

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
POWER ENTERPRISE

1155 Market St., 11th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103 • Tel. (415) 554-3155 • Fax (415) 554-3161 • TTY (415) 554.3488



April 15, 2009

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Brett Bollinger, Environmental Planner
Major Environmental Analysis Section
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

RECEIVED

MAY 15 2009

POWER ENTERPRISE

Re: CEQA Exemption Request for the
Sustainable Civic Center District: Solar
Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Project
at City Hall & Davies Symphony Hall

Index Code: 519881

Dear Brett Bollinger:

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Power Enterprise, Energy Generation Projects Group has prepared the following project information on the proposed Solar Photovoltaic Project at San Francisco City Hall and Davies Symphony Hall.

Project Description

City Hall

City Hall is located at 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place in San Francisco. The proposed Solar System at City Hall would be an approximately 100 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) low-height, rack-mounted, non-penetrating system on the roof. The PV system would be installed flat or tilted with no more than a 5-degree angle. The PV would cover a portion of the south roof area and a portion of the north roof area, approximately 9,900 square feet (please refer to Appendix B – PV System Layout Plan). The existing roof is an aggregate surface built-up membrane roof installed in 1998 (please refer to Appendix C – Roof Photographs). The roof has a 24-inch high parapet wall around the perimeter and approximately 5-foot high skylights located on the north and south roofs (as shown on the attached photographs). The PV system would reduce peak demand loads and daily energy consumption for the facility. The project would generate a minimum of 134,000 kWh per year and would offset a portion of the current load for the building. All of the electricity produced by the PV system would be consumed by the facility and would not result in net exports to the existing electrical grid (PG&E).

2009.0315E - City Hall

2009.0316E - Davies Symphony Hall

The PV system power output (from the PV system installed on the south roof area) would be routed along the roof floor level to the inverter to be located on the south-east portion of the roof (to convert the DC power to AC power). The PV system power output (from the PV system installed on the north roof area) would be routed over the east pediment mechanical room to the inverter at the location described above (please refer to Appendix D – Conduit Options). The PV system’s overall power output would be routed in conduit down through the roof near the inverter to the mechanical attic space below the roof, and to the electrical bus duct located in the southeast 4th floor electrical room through this room’s ceiling, and fed into the City Hall’s electrical distribution system.

Davies Symphony Hall

The Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco. The proposed Solar System at Davies Symphony Hall would be a 214 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) low-height, rack-mounted, non-penetrating system installed on a portion of the top roof area, approximately 14,300 square feet, and a portion of the lower south roof area, approximately 3,500 square feet or a total of 17,800 square feet (please refer to Appendix B - PV System Layout Plan). The existing roof is an aggregate surface built-up membrane roof installed in 1998 (please refer to Appendix C – Roof Photographs). The PV system would reduce peak demand loads and daily energy consumption for the facility. The project would generate a minimum of 269,000 kWh per year and would offset a portion of the current load for the building.

The PV system power output (from the PV system installed on both roof levels) would be routed to the inverter to be located on the lower west roof in the sunken heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC) mechanical equipment area (to convert the DC power to AC power). The inverter power output would then be routed to the electrical bus duct located in the mezzanine level emergency generator electrical room adjacent to the sunken HVAC mechanical equipment, and fed into the Davies Symphony Hall’s electrical distribution system. The conduit from the top roof solar array would go through the top roof mechanical room, down through the mechanical room floor into the attic truss area, across this attic truss area to a mechanical duct, down through this mechanical duct, exiting through the wall to the lower south roof area, and then to the inverter near the roof floor level. The conduit from the lower west roof solar array would be routed near the roof floor level to the inverter mentioned above (please refer to Appendix B – PV System Layout Plan).

Specifications Common to Both Sites

The PV systems would also include a small weather station to record weather data (wind speed and direction, ambient temperature, and solar insolation) and a data acquisition system to record PV system output. In addition, the SFPUC would install a flat panel, free-standing display unit (please refer to Appendix E – Display Unit Location Options) that shows the energy generated by the project, as well as the environmental savings of the project (e.g. – decrease in carbon dioxide emissions, etc.). The display would also showcase the SFPUC’s other renewable energy projects that have been installed in the City of San Francisco. The display would show a series of images and information on each of the various projects. It would describe differences in the project’s designs and technologies, as well as educate the public on how solar energy works. The display would also include some background information on the SFPUC, its hydroelectric power plants, and the customer’s that the SFPUC serves.

Currently, three location options for the display unit in City Hall are being considered. One location would be the southeastern corner of the North Light Well, a second location option would be along the

southern wall of the North Light Court, and a third option would be adjacent to the information kiosk near the Sheriff's desk on the eastern side of City Hall's main lobby.

Currently, three location options for the display unit at Davies Symphony Hall are being considered. One location would be adjacent to the elevator, a second location option would be located in the lobby, and a third option would be adjacent to the Coat Check Room.

The crystalline PV panels would have a minimum rating of 12 watts (DC-Peak STC) per square foot. PV modules and inverters would have Underwriter's Lab (U/L) certification and California Energy Commission (CEC) approval. The PV Panels would maintain a Class C fire rating. The designs would provide a minimum 3-foot perimeter around the roof's perimeter and clear access to existing fire fighting standpipes or other emergency equipment on the roof, if present, as required by the San Francisco Building Code. In addition, the San Francisco Fire Department would review and approve an electrical permit to assure sufficient emergency access, and the San Francisco Building Inspection Department would review and approve the electrical design.

Background

San Francisco City Hall was built in 1915 in the Beau-Arts style. City Hall was designed by architect Arthur Brown, Jr. San Francisco City Hall is located within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District. The San Francisco Civic Center Historic District was designated as an historic district in 1994 by the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. City Hall, as part of the District, was designated as a Contributory building. City Hall was also designated a San Francisco Landmark (Landmark No. 21) in 1970. The United States Department of the Interior listed City Hall and the Civic Center Historic District as an historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

Davies Symphony Hall was built in 1980 and is the home of the San Francisco Symphony. In addition to the concert hall itself, an adjoining building contains the Robert H. Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall, comprising three separate rehearsal spaces. Davies Symphony Hall is also located within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District and is deemed to be Noncontributory.

The proposed project would require a Certificate of Appropriateness per Section 1006 of the Planning Code and would be granted by the Planning Department following consideration and approval by the Planning Commission if the proposed alterations would have no significant impact upon the Civic Center Historic District or City Hall (Landmark No. 21). The standards for the review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness include, but are not limited to a finding that the proposed alteration preserves the significant exterior architectural features and does not adversely affect the special character or historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the Landmark or Historic District.

Environmental Impacts

Aesthetics:

The proposed solar PV systems would be installed on the roofs of both buildings and electrical conduit would be installed within the buildings and within existing electrical chases or walls out of view from the public. Architectural or historic features of the buildings would not be disturbed or altered due to the construction of the proposed solar PV project. The roofs have several existing

heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) mechanical equipment and vents extending above the roofline (see attached photographs), but they are not visible from the street level. The proposed solar PV panels would be mounted flat on a non-penetrating racking system on the roofs, set back a minimum of 3-feet from the roof perimeter, and would not be visible from the street level. The inverters would be installed adjacent to the mechanical equipment and would also not be visible from the street level. The proposed solar PV systems would not be visible from the street level and, therefore, would not have a substantial effect on scenic resources, vistas, or on the visual character of the area.

The proposed display unit at City Hall would be a free-standing unit and would not be attached to the walls. Therefore, there would be no impacts to the historic structure of the building.

Cultural Resources:

San Francisco City Hall was built in 1915 in the Beau-Arts style, is located within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District and, as such, was designated as a Contributory building. City Hall was also designated a San Francisco Landmark (Landmark No. 21) in 1970. The United States Department of the Interior listed City Hall and the Civic Center Historic District as an historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Davies Symphony Hall was built in 1980, and is also located within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District and is deemed to be Noncontributory.

The proposed solar PV systems would be installed on the two buildings' roofs and tied into the buildings' existing electrical systems through conduits to the existing buildings' electrical rooms and meters utilizing existing electrical conduit chases or inside of walls out of view from the public. Interior or exterior architectural or historic features of the buildings would not be disturbed or altered due to the construction of the proposed solar PV project. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed solar PV project would cause impacts to cultural or historic resources.

Hazards & Hazardous Materials:

A record search was conducted, for both sites, on the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC; Cortese List; Envirostor) and the California State Water Quality Control Board (Geotracker) databases (see attached documentation). The DTSC database did not identify hazardous materials issue for either site. However, the Geotracker database one hazardous materials case file for each of the sites. Davies Symphony Hall had a leaking underground diesel fuel tank that was removed and the soil remediated. This case was closed as of January 30, 2007. The case file identified for City Hall is in error as the case involved a leaking underground gasoline fuel tank located at the Shell Oil Gas Station at 400 South Van Ness Avenue and not at City Hall located at 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place. Copies of each of these case files are attached (please refer to Appendix F – Hazardous Materials Record Search) as verification of the database search and the resolution of each of the cases. Therefore, no hazardous materials releases or issues currently exist at either of the two proposed project sites, and it is not anticipated that the proposed solar PV project would cause any hazardous material impacts to the project sites.

Population & Housing:

The proposed project would install a 100 kW solar PV systems on the roof of City Hall and a 214 kW solar PV system on the roof of Davies Symphony Hall. The proposed solar PV systems would provide electricity consumed at each of the sites. There would be no net electricity exports to the

existing PG&E grid. The proposed project's electricity produced by the solar panels would offset the existing electricity provided to each of the sites by Hetch Hetchy (SFPUC). The Hetch Hetchy power offset by the project would ultimately be utilized by other City-owned buildings. Therefore, the proposed project would not provide additional electricity capacity to PG&E or induce population growth by serving new customers.

Transportation/Traffic:

The proposed solar PV project would require the use of a crane to place the solar panels, inverters and electrical conduit on each of the buildings' roofs. This would occur on the weekend, likely a Sunday morning, in order not to significantly impact street traffic. The traffic impacts associated with the project would not be significant relative to the existing capacity of the surrounding street system.

In addition to the use of the crane, several (three to five) employee vehicles would access the project sites to drop-off employees and tools. These vehicles would be required to utilize existing street parking. Because of the minor number of vehicles access the sites, the project's impact on area parking availability would not be substantial.

Therefore, construction-related impacts, as identified above, generally would not be considered significant due to their temporary and limited duration.

Air Quality:

The proposed solar PV project, once constructed, would have no air emissions and, therefore, would cause no significant impacts to air quality. The construction of the project, however, would temporarily release minor amounts of vehicle/equipment exhaust and particulate matter (vehicle/equipment exhaust and dust). These air emissions would be considered temporary impacts. Therefore, the proposed solar PV project would not exceed local and Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) regulations.

Utilities & Service Systems:

The proposed project would install a 100 kW solar PV systems on the roof of City Hall and a 214 kW solar PV system on the roof of Davies Symphony Hall. As stated above, the proposed project would not provide additional electricity capacity to PG&E's electrical grid, provide electricity to the public, or serve new customers. The proposed project's electricity produced by the solar panels would offset the existing electricity provided to each of the sites by Hetch Hetchy (SFPUC). Therefore, the proposed project would not require the construction of new electrical generation facilities or cause significant environmental impacts.

Public Services:

The proposed solar PV project would install solar systems on the roofs of City Hall and Davies Symphony Hall and be connected to each of the buildings' existing electrical systems. The proposed project construction would not require the closure of either of the buildings, would not cause significant adverse impacts to either building, or any significant adverse impacts to the service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services. Therefore, no impacts to existing public services would occur because of the proposed project.

Land Use & Planning:

San Francisco's General Plan, Environmental Protection Element establishes several Policies to encourage local government departments to fund and construct renewable energy (solar PV) systems to reduce the use of fossil fuel energy sources. Some of these Policies are: Policy 12.4 - Encourage investment in capital projects that will increase municipal energy production in an environmentally responsible manner; Policy 16.1 - Develop land use policies that will encourage the use of renewable energy sources; Policy 16.2 - Remove obstacles to energy conservation and renewable energy systems in zoning and building codes; and Policy 18.1- Promote government and private financing partnerships to carry out local energy programs.

In addition, the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection recently developed a streamlined permit process that allows applicants to complete their permit processing over the counter in a manner of minutes.

Therefore, the proposed solar PV project does not conflict with any existing land use plan or policy.

Cumulative Impacts:


The proposed solar PV project would be designed to meet all local and State regulations. In addition, the above environmental issues were evaluated and it was determined that the proposed project would not cause any significant impacts. Therefore, the proposed solar PV project would not substantially contribute to any cumulative environmental impacts.

CEQA Compliance/Recommendation

The SFPUC has determined that the proposed Sustainable Civic Center District: Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Project at City Hall & Davies Symphony Hall is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 – The operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination; and Section 15303, Class 3 – The construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

The proposed solar PV project would be constructed on the roofs of City Hall and Davies Symphony Hall, and would not cause significant or adverse impacts to the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District or to the historic resources of City Hall. Therefore, the SFPUC is requesting a Categorical Exemption under the above CEQA Sections. Should you have any questions regarding the proposed project, please contact Randall Smith, Utility Specialist at (415) 934-5716.

Sincerely,



John Doyle, Manager

Energy Generation Projects
Power Enterprise
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Attachments:

Appendix A –

CEQA Environmental Checklist, Categorical Exemption Determination – City Hall

CEQA Environmental Checklist, Categorical Exemption Determination – Davies
Symphony Hall

Appendix B – Photovoltaic System Layout Plan

Appendix C – Roof Pictures

Appendix D – Conduit Options

Appendix E – Display Unit Location Options

Appendix F – Hazardous Materials Record Search

Cc: Tina Tam, Historic Resources Coordinator, San Francisco Planning Department
Karen Kubick, Manager, Infrastructure Development, SFPUC
Randall Smith, Utility Specialist, SFPUC
Irina Torrey, Manager, Bureau of Environmental Management, SFPUC

Categorical exemption class 1(e)(1):

Additions to existing structures provided that the additions will not result in an increase of more than 50% of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 ft², whichever is less.

Sophia Middlebrook 05/11/09

CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
Class 1(e)(1)



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historical Resource Review Form

Address of Project: Davies Symphony Hall (270-290 Hayes Street) _____

Cross Streets: Franklin Street and Van Ness Avenue Block/Lot: 0810/001 _____

Case No. 2009.0316E Permit No. _____

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

STEP 1: EXEMPTION CLASS

If neither class applies, an *Environmental Exemption Application* is required.

- Class 1 – Existing Facilities:** Operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of this determination.
- Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures:** Construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

STEP 2: HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS (Refer to *Preservation Bulletin 16*.)

- Category A: Known Historical Resource** Proceed to Step 3.
Preservation Technical Specialist Review
- Category B: Potential Historical Resource** Proceed to Step 3.
- Category C: Not a Historical Resource** Proceed to Step 4.
No Further Historical Resource Review Required.

STEP 3: APPROVED WORK CHECKLIST

Per plans dated: _____

- Project falls within the scope of work described below. **Proceed to Step 4.** No Further Historical Resource Review Required.
- Project does not fall within the scope of work described below. **Proceed to Step 4.** Further Historical Resource Review Required.
- If 4 or more boxes are initialed, Preservation Technical Specialist review is required.

Planner's Initials	Work Description
	1. Interior alterations. Publicly-accessible spaces (i.e. lobby, auditorium, or sanctuary) require Preservation Technical Specialist review.
	2. Regular maintenance or restorative work that is based upon documentation of the building's historic appearance (i.e., photographs, physical evidence, historic drawings or documents, or matching buildings).
	3. In-kind window replacement at visible facades. (The size, configuration, operation, material, and exterior profiles of the <i>historic</i> windows must be matched.)

	4. Window replacement or installation of new openings at non-visible facades.
	5. Construction of deck or terrace that is not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
N	6. Installation of mechanical equipment at the roof which is not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
	7. Installation of dormers that meet the requirements for exemption from public notification under <i>Zoning Administrator Bulletin: Dormer Windows, No. 96.2.</i>
	8. Installation of garage opening that meets the requirements of <i>Zoning Administrator Bulletin: Procedures and Criteria for Adding Garages to Existing Residential Structures, No. 2006.1b.</i>
	9. Horizontal addition that is not visible from the adjacent public right-of-way for 150' in each direction; does not extend vertically beyond the floor level of the top story of the structure; and does not have a footprint that is more than 50% larger than that of the original building.
	10. Vertical addition that is not visible from the adjacent public right-of-way for 150' in each direction; is only a single story in height; and does not cause the removal of architectural significant roofing features such as ornate dormers, towers, or slate shingles.

Preservation Technical Specialist Review Required for work listed below:

	11. Window replacement at visible facades that is not in-kind but meets the <i>Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.</i>
	12. Sign installation at Category A properties.
	13. Façade alterations that do not cause the removal or alteration of any significant architectural features (i.e. storefront replacement, new openings, or new elements).
	14. Raising the building.
	15. Horizontal or vertical additions, including mechanical equipment, that are minimally visible from a public right-of-way and that meet the <i>Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.</i>
N	16. Misc.

STEP 4: RECOMMENDATION

No Further Historical Resource Review Required.

Further Historical Resource Review Required: File *Environmental Exemption Application.*

Notes: *The subject building - Davies Symphony Hall - is a non-contributor to the Civic Center historic district. The solar panels will have no significant impact to the historic district.*

Planner Name: *Sophie Middlebrook*

Signature: *Sophie Middlebrook* Date: *05/11/09*

Preservation Technical Specialist Name: *Sophie Middlebrook*

Signature: *Sophie Middlebrook* Date: *05/11/09*

Save to [I:\Building Permit Applications or I:\Cases].

If "Category A," save to [I:\MEA\Historical Resources\Category A Admin Catex].

