

OVERVIEW

The proposed project site consists of two rectangular parcels – former Central Freeway Parcels R and S – totaling 5,926 square feet. Both parcels are currently vacant, are located on the east side of Octavia Boulevard and share frontages on Lily Alley. Parcel R extends between Oak Street to the north and Lily Alley to the south and measures approximately 120 feet by 24 feet, for a total of approximately 2,873 square feet. Parcel S extends between Page Street to the south and Lily Alley to the north and measures approximately 120 feet by 25-1/2 feet, for a total of approximately 3,053 square feet.

Build Inc, the Project Sponsor, proposes to develop both parcels into a mixed-use 100% affordable residential project consisting of two buildings, partially satisfying the “Offsite BMR” requirement for the multifamily residential project located on 1540 Market Street, aka the “One Oak” project. The proposed project would provide approximately 19,492 GSF of permanently affordable residential housing and approximately 4,925 GSF of neighborhood-serving retail.

Each of the two proposed Buildings would be 55 feet and 5 stories tall and would consist of 4 floors of wood-frame construction atop 16-foot high concrete podiums. Although the current zoning allows a 50-foot height limit for both sites, the Project Sponsor intends to use the Special Height Exception in Planning Code Section 263.20(c), which states that for projects facing major streets in NCT districts “one additional foot of height, up to a total of five feet, shall be permitted above the designated height limit for each additional foot of ground floor clear ceiling height in excess of 10 feet from sidewalk grade, or in the case of residential units, for each foot the unit is raised above sidewalk grade.” Because the clear ceiling height of the proposed ground floor retail space for both buildings would be at least 15 feet, five additional feet is permitted above the 50-foot height limit.

The proposed project would contain a total of 32 units. The Parcel R Building would contain (16) One-Bedroom units, while the Parcel S Building would contain (4) Studios, (4) One-Bedroom units, and (8) Two-Bedroom units. All units would exceed the minimum area requirements of the City’s “Offsite BMR” regulations.

The Parcel R and S Buildings would satisfy the Planning Code Section 135 Usable Open Space Requirement by each providing a Common Roof Deck that would also serve as a Community Garden. The Parcel R Building would contain 2,245 square feet of common usable open space on its roof deck, while the Parcel S Building would contain 2,389 square feet of common usable open space on its roof deck. Combined, both buildings would provide a total of 4,634 square feet of common usable open space, almost double the 2,347 square feet required by the Planning Code.

Each of the Buildings will have 16 Class I bicycle parking spaces, located in the basement, and 4 Class II bicycle parking spaces, located on the sidewalk near the neighborhood-serving retail spaces – providing a total of 32 Class I bicycle parking spaces and 8 Class II bicycle parking spaces. Additionally, each Building would provide 16 private residential storage lockers in the basement. Adhering to the City’s “Transit First” policy and desiring no curb-cuts or garage doors to interrupt the public realm, the Project Sponsor intends to exceed the aspirations of the Market Octavia Plan and is proposing that the development includes no off-street automobile parking.

THE PUBLIC REALM

The proposed public realm improvements form the foundation of the Project Sponsor’s approach. They are the means by which the parcels are to be linked together in a cohesive coordinated whole and are critical in helping the project realize its maximum potential. Currently, the Access Lanes, though intended for local use only, i.e., to reach the mid-block alleys and as a safe zone for bicyclists and pedestrians, are often used as a shortcut for north-traveling automobile commuters – becoming, in effect, an “overflow” adjunct to the high-speed lanes of the Boulevard. As things stand now, they are kept from realizing their latent potential as Shared Public Ways --

inhibiting their ability to help activate these frontages in the desired manner. To correct this troublesome situation, using the City's Better Streets Plan as a guide, the Project Sponsor proposes to transform these Lanes into people-oriented environments that are well designed and thoughtfully appointed. In effect, carving out physical as well as psychological "slow space" that fosters the "chance encounter" which is the promise of the City.

SHARED PUBLIC WAY

The Project Sponsor proposes a targeted transformation of the Side Access Lane along Parcels R & S into a "tabled", traffic-calming Shared Public Way that is friendly to pedestrians, bicyclists and slow-moving motorists alike. This would be accomplished by shifting the car parking over to the west side of the roadway. The thin asphalt top layer would be removed – while retaining the underlying structural base – and replaced by concrete paving scored to match the adjacent sidewalks. This new, thicker surface would align with the level of the existing curb and sidewalk. It would extend 11 feet to the west (sloping slightly to drain) and terminate in a 7-foot wide parking lane distinguished by permeable pavers (for storm water infiltration). Since it is not always necessary for thru-traffic access, the portion of the new Shared Public Way adjacent to Parcel R could, on occasion, be temporarily closed off for public events.

FINE GRAIN AMENITIES

Taking cues from the highly-successful Linden Alley nearby, an assortment of auxiliary amenities and features: benches, kiosks, infiltration planters, bike racks, railings, etc. would augment the new design; creating finer-scale moments of visual interest and addressing important practical concerns such as accessibility and storm water management in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

NO LOSS OF ON-STREET PARKING & INCREASED SAFETY

All of the above would be accomplished without losing a single on-street automobile parking space. In fact, the Project Sponsor would be able to increase on-street parking from 12 to 14 spaces. This would be achieved by simply shifting the location of the parking lane to the other side of the Access Lane. In doing so, safer automobile disembarkation would also be achieved i.e., along the west side of the roadway directly onto the existing 4-foot wide sidewalk at the Side Median. This would also eliminate the possibility of driver-side door conflicts with bicyclists. The relocated parking lane would help buffer the newly created Shared Public Way from the high-speed boulevard traffic to the west and would create a traffic-calming "chicane" as cars cross Page Street, inhibiting the ability of errant motorists to race along the Access Lanes as an alternative to staying in the appropriate high-speed lanes of the Boulevard.

THE ARCHITECTURE

The Project Sponsor proposes two unique buildings, knitted into their surroundings through the above-described urban design strategy. Consistent with the Market Octavia Design Guidelines, each building would represent a different -- yet equally valid -- approach to contemporary "urban fabric" architecture that mediates between the scale of the Boulevard and the neighboring buildings. Each, in its own way, draws inspiration from both recent and historical patterns of development in the neighborhood and the city as a whole. Both buildings would have continuous neighborhood-serving retail at the ground level for maximum pedestrian engagement and street activation. The street level commercial spaces would have highly porous and transparent storefronts with articulating door systems that have the ability to completely open to the sidewalk -- creating a seamless transition from indoors to out. These spaces would also feature concrete floors scored to match the pattern of the existing sidewalks, further enhancing the effect of uninterrupted public-oriented space. Additionally, the positioning of the building's vertical circulation elements -- i.e., elevators and stairs -- would provide highly visible, multiple entry and egress points that will contribute to the active nature of the street.

PARCEL R BUILDING - "Concave Convex"

The Parcel R Building presents a single continuous façade that has an affinity with the existing early 20th-century apartment buildings kitty-corner on the west side of Octavia. Through the rigorous application of the normative San Francisco Bay Window -- framed by a continuous cornice above and marquee below -- a "concave / convex" effect is achieved; granting equal weight to both the projecting bays and the space between them. This creates an interesting ambiguity as well as a monumental scale appropriate to the building's boulevard location -- where the interstitial spaces between the windows suggest a kind of "negative colonnade." The building will be entirely "dry-assembled"; finished in clear satin anodized aluminum and low-maintenance integrally-colored "silver" fiber cement panels and slats. Each west and south facing window will be protected by a manually adjustable horizontal rolling exterior sunshade to mitigate unwanted solar gain and to modulate privacy.

PARCEL S BUILDING - "Judd Hybrid"

The Parcel S Building is organized into 3 "mini-buildings" separated by two "slots" containing open-air "Romeo" stairways. The slots create "visual pauses" that enhance the variegated effect, breakdown the scale, and pay tribute to a classic San Francisco morphological pattern. Each recess between the projecting bays is to be clad in a different high-quality material: cedar shingles, verdigris copper, locally-produced McNear clay brick and light-colored plaster. Each west and south facing window will be protected by a manually adjustable horizontal rolling exterior sunshade to mitigate unwanted solar gain and to modulate privacy.

NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING RETAIL

The entire ground level of all the Buildings is reserved for street-activating, neighborhood-serving retail in a diverse range of sizes. All of the commercial space is intended for local enterprises.

Each will contain "micro-retail" spaces intended for emergent enterprises that might have difficulty gaining a toehold in the City. Across both buildings there are 8 individual spaces, varying in size from 541 SF to 717 SF for a total of 4925 GSF. These spaces have the ability to be combined or further subdivided in numerous ways to support the desirable objective of a diverse / healthy "retail ecology".

A NOTE REGARDING THE EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN

The above-described project represents the further evolution of the Project Sponsor's submission for the MOEWD's Central Freeway Parcels R & S RFP that was awarded on 6/18/14. As described above, all of the innovative "deep design" features that were critical in the decision to award the project have been retained.

The originally proposed project consisted of 15% affordable "BMR" and 85% market-rate "Affordable-by-Design" housing. The Project Sponsor is now proposing to dramatically increase the affordability component by transforming it into 100% BMR housing. In order to accommodate this new housing program and adhere to the City's "Off-Site BMR" regulations regarding dwelling unit types, ratios and areas, it has been necessary to modify the buildings' exterior appearance in order to maintain a commitment to high quality architectural solutions.

For instance, the originally proposed "Affordable-by-Design" 2-Bedroom unit was about 612 square feet, whereas the City's "Off-Site BMR" regulations require a 2-Bedroom unit that is a minimum of 800 square feet. Likewise, originally the Studios were a compact 271 square feet compared to the City's BMR requirement of at least 350 square feet. (Note: The original project had no 1-Bedroom units.) Accordingly, the buildings' massing has needed to change to reflect this new interior reality.

At this time, the proposed treatments for the buildings' exteriors are still very much under consideration. In this PPA submission, the Project Sponsor has retained the materiality of the originally proposed RFP scheme, but is continuing to refine the design and welcomes Agency and Community input in order to realize the best possible project.