



HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) MEETING

SYNOPSIS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018

1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

City Hall Tower

200 East Santa Clara Street

ROOM T-332

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Edward Saum, HLC Chair

Anthony Raynsford

Stephen Polcyn (absent)

PROPOSED PROJECT:

[H18-030](#). Site Development Permit to demolish existing buildings and construct a new 41,500 square foot mixed-use building with 3 towers (27 stories, 26 stories, and 25 stories) with a total of 667 residential units, performing art space and 4 levels of below grade parking on a 1.632-gross acre site. Five buildings proposed for demolition are on the [City's Historic Resources Inventory](#). Council District 3. **PROJECT MANAGER, RUTH CUETO**

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS:

Commissioner Chair Ed Saum opened the meeting and staff provided a very brief overview of the project description and purpose of the meeting for early design comments in advance of full Historic Landmarks Commission review.

The applicant's architect team, Steinberg Hart, provided a presentation of the proposed project known as Invicta towers. The team described their understanding of the neighborhood and the SoFA Arts District, with a diverse collection of architectural styles from various periods. The team conducted a cityscape study showing the relationship of the project with the current and proposed surrounding heights, massing, and form.



The team explained their early redesign approach in response to comments and a meeting with the City's Urban Design Review consultant, SOM. A redesign for the First Street elevation resulted and now shows more connection with the existing street wall and setbacks. The team explained the project as a point of orientation to the downtown district as reflected in its design. Parking will be completely below grade. The existing City Lights theater would be integrated into the new design.

Commission Chair, Ed Saum, asked if members of the public had any comments.

Brian Greyson of PAC SJ stated that the loss of existing building listed on the Inventory is of concern and it would be desired that some or all be incorporated due to their unique characteristics. He stated that their Board has not provide a full review and comment at this time.*

Commission Chair, Ed Saum, opened the meeting to comments and explained the early status of project review.

Commissioners described the urbanistic character of the street level and appreciates the redesign on First Street and would like to see this approach taken on the Second Street side since the project causes more disruption to historic properties and character. Commissioners asked if the applicant can provide the same level of scrutiny for the Second Street side. Density and experience provide varied pedestrian experiences. Second Street has a unique character.

Other examples were mentioned, the 360 project steps down, Gateway tower preserves the facades, considers solids versus glass to break up scale with some preservation. The team mentioned the need to address concepts of aberration versus preserved buildings.

Commissioners expressed that the corner makes a bold statement and that the curves are nice on the upper levels but don't work well on the corner. Architecture should bring more proportionality and address the public realm. Commissioners discussed rectilinear forms seen in existing conditions versus curved forms as proposed. Treatments for the corner were discussed and how it activates the street levels. Geometry should be considered.

Commissioners discussed setbacks and the sense of historic at the pedestrian level and recognized the challenges. The Commissioners asked the applicant to find ways to interpret and enhance the entrance and discussed ways to highlight the lower levels. Commissions were concerned about the long stretch at the pedestrian level.

Commissioners discussed balconies and visual scale, tapering, setbacks, and the challenge to make the top distinctive, especially with various perspectives and views from the freeway. Commissioners asked to consider how the balconies play with the design. The elevated views provide interesting experience with curves and staggering towers. Balconies can bring back visual scale.