



January 29, 2013

Mr. Mark MacDonald
DM Development
448 Linden Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: 400 Grove Street Project

Dear Mr. MacDonald,

On behalf of the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition (SFHAC), I am pleased to inform you of our enthusiastic endorsement of your 400 Grove Street project. Following review and discussion, our Endorsement Committee believes the project has many merits and will make a substantial contribution to SFHAC's mission of increasing the supply of well-designed, well-located housing in San Francisco. We believe that it embodies appropriate urban design principles and meets the needs of both present and future San Franciscans.

A copy of the endorsement guidelines we applied in reviewing your project is attached. The proposed project meets our guidelines in the following ways:

Project Description

Your project proposes a five-story mixed-use design with five levels of residential use (34 units) above a ground level retail space and a below-grade parking level.

Land Use:

This project is consistent with the objectives of the Market-Octavia Area Plan. It is clearly an appropriate use of the land, given the uses in the surrounding neighborhood. Its location is transit rich with multiple transit stops, including bicycle boulevards, Muni lines, BART and the future Van Ness Rapid Transit within easy walking distance. The project is close to Civic Center employment node and many emerging high-tech job centers.

Density:

Your project maximizes the density on the site. The proposed building will be an infill, transit-oriented development of appropriate urban density similar in scale to much of the surrounding neighborhood.

Affordability:

SFHAC commends the project sponsor for building five BMR units on-site to satisfy the Inclusionary Ordinance requirement. We also note that in addition, the project will contribute to the special Market-Octavia affordable housing fund.

Alternative Transportation and Parking:

Your proposed project meets the SFHAC guidelines with an overall parking ratio of 0.5 to 1 with 17 unbundled parking spaces. The SFHAC applauds your inclusion of at least 34 bicycle parking spaces and recommends providing as many additional bicycle parking spaces as is feasible.

Historic Preservation:

There are no designated historic buildings or structures of cultural merit on the site. The site is currently a surface parking lot created by the removal of the Central Freeway.

Urban Design:

The SFHAC believes your proposal promotes the principles of excellent urban design. Generally, the committee observed that the project will be compatible with the adjacent streetscape and features its own modern interpretation of the traditional “bay window” on both the Grove and Gough Street frontages. Various open spaces will be provided. The rooftop will provide residents with easy access to light and views, as well as a very useful central courtyard at the level roughly four feet above the public sidewalk.. We’re impressed with the imaginative building plan which acknowledges the existing geometry on the adjacent property to the north and flips the normally code-required rear yard, providing the on-site open space in the form of the central courtyard with a single loaded u-shaped building (double bar layout) around it. We recognize a variance is required for this and we support your efforts to this end.

Environmental Features:

Your project complies with the City’s Green Point standards. The SFHAC commends the creative ways it minimizes energy use by maximizing the use of natural light and ventilation. We urge you to also consider individual water metering and additional water conservation measures where feasible.

Community Input:

The SFHAC applauds your team for conducting numerous meetings with neighborhood members and representatives of the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association, which has endorsed the project. The SFHAC always encourages project sponsors to meet with as many surrounding neighbors and other community groups as possible and listen to their views as the project moves forward. We commend your outreach efforts.

Thank you for submitting this project to the SFHAC Endorsements Committee for our review. Please keep us abreast of any changes or updates with this project. We are pleased to support your excellent project as it moves forward. Let us know how we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Tim Colen, Executive Director

ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES

Adopted January 2010

The SFHAC will consider endorsing housing developments and mixed-use projects with a housing component. The following guidelines will be used to evaluate the project:

Land Use: Housing should be an appropriate use of the site given the context of the adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood and should enhance neighborhood livability.

Density: The project should take full advantage of the maximum unit density and/or building envelope, allowable under the zoning rules.

Affordability: The need for affordable housing, including middle income (120-150 of median) housing, is a critical problem and SFHAC gives special support to projects that propose creative ways to expand or improve unit affordability beyond the legally mandated requirements.

Parking and Alternative Transportation: SFHAC expects the projects it endorses to include creative strategies to reduce the need for parking, such as ample bicycle storage, provision of space for car-share vehicles on-site or nearby, un-bundling parking cost from residential unit cost, and measures to incentivize transit use. Proximity to transit should result in less need for parking.

In districts with an as-of-right maximum and discretionary approval up to an absolute maximum, SFHAC will support parking exceeding the as-of-right maximum only to the extent the Code criteria for doing so are clearly met. In districts where the minimum parking requirement is one parking space per residential unit (1:1), the SFHAC will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, support a project with parking in excess of that amount.

Preservation: If there are structures of significant historic or cultural merit on the site, their retention and/ or incorporation into the project is encouraged. If such structures are to be demolished, there should be compelling reasons for doing so.

Urban Design: The project should promote principles of good urban design: Where appropriate, contextual design that is compatible with the adjacent streetscape and existing neighborhood character while at the same time utilizing allowable unit density; pleasant and functional private and/or common open space; pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly site planning; and design treatments that protect and enhance the pedestrian realm, with curb cuts minimized and active ground floor uses provided

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Projects with a substantial number of multiple bedroom units should consider including features that will make the project friendly to families with children.

Environmental Features: SFHAC is particularly supportive of projects that employ substantial and/or innovative measures that will enhance their sustainability and reduce their carbon footprint.

Community Input: Projects for which the developer has made a good faith effort to communicate to the community and to address legitimate neighborhood concerns, without sacrificing SFHAC's objectives, will receive more SFHAC support.