



Mr. Joe Kirchofer
Development Director
Avalon Bay Communities
455 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

April 21, 2014

Ref: 800 Indiana Street – Mixed-use development

Dear Mr. Kirchofer,

Thank you for bringing your proposed mixed-use project at 800 Indiana Street to the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition's (SFHAC) Project Review Committee. Upon review, we believe your project has many merits and will contribute to SFHAC's mission of increasing the supply of well-designed, well-located housing in San Francisco. Please review this letter, which explains how your project meets our guidelines as well as areas in which improvements are suggested. We have attached a copy of our project review guidelines for your reference.

Project Description:

The proposed project will replace the existing SF Opera warehouse with 326 apartments, accompanied with several residential amenities.

Land Use:

The SFHAC believes this is an appropriate location for new housing. It makes effective use of a very large parcel of land in a rapidly evolving neighborhood where old industrial and commercial uses are being replaced.

Density:

The proposed project is of comparable density to the new developments being built in the neighborhood. It also provides a range of unit types that will serve a variety of tenants.

Affordability:

At the time of your presentation, it was not decided on whether you would provide the below-market-rate (BMR) units on site or pay the *in lieu* fee. The on-site option would equate to 47 BMR units. Payment of the *in lieu* fee equate to \$19.5 million paid to the Mayor's Office of Housing. All things being equal, the SFHAC's preference would be to provide BMR units on site.

Parking and Alternative Transportation:

The site is located near several transit stops, including the 22nd Street Caltrain Station, the 3rd Street Muni rail line and the 48 Muni bus. Your proposal has a target of 230 car parking spaces (an as-of-right parking-to-housing ratio of 0.7:1) and plans to provide four car share spaces. The SFHAC supports your intent to achieve a 1:1 bike-parking ratio.

Preservation:

The existing warehouse has been deemed to be potentially eligible for historic status for CEQA analysis purposes. However, after analysis, you determined repurposing the existing structure would result in a less effective use of this transit-rich location. The SFHAC supports this decision and encourages you to pursue your plans to build 326 new homes.

Urban Design:

The SFHAC commends you for the steps you have taken to ensure your proposed project reflects the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Your design successfully breaks up the floor plan and façade of the building so it's separated into three distinct masses. We support your plans to widen the sidewalks and create a pedestrian-friendly environment, calming the traffic along the building, particularly along Indiana Street. We are also supportive of your plans to incorporate open space throughout the site, including three public plazas, two rooftop decks and five landscaped courtyards. Finally, we applaud your efforts to build dog park on 20th Street.

With the site being at the edge of the neighborhood and bordering along the I-280 freeway, your architects have handled the treatment of the project's west wall very well, both in terms of protecting the living conditions within the building as well as creating an interesting, but not distracting, façade facing the adjacent freeway.

We encourage you to look into ways to get more exposure and lighting for the interior corner units, which will have very limited lighting as currently configured. Additionally, we suggest looking into ways to identify Buildings A, B and C and their lobby entrances more clearly for building residents and non-residents alike.

Environmental Features:

You have set a LEED Homes target of Mid-Rise Gold for the proposed project. The SFHAC supports the numerous environmental features you are proposing as well as the measures you are taking to address water conservation.

Community Input:

You have worked extensively with the surrounding community and have hosted neighborhood meetings with the Dogpatch Neighborhood Association, Potrero Boosters and other neighbors interested in the project. At your presentation to our Committee, you informed the group that the DNA has endorsed the proposed project as designed. While the community has been largely supportive of the proposed project, there have been concerns over the massing and height. The SFHAC applauds your response to those concerns by stepping down the heights along Buildings A and B.

The local neighborhood associations have also asked that Avalon Bay take a more global look at Indiana Street. In response, we understand that Build Inc. and Avalon Bay, both SFHAC members, are collaborating on a streetscape master plan that is currently undergoing environmental review. We enthusiastically support both the extensive street improvements it proposes as well as the exemplary response Avalon Bay has made to accommodate the community's desires.

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Thank you for bringing your project to SFHAC for review. Please keep us abreast of any changes. We are pleased to support your project as it moves forward. Let us know how we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Colen", is displayed on a light blue rectangular background.

Tim Colen, Executive Director

CC: Planning Commission

SFHAC Project Review Criteria

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 Area Median Income) 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 consistent with historic preservation standards 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.

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.

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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.