

Case File Number: CMD 03-310

July 23, 2003

Project Name:	Jackson Center II
Location:	1111 Jackson Street
Proposal:	Construction of up to 100 residential units and associated useable open space and off-street parking in a six-story (75-foot tall) building near downtown Oakland
Owners:	Encinal Jackson LLC
Applicant:	Pyatok Architects, Inc., on behalf of Encinal Jackson LLC
Planning Permits Required:	Conditional Use Permit for development that involves more than 100,000 square feet of new floor area (Section 17.76.200), Design Review for more than three new residential units (Section 17.76.030), Variance for parking, useable open space and setbacks.
Application Numbers:	CMD 03-310
General Plan:	Central Business District
Zoning:	S-2, S-4, S-17
Environmental Determination:	Exempt, CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, Infill Development
Historic Status:	Non-Historic Property ; F3 rating - OCHS
Service Delivery District:	I-Downtown/West Oakland/Harbor
City Council Districts:	2-Wan
For further information:	Contact case planner Catherine Payne at 510 238-6316 or by e-mail at cpayne@oaklandnet.com .

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary design review comments for the proposed residential Jackson Center II project (project) located at 1111 Jackson Street near downtown Oakland. This 100-unit residential project would include for-sale townhouses, flats and lofts. The project consists of five and six stories of new construction over an existing two-story building. Three levels of parking would be provided in one underground and two above-grade levels.

The design of the proposed building would have a contemporary loft-style residential character. Proposed materials include cement plaster siding on the facades, terra cotta tile at the ground floor, metal roofs and sunscreens, glass block, etched glass and metal balcony railings and a metal cornice. Major architectural components of the building include the metal cornice, columnar features and window recesses accentuating the lower and upper building stories, a recessed building entry on 11th Street, and street-level access to ground-level residential units on Alice and 11th Streets.

The proposed project is in an urbanized area and is surrounded by development on all sides and thus meets the definition of "infill development" in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is substantively consistent with the General Plan and zoning regulations, is located on a site smaller than five acres that has no habitat value and can be served by existing utilities and public services. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the project is therefore exempt from environmental review. In addition, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the project site that included analysis of a residential alternative consistent with the

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proposed project. The EIR determined that the residential alternative was the environmentally superior alternative.

Staff is requesting comments from the Design Review Committee and the public regarding the design of the proposed project in order to provide direction in processing the submitted Conditional Use Permit and Design Review applications.

PROJECT SITE

The project site is located at 1111 Jackson Street, and is adjacent to and west of an existing, 8-story (100-foot tall) commercial building known as Jackson Center I. The area immediately surrounding the project site also includes the main Post Office building on the opposite side of 12th Street to the north (a Designated Historic Property, rated A3), two-story storefront commercial uses to the west, and institutional uses to the south. The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by a mix of land uses including institutional uses to the southeast (such as the Oakland Museum of California and Laney College), Chinatown commercial and high-density residential uses to the west, Lake Merritt to the northeast and high-density residential uses in the Gold Coast neighborhood to the north.

GENERAL PLAN ANALYSIS

The project site is located in the Central Business District General Plan land use designation (CBD). The intent of the CBD classification is to “encourage, support, and enhance the downtown area as a high density mixed use urban center of regional importance and a primary hub for business, communications, office, government, high technology, retail, entertainment, and transportation in Northern California.” (Land Use and Transportation Element, page 155). The desired character for the CBD includes high-rise residential uses, and the maximum allowable residential density is 300 units per gross acre of land area (or 500 units per net acre). The CBD provides for the most intensive, high-density development in Oakland, and encourages residential uses in a mixed-use setting.

The proposed high-density residential use is consistent with the intent and policies for the CBD. The proposed project would include up to 100 residential units on a 32,808-square foot site, resulting in a density of 132.77 units per gross acre, well within the allowable CBD density of 300 units per gross acre. In addition, the project is consistent with General Plan policies to concentrate high-density housing in the CBD, an area well-served by commercial, employment and transit uses.

ZONING COMPLIANCE

The project site is located in the S-2 Civic Center Zone (S-2 district), the S-4 Design Review Combining Zone (S-4 district), and the S-17 Downtown Residential Open Space Combining Zone (S-17 district). The S-2 district is the base zoning district. The S-2 district allows a maximum residential density of one unit per 300 square feet of lot area. The project would include up to 100 residential units on a 32,808.2 square-foot lot, reflecting a density of one unit per 328 square feet of lot area, which is within the allowable density. The S-4 regulations require design review for any construction or alteration. The application for design review complies with the S-4 district regulations. The S-17 district regulations guide the provision of useable open space in the area encompassed by the General Plan CBD designation, and are further discussed below.

The following table depicts the project’s comparison to the S-2 and S17 district development standards. According to zoning development standards, the “yards” for this project are as follows: the “front yard” faces Alice Street; the “corner side yards” face 11th and 12th Streets; and the “rear yard” is located along the property line between Jackson Center I and the project site.

Zoning Criteria	S-2 and S-17 Development Standards	Proposed	Comment
Yard – Front	10’	3-10’	Colonnaded façade is within setback; however, livable interior areas are not within setback; Minor variance required.
Yard – Street Side Yard	10’	3-10’	Colonnaded façades are within setbacks; however, livable interior areas are not within setback; Minor variance required.
Rear yard	10’	11’	Complies with regulations; alley for garage access
Height	No height limit.	75’ to roof	Complies with regulations.
Open Space	75 square feet per unit (either private or group).	6,720 sf private open space (for up to 100 residential units) = 67.2 sf per unit.	Does not comply with regulations; Additional ground floor private open space (4,500 sf) does not meet useable open space standard due to location in front and side setbacks; Minor variance required.
Parking	1 space per residential unit.	90 new spaces (parking garage) = .9	Does not comply with regulations; Minor variance required.

		space per unit	
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DESIGN REVIEW

Summary of Proposed Design

The proposed project is a 100-unit multi-family residential building near downtown Oakland. The building would occupy a three-quarter acre site on one-half of a city block. The proposed building is six stories tall, with a colonnaded façade, architectural cornice, and contemporary window, balcony and sunshade details. The building has a contemporary loft-style residential appearance. The project would include a range of unit types, including flats, lofts and townhouses. Parking would be accommodated on three levels that would not be visible from the street; one existing level is below grade, and two new levels would be surrounded by residential uses facing the street. Ground-floor residential units would be accessible from the street, and above-ground floor units would be accessible from two lobbies located on 11th and 12th Streets, respectively.

The proposed building design includes visually rich façade articulation, including a strong cornice feature, regularly spaced vertical columns, and generous façade recesses on the lower and upper stories. The building entries on 11th and 12th Streets provide visual relief from the rhythm of columns.

The ground-floor facades include more details than upper stories. A terra cotta tile base, street-level unit entrances and the colonnaded façade enhance the street level. Ground-level residential units are located a few feet above the adjacent sidewalk level and are set back from the building façade to provide privacy and adequate separation between public and private realms.

The project includes both private and group useable open space. Balconies are provided both for street-facing and courtyard-facing units. An interior courtyard is also provided on the third floor above the highest parking level.

Discussion of Design Review Issues

The proposed project is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of building bulk and massing, and staff believes the project has been designed with a strong urban character that will enhance and complement the surrounding neighborhood. Staff believes that the overall site plan, the height, massing and architectural character are appropriate to the area.

As currently designed, the project would require a Minor Variance related to parking, setbacks and the provision of useable open space. Each issue is discussed below:

- *Parking:* At this time, the project includes 94 residential units (and the applicant seeks entitlements for up to 100 units). However, only 90 parking spaces are provided to accommodate the residential units. The project would be constructed over what is now existing parking spaces located below grade. However, these existing parking spaces are dedicated to the adjacent Jackson Center I project and cannot be counted toward meeting the demand of the currently proposed project. The project would be short a maximum of ten parking spaces. Because the area is conveniently located near mass

transit (including AC Transit and both the Lake Merritt and 12th Street BART stations) and a wide range of recreation, commercial and institutional land uses, staff would support a request for a variance from the parking regulations. Residents could also use garages for commercial buildings in the area that have spaces available in the evenings.

- *Setbacks*: At this time, the project includes a colonnaded façade that extends into the front and side yard setbacks. The façade is articulated to provide a visually rich and varied ground floor and façade treatment. The colonnaded ground floor would be landscaped and include multiple unit entries to create activity at the street level and a visually interesting and attractive façade. Accordingly, staff would support a request for a variance from the setback requirements.
- *Useable Open Space*: At this time, the project does not meet the S-17 district regulations for useable open space. Staff recommends expanding useable open space to meet the regulations. The project would need to include an additional 780 square feet of useable open space. This could be achieved by enlarging balconies or widening the interior courtyard.

Additional project design issues include the following:

- *Façade treatment along 12th Street facing the Post Office*: As of this writing, staff has not received an elevation for the building façade located on 12th Street. This façade would face the Post Office, a Designated Historic Property. The design of this façade is critical to protection of the historic qualities of the Post Office. Staff believes that the 12th Street façade should complement, without mimicking, the bulk, massing and rhythm of architectural features and details of the Post Office.
- *Landscaping and off-site improvements*: As of this writing, the applicant has not submitted a landscape plan for the proposed project. Staff believes that landscaping is critical to the success of the street frontage, building frontage, interior courtyard and garage entrance. The landscape plan should indicate plant materials (street trees, foundation planting along the front building facades, courtyard trees and plants), paving materials and site furniture (including lighting, trash receptacles, benches, fountains and other landscape features). The landscape plan should complement the design of the building and the surrounding context.
- *Garage entrance*: Staff believes that the garage entrance off of 11th Street should be designed as safe and integral feature to the proposed residential building. The design should include a gateway or other feature at the property line that effectively restricts access to residents, only, and is harmonious in terms of design details, with the adjacent residential building. In addition, the driveway should be well-lit and landscaped or otherwise enhanced to provide an attractive view from the public right-of-way.

Staff requests the DRC to provide comments and direction regarding the issues identified in this report, as well as to raise other issues the DRC believes are important to resolve or address through design development.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the overall conceptual design and site plan of the project is successful with attention given to the comments raised in this report. Staff recommends the Design Review Committee review and comment on the design of the proposed project with emphasis on the following issues, along with any other issues the Design Review Committee may identify:

- Parking
- Front and Side Yard Setbacks
- Useable Open Space
- Façade Treatment along 12th Street
- Landscape Plan
- Garage Entrance

Respectfully submitted:

LESLIE GOULD
Director of Planning and Zoning

Prepared by:

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Planner IV

Attachment:

A. Project Plans