February 7, 2020

San Francisco Planning Commission
1650 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: SPUR Endorsement of One Vassar

Dear Planning Commissioners:

One Vassar LLC presented the One Vassar project to SPUR’s Project Review Advisory Board at our February 5, 2020 meeting for review and consideration. The SPUR Project Review Advisory Board finds this development proposal to be an appropriate set of uses for this location and endorses the development of One Vassar at 400 2nd Street, 645 Harrison Street and 657 Harrison Street.

SPUR is generally focused on policies, plans and codes rather than on individual projects. In order to make infill development easier, we prefer to help set good rules around zoning, fees, housing affordability, sustainability, etc. However, on occasion, our Project Review Advisory Board will review and endorse development proposals of citywide or regional importance, evaluating their potential to enhance the vitality of the city and region according to the policy priorities and principles of good placemaking supported by SPUR.

One Vassar is a significant mixed-use development project planned for three high-rise towers on a 2.4-acre site located in Central SoMa. This project incorporates over 500,000 square feet of office, a 468-room hotel and 489 residential units, as well as a 14,000 square-foot childcare center, 44,200 square feet of PDR and over 40,000 square feet of retail, including a planned market hall. The site also includes over 40,000 square feet of open space, including an outdoor plaza and an indoor POPOS at 2nd and Harrison.

SPUR affirms that One Vassar:

✓ **Is located at an appropriate location for development**, near transit and infrastructure and not on a greenfield site. This former brownfield site is located in the Central SoMa plan area, one of the city’s most transit-oriented neighborhoods and with access to BART, Caltrain, Muni Metro, bus lines, the Transbay Terminal and the new Central Subway Station, projected to open in mid-2021. One of the Central SoMa Plan’s key development sites, the One Vassar site offers great opportunity to add density exactly where the impact of greenhouse gas emissions is likely to be minimized, consistent with the tenets of the Central SoMa plan, a plan SPUR strongly supported.

✓ **Provides an appropriate mix of land uses** of residential, office, hotel, retail, PDR and childcare, contributing to a diverse stock of housing, fostering economic development and providing
amenities and services to the surrounding community. This proposal includes an impressive mix of uses for the size of the site, incorporating several uses that San Francisco needs: residential, transit-oriented office, childcare, hotel.

✓ **Provides sufficient density at the site** with two 350’ towers (residential and office) and one 15-story hotel addition over an existing 4-story historic structure, totaling 200’ in height. This supports a residential density of approximately nearly 80 units per acre and an office floor area ratio of 19.2, supporting adjacent transit and preventing underutilization of land, serving the future needs of Bay Area residents. The project currently includes 489 residential units in a 350’ tower and will provide 110% of its inclusionary requirement through land dedication and fees, contributing at least $31.7 million in value.

✓ **Creates a good place for people and contributes to a walkable environment** with active ground floor uses and retail along the street frontages (recognizing that the market entries along Harrison are limited due to the historic nature of the building that is being retained). The POPOS, located at the corner of 2nd and Harrison Streets, will provide seating and community space in a protected space, and the Harrison Street Plaza, which reads as a space open to the public, will be activated by the multiple entries (the market hall, childcare and residential) fronting it. We are pleased that the project is not proposing to exceed its as-of-right car parking and will exceed its bicycle parking requirements. We also believe that the project design deals with the significant grade change quite nicely.

**The SPUR Project Review Advisory Board finds this development proposal to be an appropriate set of uses for this location and endorses the One Vassar project.** We are impressed with this project’s proposed mix of uses – housing, office, hotel, retail (including the market hall), PDR and childcare – many of which address some of the urgent needs of San Francisco and San Franciscans today. The open design and mix of uses at the ground plane of this project are likely to lead to a healthy level of pedestrian activity. The Central SoMa Plan is one of the most important planning efforts in the Bay Area today, and One Vassar helps to realize the place-making and public benefits envisioned by the plan, as well as connecting to adjacent Rincon Hill and Transbay districts.

Please do not hesitate to contact us or Kristy Wang, SPUR’s Community Planning Policy Director, with any questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Charmaine Curtis                        Diane Filippi
Co-Chairs, SPUR Project Review Advisory Board

cc:    SPUR Board of Directors