



Mr. Sean Sullivan
JS Sullivan Partners
2044 Fillmore Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94115

January 16, 2015

Ref: 1198 Valencia Street – Mixed-Use Project

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

Thank you for bringing your proposal for 1198 Valencia Street to the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition's (SFHAC) Project Review Committee on December 3rd, 2014. Upon review, we believe your project has many merits and will contribute to SFHAC's mission to increase the supply of well-designed, well-located housing in San Francisco. We are pleased to endorse this project with the reservations noted below. Kindly review this letter, which explains how your project meets our guidelines as well as suggested improvements. Also, our attached report card grades the proposed project according to each guideline. We have attached a copy of our project review guidelines for your reference.

Project Description: The project proposes a five-story, 55-foot-tall building with 52 for-sale homes above 4,900 square feet of ground-floor retail and one level of subterranean parking.

Land Use: The site is currently inactive but was formerly occupied by a gas station. This is an excellent site for new housing, as it is located along a vibrant commercial corridor, one of the City's best transit corridors and near the City's job centers.

Density: The project includes 30 one-bedroom and 22 two-bedroom units, totaling 52 new homes. There is no density limit on site. The SFHAC supports the proposed density for the project and believes it takes advantage of the building envelope.

Affordability: The SFHAC applauds your decision to provide six inclusionary units on-site (12 percent). In addition, the homes are relatively small, which improves their natural affordability, bringing them within financial reach of more residents.

Parking and Alternative Transportation: This project is located three blocks from the 24th Street BART Station, numerous Muni lines and on the Valencia Street bicycle corridor, one of the best in the City. In light of this and the existing congestion, the SFHAC cannot support a conditional use permit to increase the parking ratio to 0.75 spaces per residential unit. This amount of parking appears excessive and does not align with San Francisco's transit-first policies. Our members urge you to increase bike parking and car share spaces, which would 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 this project.

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Urban Design: Your team has successfully taken inspiration from design elements of the surrounding neighborhood and incorporated them into your project. The most notable example is the “Papel Picado” scheme, which evokes the neighborhood’s Latin American heritage. The plans for the ground floor will improve the pedestrian experience, with the addition of eight street trees and new retail. Open space is provided on the podium and a 5,000 square foot rooftop space.

One of our members noted that the building would benefit from having a more prominent lobby entrance. Changing the paving materials on the sidewalk or incorporating the “Papel Picado” scheme could achieve this. Other members would prefer to see the texture along San Jose Street broken up to create a stronger rhythm along that side of the building. Finally, some suggested that the bike parking be provided in a more suitable location.

Environmental Features: The project will meet the City’s Green Building Ordinance and incorporate several features, though these were not fully addressed during your presentation.

The SFHAC encourages you to consider implementing water sub-metering into the project. It is likely there will soon be either a local or statewide initiative that mandates new units incorporate this feature.

Community Input: It appears you are still early on in your community outreach process, as you had only had one neighborhood meeting at the time of your presentation. The SFHAC encourages you to continue reaching out to the community and address any legitimate concerns that can be readily accommodated.

Thank you for presenting your proposal for 1198 Valencia Street to our Project Review Committee. Except for the excessive car parking levels, we are pleased to endorse it. We encourage you to bring the project back to us for another presentation when the design and plans are more finalized. Please keep us abreast of any changes and let us know how we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Tim Colen, Executive Director

CC: Planning Commission

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.

