



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

DATE: December 6, 2013
TO: Laura Messier, Jensen Architects
FROM: Chris Kern, Planning Department
RE: PPA Case No. 2013.1516U for 450 Somerset Street

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

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415.558.6409

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415.558.6377

Please find the attached Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) for the address listed above. You may contact the staff contact, Elizabeth Purl, at (415) 575-9028 or elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org, to answer any questions you may have, or to schedule a follow-up meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Kern".

Digitally signed by Chris Kern
DN: dc=org, dc=sfgov, dc=cityplanning,
ou=CityPlanning, ou=Environmental
Planning, cn=Chris Kern,
email=chris.kern@sfgov.org
Date: 2013.12.05 15:13:34 -08'00'

Chris Kern, Senior Planner



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Preliminary Project Assessment

Date: December 6, 2013
Case No.: **2013.1516U**
Project Address: 450 Somerset Street
San Francisco, CA 94134
Block/Lot: 6044/007
Zoning: RH-1 (Residential, House, One-Family) District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Project Sponsor: Laura Messier (Jensen Architects)
415-348-9650
Staff Contact: Elizabeth Purl – 575-9028
elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org

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DISCLAIMERS:

Please be advised that this determination does not constitute an application for development with the Planning Department. It also does not represent a complete review of the proposed project, a project approval of any kind, or in any way supersede any required Planning Department approvals listed below. The Planning Department may provide additional comments regarding the proposed project once the required applications listed below are submitted. While some approvals are granted by the Planning Department, some are at the discretion of other bodies, such as the Planning Commission or Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, it is likely that the project will require approvals from other City agencies such as the Department of Building Inspection, Department of Public Works, Department of Public Health, and others. The information included herein is based on plans and information provided for this assessment and the Planning Code, General Plan, Planning Department policies, and local/state/federal regulations as of the date of this document, all of which are subject to change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Alta Vista School is located at 450 Somerset Street, on a site bounded by Holyoke Street to the west, Wayland Street to the south, Somerset Street to the east, and residential development to the north. The surrounding areas are primarily residential in use, with a pattern of two-story development. A church under the same ownership as the school is located directly across Somerset Street to the east. Two public schools, E.R. Taylor Elementary and Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, are located one to two blocks to the northeast. The proposed project site is located within an RH-1 (Residential, House, One-Family) zoning district and a 40-X Height and Bulk district.

The site measures approximately 44,171 square feet (sf) or about 1 acre, and occupies the southern half of its block. The property includes two buildings – a school building and a small garage – and a paved play yard that is also used for church parking during services and church events. The site is on the end of a block with street frontage on three sides. The site's primary entrance is via a gated driveway on Somerset Street that provides access to the play yard/parking area; there is also a driveway with access to the garage on Wayland Street. The existing use is as an elementary school with a current enrollment of approximately 160 students. The school building is three stories with an area of about 22,574 sf and is 43.5

feet high. The two-car garage has an area of 984 sf and is about 9 feet high. The play yard provides 96 off-street surface parking spaces; there are no off-street loading spaces.

The proposed project would construct a new three-story school building with an area of approximately 21,055 sf and a height of about 40 feet. The building would include classroom and office/administration space and a roof deck with green roof/landscaping features and usable open space. The existing school building would be retained; the garage would be demolished. The new building would partly cover the existing play yard. The remaining portion of the yard would be reconfigured with play/sports areas, a garden, and new landscaping. Six parking spaces would be provided on an adjacent lot under the same ownership, and a garden would also replace part of the existing paved surface on this lot. Access would be from Holyoke Street, with a through driveway across the rear of the site exiting to Somerset Street. There would be student drop-offs on Holyoke and Wayland Streets. With the proposed addition, the school could accommodate up to 420 students.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the environmental review process must be completed before any project approval may be granted. The project sponsor must submit an Environmental Evaluation Application (EEA).¹ The following issues will be investigated as part of the environmental review process.

- 1. Historical Resources.** The proposed project includes demolition of a small garage and some alteration of the existing school building. Both were constructed more than 50 years ago; therefore, the project is subject to the Department's Historic Preservation review, which would include preparation of a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) by a qualified professional who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards. The department will provide the project sponsor with a list of three consultants from the Historic Resource Consultant Pool, which shall be known as the potential consultant list or PCL. Once the Environmental Evaluation Application is submitted, please contact Tina Tam, Senior Preservation Planner, via email (tina.tam@sfgov.org) for the list of three consultants. Upon selection of the historic resource consultant, the scope of the Historic Resource Evaluation shall be prepared in consultation with Department Preservation staff.
- 2. Archeology.** Project implementation would entail soil-disturbing activities associated with building construction, including excavation that could reach a depth of approximately 10 feet below grade. The project site is located within an area where no previous archeological survey has been prepared. It would require a Preliminary Archeological Review, which would be conducted in-house by Planning Department Staff. This review requires documentation of potential project soils disturbance and the range of appropriate foundation types for the proposed structure. Such information is typically contained in a geotechnical study such as the preliminary study prepared for the proposed project. The Preliminary Archeological Review will determine whether or not additional archeological studies will be required as part of the environmental evaluation.

¹ <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8253>.

3. **Transportation.** Based on the PPA submittal, a transportation study is not anticipated. However, an official determination will be made subsequent to submittal of the environmental evaluation application.
4. **Air Quality.** The proposed project, at 21,055 sf, is below the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) construction and operation screening levels for criteria air pollutants. However, detailed information related to cubic yards of excavation shall be provided as part of the EEA.

In addition, project-related demolition, excavation, grading and other construction activities may cause wind-blown dust that could contribute particulate matter into the local atmosphere. To reduce construction dust impacts, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved the Construction Dust Control Ordinance (Ordinance 176-08, effective July 30, 2008) with the intent of reducing the quantity of dust generated during site preparation, demolition, and construction work in order to protect the health of the general public and of onsite workers, minimize public nuisance complaints, and to avoid orders to stop work by the Department of Building Inspection (DBI). Pursuant to the Construction Dust Ordinance, the proposed project would be required to prepare a Construction Dust Control Plan for review and approval by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) or comply with applicable dust control requirements outlined in the ordinance.

In addition, San Francisco has partnered with the BAAQMD to inventory and assess air pollution and exposures from mobile, stationary, and area sources within San Francisco. Areas with poor air quality, termed "Air Pollutant Exposure Zones," were identified. Land use projects within these Air Pollutant Exposure Zones require special consideration to determine whether the project's activities would expose sensitive receptors to substantial air pollutant concentrations. Although the proposed project is not within an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone, improvement measures may be recommended for consideration by City decision makers such as exhaust measures during construction and enhanced ventilation measures as part of building design.

If the project would generate new sources of toxic air contaminants including, but not limited to, diesel generators or boilers, or any other stationary sources, the project would result in toxic air contaminants that may affect both on-site and off-site sensitive receptors. Detailed information related to any proposed stationary sources shall be provided with the EEA.

5. **Greenhouse Gases.** The City and County of San Francisco's *Strategies to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions* presents a comprehensive assessment of policies, programs, and ordinances that represents San Francisco's Qualified Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy.² Projects that are consistent with San Francisco's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy would result in less-than-significant impacts from GHG emissions. In order to facilitate a determination of compliance with San Francisco's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, the Planning Department has prepared a Greenhouse Gas Analysis Compliance Checklist. The environmental planner assigned or CEQA consultant in coordination with the project sponsor will prepare this checklist in coordination with the project sponsor.

² San Francisco's *Strategies to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions* and BAAQMD's letter are available online at:

<http://www.sfplanning.org/index.aspx?page=1570>

6. **Geology and Soils.** The project involves excavation to approximately 10 feet below grade. A preliminary geotechnical study prepared by the project sponsor's consultant was submitted with the PPA application. The study addressed whether the site is subject to liquefaction and landslides and provided recommendations for addressing geotechnical concerns identified in the study, and the requirement for a geotechnical study has therefore been met. To assist Department staff in their evaluation, it is recommended that the project sponsor include the geotechnical investigation with the EEA.
7. **Tree Planting and Protection Checklist.** The project site contains mature trees along its perimeter. The Department of Public Works Code Section 8.02-8.11 requires disclosure and protection of "landmark, significant, and street trees" located on private and public property. Please submit a Tree Planting and Protection Checklist with the EEA.³ Any tree identified in the Tree Planting and Protection Checklist must be shown on the project site plans with size of the trunk diameter, tree height, and accurate canopy dripline.
8. **Stormwater and Flooding.** The proposed project would result in a ground surface disturbance of more than 5,000 sf, and it is therefore subject to San Francisco's stormwater management requirements as outlined in the Stormwater Management Ordinance and the corresponding SFPUC Stormwater Design Guidelines (Guidelines). Projects that trigger the stormwater management requirements must prepare a Stormwater Control Plan demonstrating project adherence to the performance measures outlined in the Guidelines including: (a) reduction in *total volume* and *peak flow rate* of stormwater for areas in combined sewer systems OR (b) *stormwater treatment* for areas in separate sewer systems. Responsibility for review and approval of the Stormwater Control Plan is with the SFPUC, Wastewater Enterprise, Urban Watershed Management Program. Without SFPUC approval of a Stormwater Control Plan, no site or building permits can be issued. The Guidelines also require a signed maintenance agreement to ensure proper care of the necessary stormwater controls. The project's environmental evaluation should generally assess how and where the implementation of necessary stormwater controls would reduce the potential negative impacts of stormwater runoff. To view the Stormwater Management Ordinance, the Stormwater Design Guidelines, or download instructions for the Stormwater Control Plan, go to <http://sfwater.org/sdg>.
9. **Hazards.** The proposed project could disturb more than 50 cubic yards of soil and is located in an area where there is a potential for soil or groundwater contamination due to nearby leaking underground storage tank sites. Therefore, the project may be subject to Article 22A of the Health Code, also known as the Maher Ordinance. The Maher Ordinance, which is administered and overseen by the Department of Public Health (DPH), requires the project sponsor to retain the services of a qualified professional to prepare a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) that meets the requirements of Health Code Section 22.A.6. The Phase I would determine the potential for site contamination and level of exposure risk associated with the project. Based on that information, soil and/or groundwater sampling and analysis, as well as remediation of any site contamination, may be required. These steps are required to be completed prior to the issuance of any building permit.

³ <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8321>

DPH requires that projects subject to the Maher Ordinance complete a Maher Application, available at: <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/EH/HazWaste/hazWasteSiteMitigation.asp>. Fees for DPH review and oversight of projects subject to the ordinance would apply. Please refer to DPH's fee schedule, available at: <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/EH/Fees.asp#haz>.

Please provide a copy of the Phase I ESA with the Environmental Evaluation Application (EEA).

- 10. Notification of a Project Receiving Environmental Review.** Notice is required to be sent to occupants of the project site and properties adjacent to the project site, as well as to owners and to the extent feasible occupants of properties within 300 feet of the project site at the initiation of the environmental review. Please be prepared to provide mailing labels upon request during the environmental review process.

If the additional analysis outlined above indicates that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the project may qualify for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption, in which case the Planning Department would issue a Certificate of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review. If the Department's review indicates that there is a potential for the project to have significant environmental impacts, an initial study must be prepared for CEQA review. The initial study may be prepared either by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool or by Department staff.

If the initial study determines that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the Department would issue a preliminary negative declaration (PND). If the initial study finds that the project would have significant impacts that could be reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures agreed to by the project sponsor, then the Department would issue a preliminary mitigated negative declaration (PMND). The PND or PMND would be circulated for public review for a period of 20 calendar days, during which time concerned parties may appeal the determination. If an appeal is filed, the Planning Commission would hold a hearing to decide the appeal. If no appeal is filed, the Planning Department would issue a final negative declaration (FND) or final mitigated negative declaration (FMND), and CEQA review is complete.

If the initial study indicates that the project would result in a significant impact that cannot be mitigated to below a significant level, an EIR must be prepared by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool. The Planning Department would provide more detail to the project sponsor regarding the EIR process should this level of environmental review be required.

To determine fees for environmental review, please refer to page 2 of the current fee schedule, "Environmental Applications – Studies for Projects outside of Adopted Plan Area."⁴

PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPROVALS:

The project requires the following Planning Department approvals. These approvals may be reviewed in conjunction with the required environmental review, but may not be granted until after the required environmental review is completed.

⁴ <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=513>.

1. **Environmental Evaluation Application:** An Environmental Evaluation Application must be filed so that the CEQA-related issues of the project can be evaluated and assessed. For more information on what is required in this application, please refer to the Environmental Review section above.
2. **Conditional Use Authorization** from the Planning Commission is required per Planning Code Section 304, Planned Unit Developments (PUD), for any exceptions to the Planning Code requirements given that the development site is in excess of one-half acre in size and for other applicable requirements as noted below. Conditional Use Authorization applications are available at the Planning Department's website www.sfplanning.org and at the Department's Public Information Counter on the ground floor at 1660 Mission Street.
3. A **Building Permit Application** is required for the demolition of the existing garage building
4. A **Building Permit Application** is required for the new construction of the proposed building.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Project sponsors are encouraged to conduct public outreach with the surrounding community and neighborhood groups early in the development process. Additionally, many approvals require a public hearing with an associated neighborhood notification. Differing levels of neighborhood notification are mandatory for some or all of the reviews and approvals listed above.

1. **Pre-Application.** This project proposes new construction and therefore is required to conduct a Pre-Application meeting with surrounding neighbors and registered neighborhood groups before a development application may be filed with the Planning Department. The Pre-application packet, which includes instructions and template forms, is available at www.sfplanning.org under the "Applications" tab. All registered neighborhood group mailing lists are available online at www.sfplanning.org under the "Publications" tab.
2. **Neighborhood Notification.** The project proposes new construction in an R District; therefore, owners and occupants within 150 feet of the project site must also be notified, in accordance with Planning Code Section 311.
3. **Conditional Use Authorization.** The Conditional Use Authorization requires notification to owners of property within a 300 foot radius of the project site.
4. **Notification of Project Receiving Environmental Review.** As stated above, notice is required to be sent to occupants of properties adjacent to the project site and owners of properties within 300 feet of the project site at the initiation of the Community Plan Exemption process.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT COMMENTS:

The following comments address specific Planning Code and other general issues that may significantly impact the proposed project:

1. **Front Setback.** Planning Code Section 132(d)(1) requires a front setback for the new building. As a corner lot, the front setback area shall be required only along the street or alley elected by the owner

as the front of the property. The front of the existing school building is along Somerset Street; therefore, the front of the property shall remain Somerset Street for the requirement. The required front setback for the subject lot shall be equal to one-half the front setback of the adjacent building, Lot 6. Future submissions should provide measurable dimensions of the front setback.

2. **Landscaping and Permeable Surfaces.** Planned Unit Development (PUD) projects are required to meet all landscaping and permeability requirements. Therefore, Planning Code Section 132(g) applies regarding landscape and permeable paving within the required front setback. Specifically, all front setback areas required must be appropriately landscaped, meet any applicable water use requirements of Administrative Code [Chapter 63](#), and consist of a minimum of 20 percent unpaved area devoted to plant material, including the use of climate-appropriate plant material as defined in Public Works Code Section [802.1](#). In addition, the front setback area must be at least 50 percent permeable so as to increase storm water infiltration.
3. **Rear Yard.** Planning Code Section 134(a)(1) requires the minimum rear yard to be equal to 25 percent of the total lot. For the purposes of determining the lot depth to calculate the required rear yard, the lot is considered to have a depth of approximately 240 feet along the northern property line and 150 feet along the southern property line. Given this lot depth, the rear yard must be at least 60 feet in depth from the western property line fronting Holyoke Street and 37 feet 6 inches from the western property line abutting Lot 7A, requiring an open area of approximately 11,182 sf. Planning Code Section 304(d)(3) requires proposed PUD projects provide open space at least equal to the open space requirements of the Code. Plans provided indicate a common open space located in the center of the lot approximately 16,878 sf in area. The proposed open space is a more than the required rear yard area; however, it is not located at the required location. You may seek an exception through the PUD process. Future submissions should provide measurable dimensions of the rear yard.
4. **Street Trees.** Planning Code Section 138.1 requires one street tree for every 20 feet of frontage for new construction. Along Somerset Street a total of eleven street trees are required, along Wayland Street a total of eight trees are required, and along Holyoke Street a total of six street trees are required. A total of 25 street trees are required. There are a total of 25 street trees proposed for the project, but the plans submitted with the PPA application do not show that they would be in accordance with the requirement of one for every 20 feet of frontage. However, this dimensional requirement can be waived as part of the PUD, as the total sum of required trees would be satisfied by the proposal. Furthermore, an "in-lieu" street tree fee pursuant to Section 428 can be paid as an alternative option. As discussed above, a Tree Planting and Protection Checklist must be filled out and submitted with the EEA. The Tree Planting and Protection Checklist is available at: www.sf-planning.org.
5. **Better Streets Plan - Streetscape Plan and Improvements.** Planning Code Section 138.1(2)(i) outlines the requirements for streetscape and pedestrian improvements for a project located on a lot that is greater than one-half-acre in total area and includes new construction. The proposed project would be required to include streetscape and pedestrian improvements that are in keeping with the Better Streets Plan. The project sponsor will be required to submit a Streetscape Plan illustrating the location and design of streetscape improvements appropriate to the street type, including site furnishings, landscaping, corner curb extensions, and sidewalk widening as appropriate. Please coordinate with the Department's Citywide Division and Street Design Advisory Team to develop the streetscape and

pedestrian improvements. The Planning Department may require these elements as part of conditions of approval.

Street improvements may include upgrading the building's street frontages to meet the City's standards. If street improvements are being considered, project sponsors should contact DPW as early as possible to understand the process and requirements for permitting street improvements. For more information on process, guidelines, and requirements for street improvements, refer to www.sfbetterstreets.org.

Required streetscape and pedestrian improvements are not eligible for in-kind fee credit.

6. **Screening and Greening of Parking and Vehicle Use Areas.** Planning Code Section 142 requires the screening of parking and vehicle use areas of less than 25 linear feet adjacent to a public right-of-way. Planning Code Section 156(d) requires that any vehicle use area that is less than 25 linear feet adjacent to a public right-of-way which adjoins a lot in any R District shall be screened from view from the public right-of-way, except at driveways necessary for ingress and egress, by a solid fence, a solid wall, or a compact evergreen hedge, not less than four feet in height. The six parking spaces proposed on Lot 8A along Holyoke Street do not appear to be screened from the public right of way. Future submissions should include necessary parking screening.
7. **Bicycle Parking-** Planning Code Section 155.2 requires the proposed elementary school use provide two Class 1 spaces for every classroom and one Class 2 space for every classroom. Therefore, the proposed project requires 64 Class 1 spaces and 32 Class 2 spaces. However, Planning Code Section 155.2(d) allows some or all of the Class 2 bicycle parking requirements to be satisfied by paying the Bicycle Parking In Lieu Fee provided in Section 430 of the Planning Code. Future submissions should indicate all bicycle parking facilities.
8. **Excess Parking.** The project variant basement parking for 31 spaces exceeds the amount of parking classified as accessory parking per Planning Code Section 204.5. Planning Code Section 157 requires Conditional Use Authorization for excess parking. However, the Planning Commission must find the basement parking, if proposed, fulfills the criteria of Planning Code Section 157. Future submissions should indicate one single parking proposal.
9. **Off-site Parking.** Planning Code Section 159(c) requires off-street parking spaces for all uses other than dwellings be located on the same lot as the use served or within a walking distance of 800 feet. Parking provided off-site within an R district requires Conditional Use Authorization. The required six parking spaces are proposed off-site on the adjacent Lot 8A. Furthermore, any off-site parking space must be available for the actual lifetime of the structure or use to be served and verified by the property owner of the off-site lot. Future submissions should indicate the distance of off-site parking from the nearest entry of the new structure and owner authorization permitting the use of Lot 8A. If this is a hardship for the project, a lot merger in conformance with Planning Code Section 121.7 is an alternative.
10. **SFPUC Urban Watershed Management Program (UWMP):** As discussed above, projects disturbing 5,000 sf or more of ground surface are subject to the Stormwater Management Ordinance and must meet the performance measures set within the *Stormwater Design Guidelines and Appendixes*. For more

information, please refer to: <http://www.sfwater.org/sdg>. Future submittal should indicate how the proposed project will meet this requirement.

- 11. Recycled Water Ordinance:** For new construction of 40,000 sf or more or the addition of 10,000 sf or more of irrigated space, plumbing systems must recycle water. For more information, please contact the Department of Building Inspection.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN COMMENTS:

The following comments address preliminary design issues that may impact the proposed project:

- 1. Site Design, Open Space, and Massing:** Overall, the building massing and open space is appropriate for the site and the neighborhood.
- 2. Vehicle Circulation, Access, and Parking:** The proposed parking area is in a suitable location. However, the access lane, which runs along the full length of the site from Holyoke to Somerset Street, is unnecessary. Given that the parking lot holds only six cars, vehicle entrance and exit could both be accommodated on Holyoke Street. The space between the parking area and the dumpsters could then be used for an expanded garden or other quiet, student-programmed use.

The parking area should be screened from public view. The surface of the parking area, which will be visible from the street, should be permeable pavers or other high quality material.

- 3. Street Frontage:** While the Department understands the need to screen the play yard, the proposed wall results in a blank expanse along the sidewalk with little visual interest. This condition could be improved in a variety of ways, including greater transparency, a landscaped setback, a “living” wall, or artistic intervention. To lessen its length, consider eliminating the wall in locations where it screens the new building, allowing the building to engage with the street directly.
- 4. Architecture:** The Department appreciates the thoughtful building design. The proportions and rhythm are contextually sensitive, and the facades are varied enough to provide visual interest while remaining cohesive.

With the major pieces compositionally in place, a successful project will rely on an superior execution of high quality materials combined with exceptional articulation and detailing on all visible facades.

- 5. Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements:** The Department recommends that basic streetscape improvements be provided on all frontages. If the existing sidewalk width is less than Better Streets Plan standards, the Department may recommend sidewalk widening, particularly on Holyoke and Wayland Streets at student drop off locations. Planning staff is happy to review proposals or meet with the project sponsor to explore ideas.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT ASSESSMENT EXPIRATION:

This Preliminary Project Assessment is valid for a period of **18 months**. An Environmental Evaluation, Conditional Use Authorization, or Building Permit Application, as listed above, must be submitted no later than **June 8, 2015**. Otherwise, this determination is considered expired and a new Preliminary

Project Assessment is required. Such applications and plans must be generally consistent with those found in this Preliminary Project Assessment.