

SFHAC Endorsement Application

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Project Sponsor:

Archstone Smith Operating Trust and Presidio Development Partners, LLC

Location of Project:

1390 Market Street, corner Market and Hayes

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

250 Units; 120 foot building; ground floor retail; no new parking

Project Architect:

Heller Manus

Existing Zoning(height and use):

120-x; 200-S; C-3-G

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

309 approval; request for exceptions for wind exceedences and freight loading

Approval Schedule:

May 28 Planning Commission hearing; project approval and CEQA appeal

Project Planner Assigned:

Rick Cooper; Don Lewis (CEQA)

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.

When the City adopted the Market-Octavia Plan, it also put into place the Van Ness/Market Residential Special Use District. The specific purpose behind that SUD was to incentivize and encourage the creation of a high density mixed-use residential/commercial district in the immediate vicinity of the Market/Van Ness intersection. High density residential developments

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within the SUD area, including Fox Plaza, will by definition be ideal transit-oriented development. This stretch of Market Street between Civic Center and Van Ness has multiple above-ground Muni bus lines running down it, as well as two BART stations (providing regional transit opportunities) and two below-grade Muni-Metro stops. This stretch of Market Street is probably the most transit-oriented and transit-intensive several blocks in the entire City. The project will put 250 residential units directly in this corridor.

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.

There is no density limit in this SUD; the project represents the maximum density that will work for this site given the height limit and various planning code restrictions. The project, adding 250 units to this block that already has 446 rental apartment units will make this the most densely developed residential site in this area.

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.

The Planning Code requires that half the inclusionary requirement be on-site units. 19 BMR units will be on site.

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 will not add any new parking; the project will add 8 new car share spaces, and 76 new bike spaces in the existing below grade garage.

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.

There are no historic structures on the site.

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

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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 Fox Plaza Complex as it exists today was constructed in the late 1960s and consists of a 29-story, 354-foot tall tower that includes a combination of residential rental apartments, office space, and a small amount of commercial uses. The Fox Plaza site also includes a two-story commercial structure fronting on both Market and Hayes Streets that would be demolished to make way for the proposed project. Now more than 40 years old, the Fox Plaza architectural and urban form model no longer represents current thinking about modern design and urban planning.

The existing low-rise commercial portion of Fox Plaza is particularly unappealing and creates an ineffective and unpleasant pedestrian environment and street wall. Its “zig-zaggy” frontage along Market Street, intended possibly to create areas of pedestrian interest, have instead created pedestrian dead zones along this significant length of Market Street. Pedestrians are confronted with storefronts set well back from the property line and street, and a series of blank granite walls that present virtually no pedestrian experience at all. The “prow” of this typical triangular block fronting on Market Street is capped with a flat frontage facing the corner that does not in any way speak to the urban street grid or urban form that these corners present. 40 years ago, this portion of Market Street was certainly not the center of commercial and residential activity that it is today. This may explain some of the lack of effort in the original design. However, a new pedestrian-oriented building that acknowledges the street grid and creates a new street wall will significantly improve this important block of Market Street.

The new Heller Manus design is a modern interpretation of the original flat iron building. The San Francisco street grid, not being rectilinear along Market Street, creates regular triangular blocks that are ideal for interesting architecture. In this case, three major arterial streets (Market Street, 9th Street and Hayes Street) all converge on this property and present a unique opportunity to design a prominent building worthy of the site. The glass, stone, and metal proposed project, coming out to the property line and creating a new street wall environment, will be a significant improvement for the site. At 120 feet in height, the new building will create sufficient mass to anchor this corner while at the same time not being high enough to become a significant focal point on the City skyline.

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

The project sponsor intends to achieve a LEED Gold rating for the project.

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.

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The project was presented to the Alliance for a Better District 6 on April 14, 2009.