

University Park

Historic Preservation Overlay Zone

Est. March 22, 2000 by ordinance #171686

University Park H.P.O.Z. Board

David Raposa, Chairperson
Mark F. Malan, Vice Chair
Lindsay Apatow, Member
Steven Fader, Architect
Mayoral Appointee, Vacant



April 5, 2021

Honorable Members of the South Area Planning Commission

FROM: University Park HPOZ Board
Via e mail

RE: DIR-2020-4338-RDP-1A, ENV-2018-2454-CE

HPOZs are charged with the mission “to develop and maintain the appropriate settings and environment to preserve these (historic) buildings and structures, landscaping, natural features and areas” and “to ensure that all procedures comply with the California Environmental Quality Act.”¹

To fulfill this obligation, the University Park HPOZ Board met at duly noticed public hearings on February 5 and February 19 and considered the development proposal for 806 West Adams Boulevard. We offer the following comments for your consideration and for the record.

While the project site is not within the Zone, it is immediately adjacent. The University Park HPOZ, created in 2000, is directly across the site in question. Any development at 806 West Adams will impact the Zone in its character, compatibility and traffic. You cannot visually separate one side of the street from the other in terms of impacts to aesthetics, population and land use, and traffic. Further Adams Boulevard deserves special consideration as a scenic highway. The design of the project is completely inappropriate for Adams Boulevard, which was developed as an attractive residential street scape, and remains an important boulevard for the neighborhood. This project would impact a designated historic resource, e.g., the University Park HPOZ.

The project will have a demonstrable significant effect on the environment and does not qualify under Article III, Class 32 exemption A categorical exemption is not the appropriate level of environmental review for a project that is highly discretionary, is in a historically sensitive environmental, located on a scenic highway, and fails to meet objectives of the community plan and redevelopment plan.

The Class 32 “Infill” Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guideline Section 15332), hereafter referred to as the Class 32 Exemption, exempts infill development within urbanized areas if it meets certain criteria. The class consists of environmentally benign infill projects that are consistent with the General Plan and

¹ HPOZ Ordinance

Zoning requirements. This class is not intended for projects that would result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts.

There are unusual circumstances creating the reasonable possibility of significant effects which prohibits the City from using a CE. The project may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within an officially designated scenic highway; the CE review ignores its adjacency to the University Park HPOZ, the North University Park Specific Plan, the Fraternity Sorority Row survey history direct, and its importance within the Redevelopment Project Area.

Compatible Design

The University Park HPOZ Board has extensive experience in review infill projects and their compatibility with neighborhoods.

Podium parking should not be permitted; it rarely exists in University Park; underground parking should be required. Infill buildings should be sited at grade establishing a relationship with the street. The South Community Plan and the newly adopted plan establishes design criteria that this development ignores.

The material submitted fails in a very basic understanding that it is building within historic area and seeks preferential bonuses that, at their core, cannot comply with the purpose and intent of the applicable plans and zoning. Whatever is built here needs to reinforce not ignore the community character.

We ask the SAPC in the light of numerous omissions and inaccuracies in the record to deny use of a categorical exemption, to require evaluation of the land use designations under the redevelopment plan and to initiate design guidelines for compatibility as the South Community Plan requires

Respectfully,

Mark Malan, Secretary
(for)

The University Park HPOZ Board