

Staff Report

Meeting Date: December 11, 2017

To: **Waterfront Design Advisory Committee:**
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Kathrin Moore David Winslow

From: Ricky Tijani, Development Project Manager
Dan Hodapp, Urban Design Planner

Re: **Proposed Design for a mixed use residential and commercial development on Seawall Lot 322-1, located on the east side of Front Street between Broadway and Vallejo Streets.**

Summary

The proposed project – 88 Broadway Street and 375 Davis Street – (Project) includes two separate land parcels (the Sites”) providing approximately 48,620 square feet in total site area. The Project is located within the city block bound by Vallejo Street to the north, Davis Street to the east, Broadway Street to the south, and Front Street to the west in San Francisco’s northeastern waterfront neighborhood. The two parcels form a T-shaped land parcel and currently, each parcel is being used for surface parking operation providing approximately 180 public parking spaces. The Project is located within the Northeast Waterfront Landmark District, the C-2 (Community Business) Zoning District, and the 65-X Height and Bulk District. This proposal occupies a majority of one city block, within an historic district consisting of roughly nine city blocks and three partial city blocks.

The Project sponsor, BRIDGE Housing and the John Stewart Company, propose to construct two new six-story buildings, approximately 65 feet tall (with an additional 10 feet for the elevator penthouse), and decreasing in height towards the waterfront. Combined, the 88 Broadway and 735 Davis Street projects would contain approximately 178 affordable family and senior housing units and approximately 6,500 square feet of commercial space, resulting in an approximately 191,300-square-foot development.

This is the first review of the proposed design by the Waterfront Design Advisory Committee (WDAC). Of the two proposed buildings, only the 88 Broadway building is on Port property and is subject to review by the WDAC per Section 240 of the San Francisco Planning Code. The 735 Davis Street building is on a parcel owned by the City and is not in the purview of the WDAC.

Background

From mid-2015 through July 2016, the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) and the Port worked with community groups, local stakeholders, and neighbors to develop priorities and parameters for the development of the 88 Broadway and 375 Davis sites through a series of design charrettes. The City hired the joint venture design team of Mark Cavagnero Associates and Cary Bernstein Architect to develop design parameters and massing studies for a mixed-use development on the Sites (attached). Following the design charrettes, a ten-member community Working Group convened multiple times to shape the development plan, articulating priority uses, housing types, massing, and street presence.

88 Broadway

December 11, 2017

In February 2016, MOHCD released an RFP for development of the Sites. In keeping with direction from the Working Group, the RFP requested that submissions include affordable housing for both families and seniors, a mixed-used component with ground level commercial space, and the potential for community-serving social service space along the street frontages.

Project Description

The projects involve demolition of surface parking lots and construction of two new buildings (Family Housing with 130 dwelling units and Senior Housing with 54 dwelling units), with commercial and childcare uses, open space, some ground-floor residential units, and residential uses on floors 2-6. Each building reaches a maximum height of 65 feet, however variations in height between four and six stories at the streetwall are introduced to break up the massing on Front Street and to introduce a stepping down as the Projects get closer to the Embarcadero. The first floor level would provide ground floor units, commercial space (retail space and a childcare facility), bike parking and common space and social services for residential use, as well as property management space. Floors two through six would consist primarily of residential dwelling units, shared laundry rooms, mechanical spaces, and common spaces for residential use. A variety of open spaces are proposed throughout at the roof and terrace levels. There are two mid-block passage ways proposed for the Project, and an approximately 4,300-square-foot childcare facility with outdoor space at ground level. Pedestrian bulb-outs are proposed on Front Street and Broadway. No off-street parking is proposed. Approximately 120 class 1 bicycle parking spaces and 20 class 2 bicycle parking spaces are proposed. Additionally, the Project would include an emergency backup diesel generator and HVAC equipment at both buildings.

The Front Street elevation of the 88 Broadway building is articulated as five buildings, identified with a combination of two building types and organized by varying the roof heights, materiality and ground floor functions/design. The brick-like building exteriors are proposed as a four and a five-story façade at the street, with a red-color Cembrit cement panel organization, distinct fenestration pattern, and composition of the ground floor. In contrast, the frame-and-infill building exteriors are six-stories with parapet, Cembrit and Minaret cement panel organization, fenestration pattern, and ground floor organization.

The mass of the buildings generally extends to the property line. Setbacks away from the streetwall exist at the upper levels at the brick-like buildings. Along Front Street, a substantial setback of the upper level(s) is approximately 30 feet making the upper floors minimally perceptible from the pedestrian's perspective.

Other Actions Required

The proposed Project was brought before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the City's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on March 15, 2017 and is planned to be brought before the HPC for review for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction within the NE Waterfront Landmark District, pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. The District requires conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (Secretary Standards).

At the March 15 ARC meeting, the (City) Planning Department requested review and comment regarding conformance of proposed design with Appendix D of Article 10 and with the *Secretary Standards*, specifically on five recommendations included in (City Planning) Staff's Memo to ARC dated March 15, 2017. The following is a Planning Department Preservation Staff summary of the ARC comments from that meeting.

The ARC members were overall supportive of the Project, of the enhanced pedestrian experience, and of the overall lightness of the design. Two Commissioners felt the Front Street elevation was incredibly successful. One Commissioner felt success of the Davis Street "brick" building stemmed from the visual structural columns that come to the ground rather than the "floating" facade on the Front Street elevation. One Commissioner noted a concern about maintenance of the ground floor active uses through smaller commercial retail spaces or alternative uses, if the commercial retail at Broadway and Front is not leased as one large space.

Recommendation 1: In collaboration with the project team and community input, explore the option of the frame and infill building without the notch at the sixth floor of the Vallejo and 2 Broadway Street elevations, as shown on Sheets A.13, or explore some variation to achieve conformance with the character of the District.

In general, the ARC felt that the existing notch, setback from the midblock crossing at Broadway and Vallejo Streets, was not as successful in breaking down the massing as other moves. The ARC recommended studying two modifications at the frame and infill buildings. One Commissioner recommended a setback of five feet at the entire top floor from Broadway (and presumably Vallejo) Street. Two Commissioners recommended re-orienting the notch to the Broadway and Vallejo Street elevations instead of at the mid-block crossing.

Recommendation 2: Study a modified fenestration pattern for the frame and infill building elevations on Front, Broadway and Vallejo Streets. At minimum, (City Planning) Staff recommends two approaches for ARC direction to sponsor for study and possible incorporation into the frame and infill fenestration pattern, within technical confines for building performance. One option is to shift the orientation to horizontal and increase consistency of glazing. Another option is to maintain the existing orientation while increasing the glazing from one panel to two, within the three panel system created for the project.

The ARC discussed that the fenestration pattern at the frame and infill buildings should incorporate more regularity. One Commissioner felt this regularity could be achieved within the 35% threshold for Title 24 purposes. One Commissioner felt there was too much verticality as the window system spanned a two-floor unit, and recommended more horizontal design definition. The ARC did not recommend additional glazing.

Recommendation 3: To ensure the long-term integrity of the District, (City Planning) Department staff recommends selecting another contemporary masonry material or selecting several brick tone colors that can be varied randomly for the brick building Cembrit panel rain-screens. Alternately, ensuring that the manufacturer provides a lifetime guarantee against fading, and replacement, would assist in ensuring that the single-color materials selection would assist in maintaining the long-term integrity of the District.

Two Commissioners noted a concern about the monolithic and monochromatic appearance of the single-color panel. One Commissioner noted an additional concern of longevity and UV discoloration with use of dark-colored cement panel boards. One Commissioner suggested reviewing the coursing pattern of the panels. The ARC directed Staff to review additional information on guarantees against fading and to review images of projects of like materials and color with long lifespan.

Recommendation 4: Explore an alternative design to the projecting bay window-like architectural feature and incorporate this into the frame and infill building, with the goal of

maintaining the integrity of the District. The alternative design should strengthen the definition of the floors and piers, taking note of horizontal and vertical planes (pilasters, beltcourses, sills, etc) characteristic of the District's "newer buildings" pursuant to Section 7 of Appendix D, Article 10, those elements relationship to one another, and to the expression of the construction method. There are numerous examples provided by Sponsor in the submittal, as well as (by City Planning) Staff titled "Representative examples of contributors to the NE Waterfront Landmark District".

The ARC felt that the random placement of the projecting bay window-like architectural features diminished their power, and recommended establishing a regular pattern of placement of these features on the frame and infill building. One Commissioner suggested having the projecting elements at the corners or ends to be a reference to the heavily articulated quoins on many of the district buildings.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the articulation at the parapet of the brick building to reference the built-up brick corbelling characteristic in the District.

The ARC recommended enhancing the cornice feature by making the material which defines the cornice thicker or by increasing the projection beyond the face of the wall. The ARC referenced the Teatro Zinzanni project and the steel channel cornice.

At the WDAC meeting the applicant will present their responses to the above comments.

Following review by the Waterfront Design Advisory Committee the project will be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission possibly in February 2018; and at other neighborhood and civic groups as requested or necessary to ensure adequate outreach to the community. Port staff anticipates returning to the Port Commission to request project approval, subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors (if required).

The project also requires a Conditional Use Authorization by the City Planning Commission for a Planned Unit Development, for development sites larger than half an acre, to include exceptions for rear yard, dwelling unit exposure, and possibly other Code Sections.

Environmental Review

The City Planning Department released a Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration (PMND) for the project on October 25, 2017, finding that the 88 Broadway & 735 Davis Street Project would not have a significant effect on the environment. The PMND is available for review at the Port's offices at Pier 1.

Waterfront Design Advisory Committee Review

The Waterfront *Design Advisory Committee* should consider making recommendations to ensure that the Project is consistent with policies and design criteria in the *Waterfront Land Use Plan's Waterfront Design & Access Element*. The following summary addresses the most relevant policies and criteria in the *Design & Access Element* pertaining to the Project:

Page 63, "RESPECT CITY FORM" – Respect City form by stepping new buildings down toward The Embarcadero or other waterfront roadways.

The proposed project adheres to the City Zoning Code height limits, which step heights down from Telegraph Hill (located to the west of the Project) from 84 feet, towards the waterfront and The Embarcadero where the height limit is 40 feet. The proposed Project height of 65 feet is the allowable height for this parcel.

Page 63, “NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE & CHARACTER” – New buildings should respect the scale and architectural character of adjacent neighborhoods.

Page 90, “MASSING” – Complement the established scale of the adjacent neighborhood by providing breaks or changes in building massing at ½ block intervals (minimum) by varying building form e.g. changes in height, setbacks, roof forms).

Page 90, “ARTICULATION” – Use a variety of architectural treatments (e.g. pattern and spacing of windows, doors, color or other materials and detailing) to provide visually interesting street facades and complement the established neighborhood character.

Page 90, “CHARACTER” – Use materials, style, and detailing that complement the architectural character of the adjacent Northeast Waterfront Historic District.

See discussion in staff report above regarding “Project Description” and review of project by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the City’s Historic Preservation Commission. Also see attached drawings. Discussion describes how building is broken into five distinct sections along Front Street, how the building alternates between two façade patterns common to the Historic District – “frame and infill” and “bearing wall” – and how window pattern and shapes generally reflect those found in the Historic District. Project also employs materials and detailing that could be compatible with those found in the District and would be current in design and technology for exterior wall systems. Committee members should review staff report and drawings to determine if Project meets the above criteria.

Page 90, “ENTRY” – Primary uses and pedestrian entrances should be oriented toward Broadway and Front Street with a clear expression of pedestrian entrances (e.g. recessed bays, awnings or other architectural treatment).

Commercial uses are located on Broadway and on Front Street near Broadway. The primary residential entry is on Front Street where the entry is recessed and there is a lobby entrance to the residential uses and elevators.

Page 90, “TRANSPARENCY” – Avoid bland ground floor walls by providing views into the ground floor of buildings.

Windows are provided along most ground floor areas of the three street frontages of the project as described in the above staff report and as viewable in the attached project drawings.

Page 90, “SERVICE” – Avoid service, parking, and auto-court entries from Broadway.

The Project provides service access on Front and Vallejo Streets only. The project does not include any parking.

Page 90, “MASSING” – Any required residential open space should be located within project interior.

The Project’s major open spaces are along its east, interior edge at the ground level and the second level. Other open spaces occur on level six facing Front Street.

Attachments

- A. Project Drawings
- B. Community Design Workshop, Seawall Lot 322-1, July 21, 2015
- C. Letter from Telegraph Hill Dwellers, November 27, 2017

END