



SAN FRANCISCO  
PLANNING + URBAN RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION

654 Mission Street  
San Francisco, California  
94105

415.781.8726 t  
415.781.7291 f

[www.spur.org](http://www.spur.org)

**Co-Chairs**

Linda Jo Fitz  
Lee Blitch

**Executive Director**

Gabriel Metcalf

**Vice Chairs**

Emilio Cruz  
David Friedman  
Mary McCue  
Wade Rose  
V. Fei Tsen

**Secretary**

Bill Rosetti

**Treasurer**

Bob Gamble

**Immediate Past Chair**

Andy Barnes

**Advisory Council**

**Co-Chairs**

Michael Alexander  
Paul Sedway

**Board Members**

Carl Anthony  
Alexa Arena  
Chris Block  
Larry Burnett  
Michaela Cassidy  
Michael Cohen  
Madeline Chun  
Charmaine Curtis  
Gia Daniller-Katz  
Kelly Dearman  
Shelley Doran  
Oz Erickson  
Manny Flores  
Gillian Gillett  
Chris Gruwell  
Anne Halsted  
Dave Hartley  
Mary Huss  
Chris Iglesias  
Laurie Johnson  
Ken Kirkey  
Dick Lonergan  
Ellen Lou  
Janis MacKenzie  
John Madden  
Gordon Mar  
Jacinta McCann  
Chris Meany  
Ezra Mersey  
Terry Micheau  
Jeanne Myerson  
Mary Murphy  
Brad Paul  
Chris Poland  
Teresa Rea  
Byron Rhett  
Victor Seeto  
Elizabeth Seifel  
Chi-Hsin Shao  
Ontario Smith  
Bill Stotler  
Stuart Sunshine  
Michael Teitz  
James Tracy  
Will Travis  
Steve Vettel  
Debra Walker  
Cynthia Wilusz-Lovell  
Cindy Wu

January 31st, 2012

Sean P. Murphy  
Bay West Group  
2 Henry Adams, Suite 450  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Murphy,

On behalf of the members of the SPUR Project Review Committee, we would like to thank your team for bringing the proposed mixed-use residential development for the two sites at 1 Henry Adams Street and 801 Brannan Street to our group for consideration and review at our October 2011 meeting.

The mission of the SPUR Project Review Committee is to consider projects that are of citywide importance and to evaluate them according to criteria related to land use, public realm interface, building design and environmental effects. In all cases, we are seeking a combination of excellent planning and design solutions that will ensure the positive contribution of each project to a safe, comfortable, visually appealing and useful urban setting for the people who live and work in San Francisco.

As a result of our review and discussion of your project, we provide the following comments for your information and possible action.

## Land Use

The Committee is pleased with the combination of housing, retail, and a few lofts in conformance with the Eastern Neighborhoods zoning plan. The sites are located close to Townsend Circle, where the Potrero Hill and South of Market neighborhoods meet. Other than the #19 bus, the sites, about 0.7 miles from the Caltrain terminal, are not especially well served by public transport. The site at 1 Henry Adams Street is currently an undeveloped surface parking lot, and 801 Brannan Street is occupied by the outdated Concourse Pavilion.

Distributed between two buildings, the project proposes a mix of 275 each of one- and two-bedroom units and 24 lofts for a total of 574 units. No three- bedroom units are proposed. The buildings on the larger lot at 801 Brannan are separated by a landscaped pedestrian passage perpendicular to Townsend St, where 15 of the lofts are located. The eastern approximately one fourth of the 801 Brannan parcel is land dedicated to the City for 150 Below Market Rate (BMR) units of unspecified size.

For the market rate buildings, 499 new enclosed residential parking spaces at grade, mainly in puzzle lifts, will be provided, plus an additional 71 "Reserved Replacement" spaces. An additional 95 residential spaces are proposed at nearby buildings, for a total

residential ratio of 1.16 cars per unit. While the siting of some of the spaces off site makes the overall number of spaces compliant, and while we recognize the challenges of the accessing public transport from the site, we nevertheless would like to see this ratio lowered to 1:1, or the amount allowed under the existing Eastern Neighborhoods plan, whichever is lower. Two hundred six bike spaces are being provided, as per code.

We believe that affordable housing is a key component of a complete neighborhood. We strongly hope that the affordable housing project will be built at the same time as the market rate housing project and will be designed to enhance economic integration of the area.

### **Public realm Interface and the Promotion of a Pedestrian-Oriented environment**

The primary public amenity is the proposed 55' wide midblock passage linking Brannan with the alley parallel to it. Though details are not yet available at this preliminary stage, it appears that the passage will be mostly hardscape, lined with trees. While we usually welcome midblock passageways as an urban massing gesture, it is hard at this stage to see that this path, ending in an alley bordering a large building, will see much public use. Given the setting on Brannan Street, one of the only 2-way avenues South of Market, we could envision an approach to public space that focuses more on reinforcing the sidewalk. Another option would be to turn the passageway 90 degrees to create a "South Park" style public open space. The building at 1 Henry Adams abuts Townsend Circle and therefore offers some more imaginative possibilities for appealing public spaces.

The plan would also benefit from some thinking about how to make the proposed development more friendly to families and children. Since the project will include many multi-bedroomed units it would make sense to give this issue further thought, especially given the industrial nature of the neighborhood, the abundance of traffic on the surrounding streets, and the lack of parks nearby. (Jackson Playground, the only park accessible without crossing under a freeway, is a 10-15 minute walk away.)

### **Building and Landscape Design**

The very preliminary designs we viewed are essentially massing models that appear to comply with the Eastern Neighborhoods zoning plan. We welcome the 18' high street level retail spaces and massing articulation. Because of the preliminary nature of the design, we cannot comment further on the design at present, but we look forward to doing so in the future.

### **Environmental Effects**

The buildings will be constructed with environmentally appropriate materials consistent with the City's and State's green building codes. We have few other details of the environmental or energy conserving features and we encourage the developer to incorporate as many as possible. SPUR always looks to projects to build environmental sustainability into their design and function and encourages the project sponsor to regard

sustainability as an ongoing priority throughout the design and construction process rather than as an add-on at a later stage.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the SPUR Project Review Committee finds the idea of this project, with its residential and retail components, to have significant potential to bring both desirable housing opportunities and viable commercial uses to underutilized parcels and to the neighborhood. Since the design was so preliminary, there are many aspects of the project that have not yet been developed, so we would welcome the opportunity to see the project again so that we could comment on its execution. We thank you for committing your time and resources to the presentation at SPUR, and hope that you will take our recommendations into consideration. We will follow further refinements of this project with great interest and invite you to keep us informed on its progress.

## **Consideration for Endorsement**

Should you intend to request SPUR to consider this project for endorsement, you should contact the Committee co-chairs at the appropriate time. Endorsement by SPUR is reserved for projects of the highest quality and significance to the city. Consideration for endorsement begins with a formal response by project sponsors to this review letter, including an update on any significant changes to the project program or design since the project was presented at SPUR. The project is then taken up for discussion by an endorsement subcommittee of SPUR board members who serve on committees in the areas of project review, community planning, housing, sustainability, and transportation. We normally require a month's lead-time to schedule a meeting of the endorsement subcommittee.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for questions/clarifications.

Sincerely,

Reuben Schwartz

Mary Beth Sanders

Charmaine Curtis

Co-Chairs, Project Review Committee