fantasy Records** in the 1970s. Zaentz and his company worked on movies including "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Amadeus" and "The English Patient." **Wareham** plans to renovate the lobby and add an outdoor plaza to the media center.

Wareham owns 4 million square feet of commercial real estate in Berkeley, Emeryville and Point Richmond. More than a quarter of the company's portfolio is made up of biotechnology and related facilities.

With the Saul Zaentz Media Center in Berkeley and Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, the East Bay is becoming a significant center for digital media, **Barlow** said.

"As the technology has progressed from analog to digital in the sound industry and from celluloid to digital in the film industry, we've seen a convergence of technology," **Barlow** said. "We believe the Bay Area is a key place where that can happen."

Norheim & Yost, a commercial real estate firm with offices in Berkeley, represented both the buyer and the seller in the transaction.

E-mail Marni Leff Kottle at mkottle@sfchronicle.com.