



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL
MEMORANDUM**

Community Development Department – Planning Division

DATE: October 12, 2021

TO: Chair Samudzi and Planning Commissioners

FROM: Steve Stafford, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: [UP21-006, ED21-022] Additional Public Comment; Increase Height, Room and Bed Count Request
800 Mission Ave. Project (APNS: 011-184-08 & -09)

Planning staff has received additional public comments on the 800 Mission Ave. project after the distribution of staff's report to the Planning Commission (Commission). Please find attached written comments redacted, both in support and in opposition of the project. Those comments in support and in opposition of the proposed project are similar to those comments attached to staff's report to the Commission. Comments in support of the proposed project state that the project would continue to promote an attractive, California Mission Revival architecture design, even as a taller building, and to provide needed affordable housing in-lieu fees. Comments opposed to the proposed project state, generally, that the additional building height is excessive, the site and use requires comprehensive redesign and the perceived traffic, parking and water impacts require mitigation.

Kingston Cole

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94901
[REDACTED]

Thursday, October 7, 2021

Mr. Steve Stafford

City Planner

Steve.stafford@cityofsanrafael.org

Mr. Stafford:

I am writing in support of the 800 Mission Aegis Senior Community project. I am a 26-year resident of the San Rafael Hill neighborhood. I was a founding member of the Lincoln San Rafael Neighborhood Association; and am also a recent president of that Association. I wrote the comments for our Association that were submitted for the San Rafael 2040 General Plan (I wrote the same for the 2020 Plan as well). I am retired but very active in civic involvement—currently serving as:

- Member, Coalition of Sensible Taxpayers (CO\$T) Board of Directors
- Member: Citizens Oversight Committee for Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)
- Member: Citizens Oversight Committee for the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA)
- Member: Residence Committee for Digital Marin Broadband Project

The northwest corner of Mission and Lincoln has been an eye sore for more than twenty years. It will finally, I hope, be developed with a senior facility that will provide vibrancy and life to our neighborhood as well as downtown San Rafael. As it is in the LSRHNA's "zone of influence," we have had an opportunity to comment on the project—and did so with an approval less than four years ago.

A new, rump group has apparently taken over the LSRHNA and now seeks to abrogate that approval. I urge the Planning Commission to disregard their negative comments for the following reasons:

- We have endured the Recession of 2008-09 as well as the COVID pandemic since the original 800 Mission application was submitted. We as a neighborhood as well as the City have had ample time to provide comments and make adjustments to allow this project to proceed. To cancel it now because it is "too big" or "too tall" makes not sense.
- I believe we have to balance the equities in our San Rafael Hill neighborhood—allowing beneficial, zoning-compliant businesses in and along Lincoln Avenue to co-exist with our single-family dwellings. This has been the case for decades. 800 Mission, with its emphasis on serving our aging population (which includes me!) meets those criteria. We must grow—and do it intelligently.
- I believe we should welcome our new neighbors and employees to the neighborhood. More than a hundred jobs will be created. Another hundred plus seniors will live and prosper when the project is completed. They will add to the vibrancy and diversity of our entire neighborhood.

- I have walked the streets and fire road of San Rafael Hill itself for more than 25 years. I have talked and listened to my neighbors up and down that Hill. I have taken the “temperature” of the Hill on this project over the years. The response has been generally positive. Yes, there is some NIMBY’ism, but people do understand the needs of our aging population and the need to do something positive with an ugly, barren, very large open space that’s been that way for decades now.

I have discussed the perennial neighborhood issues and concerns with the Aegis development director. While I believe there will be no long-term impact, I think I should be on the record with my beliefs:

- **Parking and Traffic Impact:** Most of the residents will not be driving and will not own vehicles. A facility for the aging is different than an apartment building. Staff and visitors will be coming and going at off-peak hours; thus mitigating an important concern of our neighborhood.
- **Noise Issues:** Should not be a problem with an aging population seeking peace and quiet.
- **Offset Credits for Affordable Housing:** I was informed by the Aegis project director that they will pay the City \$600,000 to develop more affordable housing. I leave it to the discretion of the Planning Commission to determine if this is adequate.

Finally, I ask that the Planning Commission and the City Council act in an expeditious manner. This is an important project that will add many benefits to our neighborhood and the adjacent downtown area. I ask that you approve the 800 Aegis Senior Community project, after due deliberations.

Sincerely yours,

Kingston Cole

Steve Stafford

From: Janet Mills [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, October 8, 2021 10:24 AM
To: planning
Subject: 800 Mission Street, San Rafael, CA

To planning commission:

I strongly oppose increasing the height of the building at 800 Mission Street in San Rafael.

In fact, I don't understand why the city of San Rafael would approve of any project requiring water when we are clearly in a water crisis!



Janet Mills
[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94903

Steve Stafford

From: Community Development
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2021 9:13 AM
To: Steve Stafford; Leslie Mendez
Subject: FW: 800 Mission Street Project/Planning Commission agenda 10/12/21

Comment for 800 Mission

Renee Nickenig | City of San Rafael
Assistant Planner
1400 5th Avenue, 3rd floor
San Rafael, CA 94901
415-485-3397

The City of San Rafael is currently open for general walk-in customer service Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30AM – 12:30PM. For San Rafael City Services questions, updates, and resources visit <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/coronavirus>.



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

From: Nancy Abodeely <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, October 10, 2021 9:21 AM
To: planning <planning@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: 800 Mission Street Project/Planning Commission agenda 10/12/21

Attention
Steve Stafford
Planning Department
1400 Fifth Avenue, Top Floor
San Rafael, CA 94901

I am a resident of the Lincoln neighborhood and wish to express my opposition to the additional height proposed in the current plan for 800 Mission Ave. I would prefer to see a plan that satisfies the Design Review Committee and better reflects community needs and preferences. I support appropriate new development and trust that your department is considering all the visual and social impacts and consequences of development. In the context of drought, fire risk, community values, and aesthetics, I think we need to be extra diligent in evaluating commercial development proposals.

I hope you will recommend rejecting the new plan, task the developer with further work on the building design, and communicate the reasons to us residents.

Thank you,

Nancy Abodeely



FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD

October 7, 2021

Steve Stafford, Planning Dept.
1400 Fifth Avenue. Top Floor
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Project at 800 Mission (Corner of Lincoln & Mission)

I consider the proposed height of more than 62 feet from the ground to be excessive.

I recommend that the specifications be reduced to match those recommended by the City Planning Dept.

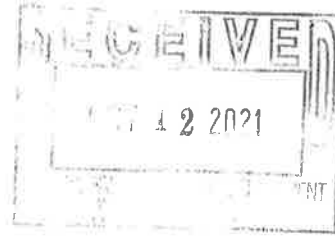
I also recommend that the plans pass the Design Review Board before being presented to the San Rafael Planning Commission.

Lynn Mason

[REDACTED]
San Rafael CA, 94901

Date: Oct 6, 2021

To: Steve Stafford
Planning Department
1400 Fifth Avenue, Top Floor
San Rafael, CA 94901



From: Don Sykes
[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Proposed Project at 800 Mission St.

Mr Stafford, et al;

It is only just now that I come to realize what is being proposed for the corner lot on Mission and Lincoln. Firstly, I am disappointed that the planning commission has come this far without multiple notifications being sent out to every household in the 94901 zip code requesting input.

Any project this large and impactful to an already problematic intersection, should be much better publicized. You shouldn't assume that everyone in the city is aware of what is going on in the Planning Department. Your job should be informing **us**, not assuming that each of us is checking on what you're doing!

Second, any and all **large projects** should be put before the voters **before** any agreements are made with developers. That will save you and the developers a great deal of time and money by not pursuing unwanted projects.

I read from a comment on nextdoor.com that this will be voted on by the public before it's approved. I hope that is true, but regardless of a public vote, I want to let you know now that, as a 30+ year San Rafael resident, I am **opposed to any major development on that site.**

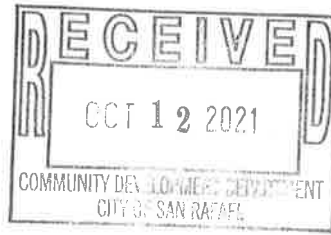
Thank You,

Donald E. Sykes

Don Sykes

Oct 5, 2021

City of San Rafael
Planning Commission
C/O Steve Stafford
1400 5th Ave
San Rafael, CA 94901



Re: Proposed Development of 800 Lincoln Ave & 1580 Lincoln Ave

Dear Mr Stafford,

I am providing input with regard to the projects in San Rafael referenced above for the upcoming meeting of the Planning Commission set for Oct 12, 2021. Both of these projects have been reviewed in the past and public comments have been provided. I have not personally attended those meetings but it appears little progress has been made. I personally believe both of these projects plus any future development in San Rafael, or anywhere in Marin County, must be put on hold until our water issues are resolved. At the present it appears the Commission has taken the stance that San Rafael should continue with developments and then the rain will come. It's anyone's guess as to what happens with regard to rainfall this fall and winter but not even moderate rain will not resolve the issue of no water. Additionally, we are not scoring well with water conservation.

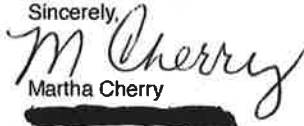
I have lived in Marin County since 1998 and specifically in the Lincoln Hill neighborhood since 2004. The general consensus from the neighborhood is that both of the proposed buildings are too large, especially in height, compared to the other buildings. It appears the developer has turned a deaf ear to the that comment. 800 Lincoln already received an 11'2" height bonus. This certainly does not preserve harmony and balance with the remainder of the neighborhood. It also ignores the fact that there is a shortage of employees for assisted living and convalescent facilities nationwide. So why insist upon pushing the boundaries to build a huge facility that cannot be fully occupied because it cannot be properly staffed. It makes more sense to preserve balance and harmony within the neighborhood by building something that is not so colossal. I do realize that businesses need to make a profit. Perhaps a smaller, less expensive build would be a good place to start.

My own experience is that once variances, especially height, are allowed, there is more pressure to continue that trend. Washington Park, in Denver, CO, is just one example of what happens with that trend. Two bedroom Tudor style homes are now 6 bedroom. The increased height has blocked the sun from many residences.

Finally, just as a general comment, I think it would be prudent for the Planning Commission to keep in mind that the Lincoln Hill neighborhood is a working class neighborhood. It is not a tourist destination. The impact of the increased traffic increases pollution and noise. This neighborhood is already heavily impacted.

In closing, thank you to the Planning Commission for requesting public input. I am hopeful for an outcome that everyone can accept.

Sincerely,


Martha Cherry
