

## **SFHAC ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION**

**Project Sponsor:** 1645 Pacific Avenue LLC, an affiliate of Nick Podell Company

**Location of Project:** 1645 Pacific Avenue

**Brief Project Description: (uses, height, unit mix, etc)**

The proposed project is a 6 story 48-unit residential condominium with 3,625 square feet of ground floor retail on Pacific. The proposed building is 65 feet in height. The unit mix is currently 26 studio's, 5 one-bedroom units, 13 two-bedroom units and 3 three-bedroom units.

**Project Architect:** BDE Architects, Jon Ennis (415) 394-6978

**Existing Zoning: (height and use):**

The project is in the Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District. It is in the 65-A height and bulk district.

The existing project site has a 2 story concrete commercial structure with automotive use at 1645 Pacific and a 1-story wood frame structure with an automotive use at 1661 Pacific. The site is one lot, Lot 13 of Block 0595. The San Francisco Planning Department has identified 1661 Pacific as a contributing ancillary structure to the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District. The proposed project is not subject to review by the new Historic Preservation Commission.

**Exceptions, Variances, Conditional Use Approvals and Code Changes Requested:**

The underlying zoning allows up to 79 units as-of-right and buildings up to 65 feet in height. The lot is 15,775 square feet. The Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District requires Conditional Use approval for all projects on lots over 10,000 square feet. We are requesting an exception to the Bulk guidelines above 40' for superior design as discussed below. No other exceptions are sought.

**Approval Schedule:** DEIR is to be published 10/21/09 or 10/28/09; conditional use hearing in Spring 2010.

**Project Planner Assigned:** Kevin Guy 558-6163

Environmental Review Planner: Brett Bollinger 575-9024

**The following guidelines will be used to evaluate the project. Under each guideline, please indicate briefly whether and how the project meets the guideline:**

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

To the east of the site along Pacific are two 5 story, 50' high multifamily housing buildings. The building immediately to the east does not have retail on the ground floor. To the South of the project site is 1650 Jackson, a 9 story multifamily housing building. Our project will impact the private views from 1650 Jackson. To the west of the site are 1 and 2 story commercial buildings in the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District. The height and bulk district immediately to the west of the site is 80-D.

The project site is a half level block off the Polk Street corridor. It is within 3 blocks of Real Foods & Big Apple grocers, Walgreens, Brownies and Cole Hardware stores, and dozens of café's, restaurants and shops. Per the San Francisco Bike Coalition's Bike Map and Walking Guide, the project site has a unique topographic location that makes it an easy grade to walk/bike to Cow Hollow, the Marina, and the Presidio.

The surrounding neighborhood is predominately residential, mixed use and some commercial. The additional housing will contribute to the vitality of the Polk Street commercial district by constructing multi-family residential units above ground floor retail. Hopefully, the additional retail will expand the neighborhood commercial opportunities.

**Density: The project should have the maximum housing unit density allowable under current zoning for the project site. Extra support may be given to projects that further propose increased density above the base zoning, particularly in areas that are transit accessible.**

The Polk Street NCD allows 1 unit per 400 square feet of lot size. This would allow 39 units on the site. Because we are immediately adjacent to RC-4 zoning to the west, the code allows RC-4 density of 200 square feet of lot size. The proposed project is 48 units. Given the height limit and size of the lot, and limited ability to provide bedroom windows based on the site's mid-block location, we have fit as many units as is feasible into the allowed building envelope.

**Affordability: The SFHAC recognizes that the need for affordable housing in San Francisco is a critical problem and gives preference to projects that propose creative ways to improve unit affordability. Projects that include below market rate units above the legally mandated minimums will receive special support.**

We will pay the affordable housing in lieu fee for the project. However, projected proforma sales prices of the 26 studio apartments range from \$526,000 to \$586,000 providing a relatively affordable price point for housing in the neighborhood.

They are affordable by design.

**Transit Orientation and Parking: In districts where the minimum parking requirement is one parking space per residential unit (1:1) or more, the SFHAC will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, support a project with parking in excess of 1:1. In districts where the minimum parking requirement is less than 1:1, SFHAC will only support additional parking up to 1:1 if the need for additional is clearly established. The SFHAC prefers creative strategies to reduce the need for parking, such as transit linkages, bicycle storage, provision of space for car-share vehicles on-site or nearby, and un-bundling parking cost from residential unit cost.**

The project has 1:1 parking spaces per unit, all in “Klaus” stackers. The parking spaces will be un-bundled from the unit sales. The project has space for 24 bikes in the secure underground garage. In addition, there is 1 car-share parking space for exclusive use of the project residents, inside the projects garage.

The Project is ½ block off the proposed Van Ness BRT line and the existing Van Ness transportation system. The 12 Folsom stops ½ a block away on the corner of Pacific & Van Ness. The 19 Polk stops ½ a block away on Polk at Pacific.

City Car Share has 6 vehicles ½ block a way form the site and Zip Car has 9 vehicles ½ a block to 1 block away.

**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.**

Our original plan called for the demolition of the structure at 1661 Pacific. Prior to acquisition of the development site, we had a historic resource report done by Patrick McGrew. Mr. McGrew found that neither building on the site qualified as an historic resource pursuant to CEQA. Planning Staff disagreed and identified 1661 Pacific as a contributing ancillary structure to the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District. We entirely redesigned the project to incorporate the façade and first 15 feet of depth of 1661 Pacific. Planning staff has reviewed our present design and issued HRER 2007.0519E, concurring that “the project at 1645 Pacific Avenue is compatible with the district in terms of its height, scale, massing, fenestration pattern, and other features. Its design reflects the varied architectural styles of the district and shall not have a significant adverse impact upon the Van Ness Auto Row District”.

**Design: The project should promote principles of good urban design: pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly site planning; contextual design such as compatibility of style, scale and facades with existing neighborhood character where appropriate; increased density while maintaining compatibility with streetscape and neighborhood scale. We expect design treatments to protect the pedestrian realm, with curb cuts minimized and active ground floor uses provided.**

The project has a highly articulated bulk massing. By preserving the relevant portions of 1661 Pacific, we’ve created in effect, 2 masses. 1645 Pacific will be replaced with a

traditional 6 story residential structure with overtly ornamental storefront treatment, carrying up into the design motif of the building. 1661 Pacific will be the project garage entry. Rising behind the preserved façade 15' back will be a brick clad industrial warehouse design echoing similar buildings and materials used in the historic district.

Due to the addition of the Pacific Avenue retail & the preservation of the 1661 Pacific façade we lost 4 residential units with the new plan. However, we feel that the new plan is superior to the original bulk conforming plan, by creating a more animated pedestrian experience and breaking up the mass of the bulk as seen from the street.

**Greening and Energy Efficiency: Extra consideration will be given to projects that incorporate energy efficient materials and green building principles.**

We are planning on a LEED Gold building. The project has been accepted into the City's LEED Gold expedited permitting process.

**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.**

We have met with the Mid Polk Neighborhood Association prior to each submission to the Planning Department. We have given them our submission material prior to giving it to Planning Staff. At each meeting, we've told the neighborhood that we are open to all of their ideas and concerns, however, we intend on submitting a 65' building at the highest density we can effectively fit on the site.

We have made the following changes to the project after neighborhood input:

Revisions made to project in response to community concerns  
October 2009

Concern: No retail facing Pacific Avenue

Response: Four retail storefronts have been added to the Pacific Avenue frontage

Concern: Above-ground parking

Response: All parking has been moved to a below-grade garage, with 1 parking space per unit, 1 car share space and plentiful bicycle parking.

This change in combination with the addition of retail resulted in 5-1/2 stories of housing rather than 6 and the loss of approximately 3,500 sq. ft. of residential space.

Concern: Consider preserving façade of 1661 Pacific building

Response: Façade and first 15 feet of 1661 Pacific building will be preserved and integrated into the new structure, with a distinctive "industrial" design above the preserved façade.

We broke up the mass of the building into two wings: the residential wing and the industrial garage wing. The residential wing skin will be cement plaster with formed stone detailing. The industrial wing skin will be brick.

Concern: Design was not appropriate

Response: The building was redesigned in consultation with Page & Turnbull, Preservation Architects. The architecture now features a highly articulated façade, high quality materials, and multiple setbacks. A full 32-foot rear yard has been proposed (25% of the lot depth).

Concern: Building is too dense

Response: Existing zoning allows up to 79 units as-of-right. We propose only 48 units. Conditional use approval is required only because the lot is over 10,000 square feet and to modify the bulk of the top three floors to produce a better design.

Concern: Building is too tall

Response: Existing height limit is 65 feet, with which the building complies. That height is the minimum necessary to build a 6-story structure with ground-floor retail. The elevator penthouse is as short and compact as code permits while still providing ADA access to the roof deck, which provides required open space for residents. The building is 2 stories lower than 1650 Jackson.

Concern: Comments on the scope of the EIR focused on density, scale, height and bulk, zoning compliance, neighborhood character, visual impacts, views, historic resources, traffic and transportation, noise, air quality, wind, shadows, and hazardous materials.

Response: The Draft EIR is scheduled to be published on October 21 or 28, 2009. It will analyze each of these topics, determine whether any impacts are significant, and propose mitigation measures to reduce any significant impacts disclosed.