



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

General Plan Referral

Date: November 26, 2014

Case No.: Case No. 2014.1396R
James Alley Street Vacation


Block/Lot No.: 0192/039

Project Sponsor: Javier Rivera
San Francisco Department of Public Works
1155 Market Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Applicant: Same as Above

Staff Contact: Lily Langlois – (415) 575-9083
lily.langlois@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Finding the project, on balance, is **in conformity** with the General Plan

Recommended By: 
John Rahaim, Director of Planning

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to vacate James Alley. James Alley is a non-standard street with a width of 6.25 feet. The vacation of the alley is to accommodate hospital uses for the new Chinese Hospital. The design and landscaping of James Alley should be consistent with the project description and conditions of approval as approved by the Planning Commission on July 12, 2012 under Motion 18664.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project was evaluated in the 835-845 Jackson Street Chinese Hospital Replacement Project Final Environmental Impact Report, certified July 12, 2012, Planning Commission Motion No. 18660.

GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

With the listed right of way pedestrian improvements above, the Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 as described in the body of this letter. The Project with the listed right of way pedestrian improvements above is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan, given the provision of the public improvements to the right of way:

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**City Pattern****OBJECTIVE 1**

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

POLICY 2.8

Maintain a strong presumption against the giving up of street areas for private ownership or use, or for construction of public buildings.

Street areas have a variety of public values in addition to the carrying of traffic. They are important, among other things, in the perception of the city pattern, in regulating the scale and organization of building development, in creating views, in affording neighborhood open space and landscaping, and in providing light and air and access to properties.

POLICY 2.9

Review proposals for the giving of street areas in terms of all the public values that streets afford.

Every proposal for the giving up of public rights in street areas, through vacation, sale or lease of air rights, revocable permit or other means, shall be judged with the following criteria as the minimum basis for review:

- a. No release of a street area shall be recommended which would result in:
 1. Detriment to vehicular or pedestrian circulation;
 2. Interference with the rights of access to any private property;
 3. Inhibiting of access for fire protection or any other emergency purpose, or interference with utility lines or service without adequate reimbursement;
 4. Obstruction or diminishing of a significant view, or elimination of a viewpoint; industrial operations;
 5. Elimination or reduction of open space which might feasibly be used for public recreation;

6. Elimination of street space adjacent to a public facility, such as a park, where retention of the street might be of advantage to the public facility;
7. Elimination of street space that has formed the basis for creation of any lot, or construction or occupancy of any building according to standards that would be violated by discontinuance of the street;
8. Enlargement of a property that would result in (i) additional dwelling units in a multi-family area; (ii) excessive density for workers in a commercial area; or (iii) a building of excessive height or bulk;
9. Reduction of street space in areas of high building intensity, without provision of new open space in the same area of equivalent amount and quality and reasonably accessible for public enjoyment;
10. Removal of significant natural features, or detriment to the scale and character of surrounding development;
11. Adverse effect upon any element of the General Plan or upon an area plan or other plan of the Department of City Planning; or
12. Release of a street area in any situation in which the future development or use of such street area and any property of which it would become a part is unknown.

b. Release of a street area may be considered favorably when it would not violate any of the above criteria and when it would be:

1. Necessary for a subdivision, redevelopment project or other project involving assembly of a large site, in which a new and improved pattern would be substituted for the existing street pattern;
2. In furtherance of an industrial project where the existing street pattern would not fulfill the requirements of modern industrial operations;
3. Necessary for a significant public or semi-public use, or public assembly use, where the nature of the use and the character of the development proposed present strong justifications for occupying the street area rather than some other site;
4. For the purpose of permitting a small-scale pedestrian crossing consistent with the principles and policies of The Urban Design Element; or
5. In furtherance of the public values and purposes of streets as expressed in The Urban Design Element and elsewhere in the General Plan.

Neighborhood Environment

OBJECTIVE 4

IMPROVEMENT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE PERSONAL SAFETY, COMFORT, PRIDE AND OPPORTUNITY

San Francisco draws much of its strength and vitality from the quality of its neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods offer a pleasant environment to residents of the city, while others have experienced physical decline and still others have never enjoyed some of the amenities common to the city as a whole. Measures must be taken to stabilize and improve the health and safety of the local environment, the psychological feeling of neighborhood, the opportunities for recreation and other fulfilling activities, and the small-scale visual qualities that make the city a comfortable and often exciting place in which to live.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

General

POLICY 1.2

Ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout the city.

Safety is a concern in the development and accommodation of any part of the transportation system, but safety for pedestrians (which includes disabled persons in wheelchairs and other ambulatory devices) should be given priority where conflicts exist with other modes of transportation.

Pedestrian

OBJECTIVE 23

IMPROVE THE CITY’S PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR EFFICIENT, PLEASANT, AND SAFE MOVEMENT.

The public improvements will improve pedestrian access to the site.

PROPOSITION M FINDINGS – PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project, demolition and replacement of the Chinese Recreation Center, is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

Eight Priority Policies Findings

The subject project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced.

The Project would have no adverse effect on neighborhood serving retail uses or opportunities for employment in or ownership of such businesses.

- 2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhood.

The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's housing stock or on neighborhood character. The existing housing and neighborhood character would not be negatively affected.

- 3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.
- The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.*

- 4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The Project would not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI's transit service, overburdening the streets or altering current neighborhood parking.

- 5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The Project would not affect the existing economic base in this area.

- 6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

The Project would not adversely affect achieving the greatest possible preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

- 7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

The Project would have no adverse effect on historic buildings or landmarks.

- 8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

The Project would have no adverse effect on parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vista.

<p>RECOMMENDATION: Finding the Project, on balance, in-conformity with the General Plan</p>
--

cc: Javier Rivera, SFDPW

I:\Citywide\General Plan\General Plan Referrals\2014\2013.001396GPR James Alley Vacation.docx

