

Eugene Flannery
City and County of San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing
1 South Van Ness Avenue – 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

July 20, 2010

Re: 3155 Scott Street - Edward II Inn

Mr. Flannery,

The public housing Project located at 3155 Scott Street has significant environmental impacts on the human environment that need to be evaluated, studied and considered before allowing the project to proceed. I have identified many areas of environmental concern regarding this project and am submitting these comments to you now in order to make those concerns part of the record. I kindly ask that you require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as a condition precedent to the Project's going forward as it is a legal requirement due to the substantial environmental impacts stated herein.

Land Development - Conformance with Comprehensive Plans and Zoning

The project site is zoned NC-3, Moderate-Scale Neighborhood Commercial District, which is intended to offer a wide variety of uses with special emphasis on neighborhood-serving businesses. The proposed project is not a business that serves the neighborhood. The zoning in the area surrounding the project site includes RH-1 and RH-2 for one- and two-family housing uses; RM-1 and RM-3 for low- to medium-density residential uses; and NC-2 and NC-3 for commercial land uses. The site density controls would limit the project to 16 units and proposed project of 25 units would not conform to zoning code in terms of density, and will, therefore, violate the General Plan and Zoning Code.

The proposed rezoning of the project site to a special use district (SUD) in order to accommodate the project may encourage future developments in the neighborhood to build without any consideration for zoning limits. The details of the SUD have not been given through the documents available in the planning department file and it is insufficient to merely assume what is being proposed. The details of the SUD must be provided in order to appropriately address the concerns of the neighborhood. **The fact that the SUD information was contained in a separate entitlement file held by the planning department is unfair and potentially unlawful because interested parties were unable to view these documents in order to assess the environmental effects under NEPA as they pertain to the SUD.**

The proposed project, through establishment of an SUD, will increase the residential density in the project area and on the project block. This increase may constitute a significant land use impact and may have a demonstrable negative effect on the character or quality of the neighborhood. The current zoning allows for a maximum of 6 residential units or 16 group housing units. The SUD is asking for 1 residential unit, plus 24 group housing units and therefore equals 26 potential tenants plus overnight guests that will be able to stay under proposed tenant guidelines.

The proposed project is not typical of the range of residential densities found within the Cow Hollow District, where residential densities do not vary greatly from block to block. The residential density of the proposed project strongly differs from residential densities found on the blocks immediately surrounding the project block. Therefore, the proposed new residential use on the project site may be denser than the uses on the project block, the density may be incompatible with what is already established in the greater project area, and therefore would have an adverse impact in terms of neighborhood character and compatibility.

The Project's proposed uses would result in an intensified use on the site as well as an increase in daytime and evening activity on the project block. Since the existing hotel is presently used for tourists who stay only a few nights and tend to sight-see away from the hotel during the day and only return to the hotel to sleep at night, the net increase of activity associated with the proposed project would be noticeable to the neighbors and is anticipated to be significant. The Project plans to host group classes throughout the day, have a community kitchen for 26 people, have a large common room for gathering of groups, and may offer treatment services for tenants with addiction issues surrounding drugs or alcohol or treatment for medical issues such as HIV. This activity is severely different from the existing tourist hotel.

The activity associated with the residential use and life-skills development classes offered throughout the day would constitute a significant impact since the project would be constructed in a residential area with no other similar facilities close by. The proposed project will change the existing character of the project vicinity and would introduce new and incompatible land use to the area. This type of land use and population demographic are not commonly observed in the Cow Hollow-Marina neighborhood.

A project of this size and scope may significantly alter the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood by introducing an incompatible demographic of 18 to 24 year olds, many of whom will have a history of drug or alcohol abuse, unstable medical issues, and overall lack of experience living in a traditional housing environment due to past experiences as homeless or runaway teens.

I want to clearly identify the environmental impact problem here as it relates specifically to the intended use of this particular site for a "mixed" tenant population. This project will also house tenants who are aging out of the foster care system and I am confident that this housing opportunity is necessary for those teens and young adults who have not demonstrated criminal behavior, drug or alcohol problems or the like. It is the inclusion of a mixed tenant population that is my largest concern because many of these former foster youth will be grouped together with former criminals, drug addicts and formerly homeless teens, who may not be ready for a group housing setting.

There have been no studies put forth by the Project sponsor stating the ease to which these "mixed" tenants will have incorporating into the area and among other tenants and there is high potential for problems to occur within the community if these potential environmental issues are not properly addressed. Thus, I feel that this should be addressed through an Environmental Impact Statement.

In addition to the increase in density, the SUD seeks to circumvent the fact that the building lacks a rear yard or open space as required under current zoning. This is insufficient and a rear yard or open space should be required because the tenants will have zero outdoor space and will be forced to go on the front sidewalk in order to have fresh air. The environmental impact of this lack of space should be analyzed further through an Environmental Impact Statement.

The project has had zero community outreach efforts to engage project participants with interested neighbors and institutions in the neighborhood. Project related impacts with respect to changes in demographic character could be significant and demand further review.

Compatibility and Urban Impact

The implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the vicinity, may result in a significant cumulative impact to public service resources such as fire and police protection. The city attorney has recently filed a civil suit against a neighboring motel calling the neighboring Bridge Motel a "public nuisance". There have been numerous arrests, housing code violations and countless police service calls to the Bridge Motel facility in the last three or more years.

The close proximity of the two resident hotels may create a cumulative impact with strong environmental effects that change the character of the block and endanger tenants of the proposed Project due to the illegal activity that has been reported at the Bridge Motel. The fact that the activity was so severe that it caused the city attorney to call the Bridge Motel a “public nuisance” and subsequently file a civil suit against the property owners, leads me to believe there is serious risk to the future tenants of this project both from a safety standpoint as well as the lure of illegal activity that may be going on close-by, that could draw in these young and impressionable tenants.

Noise- Contribution to Community Noise Levels

Activities related to excavation, site clearance, and project construction at the project site would increase noise in the site’s vicinity and expose nearby residential uses to long term construction noise and long term noise from the proposed use. The proposed project would increase ambient noise levels in the immediate vicinity due to mechanical noise during construction and increased activity on the site in the long term. The Project will have large group classes and social gatherings of young adults that will create a significant increase in noise due to the proposed use and may have an even greater impact at night when other resident neighbors are sleeping. The proposed project would also result in traffic volumes that would result in significant project generated traffic noise from the coming and going of tenants and program participants that may live off-site which would have negative impact on surrounding residents and pets.

A HUD Noise Assessment was performed to determine the average day/night noise level in decibels at the project site resulting from traffic volumes on Lombard Street. The resulting noise level was 71.8251 DNL. This level of noise exposure is within the “**normally unacceptable**” noise zone as defined by HUD’s Noise Guidelines for new residential projects.

Based on the City’s noise guidelines, constructing residential land uses (including group quarters) in areas where the existing ambient noise levels exceed 65 dB **should generally be discouraged**. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features must be included in the design. The project plans do not show any proposed changes to the second or third floors, therefore inadequately failing to provide details on how this normally unacceptable level of noise will be properly mitigated. Without a detailed drawing provided, it is impossible to determine if the project proponents are appropriately mitigating this enormous environmental problem. Further, an alternative site or plan has not been properly identified and because this project sits on Hwy 101, it is likely that an alternative site away from Hwy 101 would not have these unacceptable levels of noise.

Environmental Design - Visual Quality and Aesthetics

Implementation of the proposed project may alter the visual character of the project site and the immediate vicinity. The proposed project would increase light and glare at the project site and the project site would be incrementally more noticeable at night than with existing conditions because the project would introduce a higher density population and more residential and community center-related lighting to the site, visible through windows and at building entries.

The United States Green Building Council has established a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system specifically designed to minimize the comprehensive environmental impact of both new construction and renovation projects. This project is within the guidelines for projects that should conform to LEED Certification

requirements. LEED certification is generally required for federally funded projects like this one and is a methodology for minimizing adverse environmental impacts. There is no legitimate reason that this project should be exempt from the need to pursue LEED certification - and the project sponsors have stated in the loan documents that they do not intend to seek LEED certification. This is completely unacceptable.

Cultural Resources

Modification of the existing building would destroy a building considered to be a historical resource. The building at 3155 Scott Street is a historical resource to California because it is associated with two events that have made a significant contribution to California's history and cultural heritage: the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) and the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. In 1912 the area then known as Harbor View, was selected as the site of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). The fair was the impetus for the development of the surrounding area. The lot at 3155 Scott Street was located one block from the exposition's main entrance at Chestnut and Scott and on axis with the Court of the Universe, which was the center of the fair. In 1914, 96 years ago and the year before the PPIE opened, the hotel at 3155 Scott Street was completed. The property has existed as a tourist hotel for 96 years. In 1915 four of the residents living in the building worked at the exposition. The PPIE is significant for the development of the Marina District and the city as a whole, and the association between the property at 3155 Scott Street is not merely tangential but was central to the PPIE and the housing of its guests. Besides the Palace of Fine Arts, only one other building remains standing today that was built during this period for the PPIE which is a police station located on Greenwich Street. Both the Palace of Fine Arts and the Greenwich Police Station have been deemed historically significant, which further leads me to believe that the Edward II hotel should be properly identified as a historic resource.

The building at 3155 Scott Street is associated with the lives of persons important to our past and represents the work of an important creative individual because it was designed by San Francisco architect Charles J. Rousseau. Rousseau's family was notable in the architectural history of San Francisco. Charles M. Rousseau, his father, and his two brothers, Arthur F. Rousseau, and Oliver M. Rousseau all practiced as architects in the city, often as partners. The project at 3155 Scott Street was not the first time Charles J. Rousseau had been hired by property owner, Edward H. Mitchell. In 1909 Mitchell hired Rousseau to construct a two-story reinforced concrete warehouse at 2222 Army Street (now Caesar Chavez). Like 3155 Scott Street, the building was designed in the Spanish Revival style.

The building maintains enough of its original appearance to be recognizable from the time of the PPIE and the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge and the building has good integrity of association.

This building is a historical resource and the proposed change of use would eliminate its 96-year history of functioning as a tourist hotel for the City of San Francisco. The photographs in the file are inadequate to determine the visual character of the Edward II as it existed in 1915 and further study is required in order to properly compare the prior visual aesthetic to how the building appears today. From all documents I have seen, the building's current façade is quite similar to how it appeared when it was built in 1914. This directly goes against the Project proponent's assertion that the building has undergone such significant change that it no longer can retain its historical significance. There are no visual documents available in the file to back up this argument. Thus, further study is necessary.

Socioeconomic – Demographic Character Changes

This population increase may have a significant effect on the environment because the project site is within a residential area. The population increase will be noticeable to immediately adjacent neighbors and this increase may substantially change the existing area-wide population characteristics due to the age and socio-demographics of the proposed tenant population. There are few residents of the neighborhood who are between the ages of 18 to 22 and many bar owners are concerned about under aged tenants using fake identification to gain admittance to area bars. There is a bar currently adjacent to the Edward II Inn and a bar directly across the street. This is not the proper location to house under-age youth and an alternative site should be identified.

Community Facilities and Services – Water, Waste Water and Solid Waste

The proposed Project would increase density in the building and area and create residential use for a building that formerly was used as a tourist hotel. The Project sponsors, CHP and the Mayor's office of Housing (MOH), have stated that this tourist hotel was seldom at full occupancy. This Project will bring 26 new residents to the building with the possibility of overnight guests for all of the tenants. Therefore 50 people could be contributing to water consumption and wastewater disposal at this Project site.

Further, the Project will be adding new bathrooms to the project site and without plans made available showing the second and third floors, it is unclear how many bathrooms will be added. This huge increase in use would have a substantial impact on the existing water system and wastewater disposal services. This impact has not been properly addressed by the Project sponsors and therefore an Environmental Impact Statement should be conducted.

The current use as a tourist hotel has not produced the same amount of solid waste that is proposed by the Project sponsor. The increase in garbage pick-up service may cause an impact on traffic, bicycle and pedestrian congestion in an already highly congested area. There is no proposed loading zone for the Project, leading me to believe that garbage and service trucks will be double parked and regularly stopping at this location. This could have a substantial impact on the traffic in the neighborhood and warrants further review.

Community Facilities and Services - Public Safety – Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The proposed Project will result in the need for new or physically altered police protection in the neighborhood as provided by the Northern Station because the introduction of residential uses to the project site will result in an increase in demand for police protection services (i.e., calls for service). This increase will be substantial in light of the existing demand and capacity for police protection services in the area and in light of the buildings prior use as a tourist hotel with no long term residents.

The Project file is incomplete and does not assess the risks associated with having a Transitional Age Youth (TAY) housing Project located in the Cow Hollow/Marina neighborhood for the first time. There are legitimate public safety concerns that must be properly addressed. Further research is warranted on what additional steps will be necessary in order to adequately increase police protection in the area in light of remarks by three different San Francisco law enforcement officials, including a police captain, stating that this particular tenant population of at-risk youth ages 18 to 24, runs a larger demand for service calls and may lead to an increase in the amount of crime in the area.

The Project sponsors have not properly assessed the environmental impact that this particular tenant population will have on police, fire and emergency resources available in our area. It is a fair assumption that an at-risk population of young adults ages 18 to 24, who are transitioning out of homelessness and drug or alcohol treatment centers, will run a higher risk of emergency needs which have not been properly mentioned or identified by the Project sponsor. Many tenants will have criminal backgrounds and the likelihood of recidivism in this particular age group is tremendously high.

The floor plans available in the planning department's file only show the first floor and do not show the second or third floor of the site. This leads me to believe that the second and third floors are not being properly assessed from a safety perspective as the risk for emergencies due to fire can run high in an overcrowded building with inadequate fire escape routes. With the lack of floor plans available for public viewing, it is unclear whether the upper floors will have kitchens in the rooms, which can cause additional fire danger, or whether those floors will have adequate escape routes for both able-body and disabled tenants. New bathrooms are planned to be installed in the upper floors but it is unclear where they will be located and if they will be ADA accessible. Floor plans of all three floors need to be put forth in order to determine the adequacies of safety precautions taken by the project sponsor. Without these plans it can be assumed that the sponsor is creating an increased risk for fire, death, or serious injury to the tenants, which would have a severe impact on public safety and the public services available to our neighborhood.

A proper emergency plan needs to be identified and created by the Project sponsor which incorporates prevention of fire in the building, crime in the neighborhood, violence between co-tenants, and emergency response for treatment related problems that often occur in transitional housing of this type when tenants who are in recovery lapse into drug or alcohol related medical scenarios. It is unfair and unwise to allow this Project to go forward without properly assessing the emergency needs of the facility and determining if the public services available to the area are adequate to meet those needs and what the actual impact on the environment will be.

Open Space and Recreation

The proposed project will result in the physical deterioration of existing recreational resources because it would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated.

Currently the occasional occupants of the tourist hotel do not use the Marina recreational facilities and the project would result in an estimated population increase of 25 permanent residents at the subject property and possibly additional users of the facility for life-skills classes and overnight guests. These additional residents, and potentially some of the daytime users, may use surrounding parks and other recreational facilities. Therefore the demand associated with the proposed project may result in the need to expand or construct new facilities and this use of the recreational facilities and parks by project residents may cause physical deterioration of these spaces.

Transportation and Traffic Circulation

Traffic

Traffic generated by the proposed Project may substantially increase vehicle delays at local intersections which are already congested due to its location on Lombard Street (Hwy 101) and the Doyle Drive replacement project. Traffic generated by the proposed project, in conjunction

with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects associated with the Doyle Drive replacement, will substantially increase vehicle delays at local intersections because the current Doyle Drive project will divert thousands of additional cars onto Lombard Street over the next 3 to 4 years. This project is underway now and will be completed in 2014. Additional traffic is expected to be diverted onto Lombard Street by this project due to the reconfiguration of the Presidio Parkway on and off-ramps. This increase in traffic volume will lead to an increase in noise and pollution that will affect the Project. This is not mentioned in the MOH's documents and warrants further review. I suggest a traffic study be conducted in order to determine the effects of this Project on the already congested Lombard/Hwy 101 corridor.

Loading and unloading activity associated with the proposed Project would disrupt traffic flow on area streets. The proposed use as a Transitional Age Youth housing facility and subsequent changes in use for drop-in counseling services, will result in a large increase of deliveries and truck activity due to the shared kitchen for 26 or more persons being proposed. While the current hotel has a restaurant, it does not accommodate even remotely close to 26 patrons per meal and often only serves one meal per day. This increase in traffic activity associated with mail, maintenance, move-in/move-out of tenants, garbage/recycling pick-up, tenant pick-up and drop-off for 26 residents, plus any program participants (teachers or students) that will be coming and going to attend classes offered on-site, and food delivery may lead to congestion on Lombard and Scott streets and should be analyzed to mitigate traffic problems on an already congested heavily trafficked thoroughfare and busy corner intersection. These environmental concerns are not adequately addressed in the documents and warrant further review through an Environmental Impact Statement and comprehensive traffic study.

Parking

While parking availability is a social and not environmental problem, the secondary effect of traffic congestion in the project area is already constrained and would get worse if the proposed project were implemented because of cars circling for parking, driving slowly looking for parking, or double parking in front of the facility for pick-up and drop-off of tenants. Lombard Street already experiences extreme congestion during morning and evening rush-hour time frames as Lombard Street is a main artery of traffic from and to the Golden Gate Bridge which many commuters must cross in order to reach the city. The proposed project sits on the corner of Lombard and Scott Streets. This traffic problem will be exacerbated in the next three years due to construction on Doyle Drive and the planned removal of existing off-ramps that will divert even more traffic flow onto Lombard Street.

Tenant move-ins and move-outs would also create congestion if moving trucks were double parked and impeding the flow of traffic on Lombard or Scott streets. Double parked vehicles at the project site could reduce peak hour roadway capacity, which could potentially compromise pedestrian and bicycle safety at the intersections crosswalk. The documents do not suggest the addition of a loading zone which I feel is problematic and should be addressed.

Transit

Transit ridership generated by the proposed project may result in unacceptable levels of transit service, or cause a substantial increase in delays or operating costs to MUNI and other service providers. The transit statistics available in the planning department documents are inaccurate and incomplete because MUNI service routes were recently changed on all of the routes serving this site and further analysis must be done to determine the effects on transit. This particular tenant population will be attending school, working away from the facility and attending classes offered on-site at the facility. Thus, the tenant population may actually have a

larger impact on public transit than previously contemplated by the Project sponsor. I would argue that the tenant population of 18 to 24 year olds may have a higher transit trip count due to the age and demographics of the population and this warrants further review through an EIS.

The documents provided include factual inconsistencies in this arena because it states on the one-hand tenants will be working, going to school and participating in community activities, and on the other-hand tenants will not be using transit or leaving the building often because classes will be offered on-site. More analysis needs to be conducted in order to fully determine the environmental impact that this population will have on existing transit resources. A full transportation study should be required in order to determine and mitigate risks associated with this Project.

Pedestrians

The proposed Project would result in overcrowding on public sidewalks, create potentially hazardous conditions for pedestrians, or otherwise interfere with pedestrian accessibility to the site and adjoining areas because there is no other outdoor space for the building tenants, including no rear yard and no decks. Therefore any outdoor activity, including smoking, will be on the front sidewalk in front of the building and may cause congestion to pedestrians. This could cause a risk to passing pedestrians and may disrupt pedestrian patterns existing today.

Bicyclists

The proposed Project may create potentially hazardous conditions for bicyclists or substantially interfere with bicycle accessibility to the site and adjoining areas if loading trucks associated with moving and deliveries of goods are double parked on the street and create an obstacle for bicyclists. Double parked vehicles at the project site could reduce peak hour roadway capacity, which could potentially compromise pedestrian and bicycle safety at the intersections crosswalk.

The proposed Project may result in inadequate emergency access because zoning law requires bicycle parking available for 13 bicycles and the Project sponsor has stated a plan to store them in the breezeway between buildings. This breezeway is a fire escape and bicycle parking there could cause a fire hazard. There is no bicycle storage plan available to the public for review under these documents and one needs to be made available in order to determine if proper environmental concerns have been addressed.

In conclusion, I respectfully submit my comments to you and urge the MOH to require an Environmental Impact Statement based on the substantial environmental concerns raised within this letter.

Regards,

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