



March 30, 2016 (revised from February 4, 2015)

Will Mollard, Principal
Workshop1
1030 Grayson Street
Berkeley, CA 94710

Ref: 1301-16th Street – Mixed-Use Development

Dear Mr. Mollard,

Thank you for bringing the proposal for 1301-16th Street to the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition's (SFHAC's) Project Review Committee on March 26, 2014 and January 14, 2015. After reviewing the project twice, we are pleased to endorse it and conclude that 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. Kindly review this letter, which explains how your project meets our guidelines as well as areas in which improvements are suggested. Also review our report card, which grades the proposed project according to each guideline. We have attached our guidelines for your reference.

Project Description

The project proposes the demolition of a one-story industrial building and replacing it with a seven-story building, 176 new homes with ground floor flexible occupancy, almost 7,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 111 car parking spaces at grade.

Land Use

The site is currently occupied by an under-utilized, one-story industrial building. The SFHAC believes housing is a much better use. The site is located along the evolving 16th Street transit corridor, a major connector between the Third Street corridor and the Mission District. The proposed development will also bring new residents into proximity of the City's jobs and the rapidly evolving Mission Bay and UCSF campus.

Density

We originally endorsed the version of your project that was planned to have 234 units. While we understand these changes were the result of substantial outreach and collaboration with Potrero Hill neighbors, we're disappointed it resulted in the loss of 58 homes. We feel the greater density is appropriate, especially since 16th Street is planned to be a major transit corridor.

Affordability

The SFHAC supports the decision to provide the below-market-rate units on site. The Urban Mixed-Use (UMU Tier B) zoning rate - 16 percent – applies, equating to 27 below-market-rate (BMR) homes. It is noteworthy how the project's unit mix emphasizes small, affordable-by-design housing, which has potential for student housing. This might become an attractive option for the colleges and universities in the area.

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We'd like to note that the reduced unit count also results in the loss of 12 BMRs, an unfortunate result.

Parking and Alternative Transportation

The SFHAC supports your design for robust amounts of bicycle parking spaces. You propose 260 spaces, which exceeds the ratio of one bicycle space per residential unit. We applaud this and encourage you to explore ways to further increase the number of bike spaces, something we are seeing in most of the projects we review.

The project proposes 111 car parking spaces with stackers and 2 car share spaces. We encourage you to consider reducing the number of car parking spaces, since 16th Street will be getting a large investment in new transit and bicycle infrastructure. We urge your team to resist some of your neighbor's insistence on increasing parking. This does not align with the City's transit-first policies and ignores the realities of increasing traffic congestion in the area.

We'd like to note that although you have not increased your car parking count, your lower unit count does result in a higher parking space to unit ratio.

Finally, we commend you for pursuing the installation of a bike-share pod outside the building. The SFHAC supports creative efforts that reduce the need for private automobiles.

Preservation

There are no structures of significant cultural or historic merit on or near the site that would be affected by your project.

Urban Design

The overall design and massing of the project has improved significantly since it was presented to us in its early stages almost a year ago. One of the notable changes includes a 20-foot break in the building along 16th Street. The landscaping, which includes widening the sidewalks and new street trees, will significantly improve the pedestrian experience.

Open space will be provided in the form of a programmed, 60-foot wide courtyard on the second floor and a roof deck. Other features include double-height commercial spaces with glass storefronts and townhouse style flexible occupancy units along Wisconsin and Caroline Streets, both of which will activate the street level.

Our members were largely in agreement that they would prefer having the flex units at grade, as opposed to on a stoop.

Environmental Features

We are very aware that San Francisco has some of the highest environmental standards of any city in the country. Nevertheless, our members urge you to consider more options to improve the building's efficiency. Your presentation to us did not include specific features you plan to incorporate in the project. Our members believe that the rooftop offers excellent potential for such programming. In addition, we urge to analyze installation of individual water sub-metering since we understand there will be state or local laws mandating this in 2015.

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Community Input

The SFHAC commends you for being thorough in your community outreach. In addition to presenting to our Project Review Committee twice, you have met several times with both the Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association and the Dogpatch Neighborhood Association. Their feedback is reflected in the project's improved design. Unfortunately, it has also resulted in 58 less homes.

Thank you for bringing your project to the SFHAC for review. We are pleased to endorse this project. Please keep us abreast of any changes and let us know how we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Colen", is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tim Colen, Executive Director

SFHAC Project Review Guidelines

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.

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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.

