

Don't build the hotel at 1580 Lincoln Ave!

Catherine Abrams [REDACTED]

Sun 10/17/2021 9:09 AM

To: Krystle Rizzi <Krystle.Rizzi@cityofsanrafael.org>

Krystle,

My name is Catherine Abrams. I am a homeowner here in San Rafael. I live very close to the proposed location for a new hotel at 1580 Lincoln Ave. I **STRONGLY OPPOSE** this building project. Here are the reasons why:

- It would block our view to the southeast.
- It would bring more congestion and traffic to Lincoln which is already a very busy thoroughfare.
- There are already hotels and apartment buildings on Lincoln. Adding another tall building (4 stories tall with a 8'9" bonus bringing the **total height to 53'6"**!) will create an undesirable tunnel effect on Lincoln Ave.
- There is a plan to have a car lift. This will create noise for all the surrounding neighbors.
- This is already a densely populated location. Please don't add to the congestion.

Honestly I was crossing my fingers this site would be turned back into a Garden Center. A one story business that the local residents could visit and support. Another hotel does not meet the bill.

Please don't build a 4 story 53'6" hotel at 1580 Lincoln Ave. The neighborhood strongly opposes this project.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Catherine Abrams

[REDACTED]
Homeowner & local firefighter

Hotel on Lincoln

Angela Elkins [REDACTED]

Thu 10/14/2021 10:07 PM

To: Krystle Rizzi <Krystle.Rizzi@cityofsanrafael.org>

There needs to b a moratorium on building. We have no water and traffic is impossible! Please address this and let me know why the City of San Rafael is doing this? Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT :1580 Lincoln Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901: Response /Submission for Public records - Cc: City Attorney

Bob Ford [REDACTED]

Mon 10/18/2021 11:05 AM

To: Krystle Rizzi <Krystle.Rizzi@cityofsanrafael.org>

Dear Ms. Rizzi
Consulting Planner
City of San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: SLOAT PROPERTY
Proposed HOTEL DEVELOPMENT
1580 Lincoln Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901:

In Response to submitted conceptual plans
My Letter of Response /Submission for Public records
Note: added Posted Public Response from our NextDoor Community cited below:

Cc: City Attorney: R. Epstein

I was just recently was informed of a development that is within 500 ft. of my property and I believe barely within the required by law timeframe for response/submission? In the future please allow a maximum of time for neighborhood/neighbor response.

So forgive the hurried response to this proposed development.

While many of us in the Lincoln/San Rafael/ Dominican area mourn the loss of the Sloat Nursery (a longtime gem) in our community. I like others, understand "marketplace changes" and the redevelopment needs of the community. Having myself worked with San Rafael Community members, City Staff and our Local LHNA association members (Jimmy, Nina and others way back when- 90's) . .we have spent countless hours on the Vision San Rafael 2020 (and how it relates to not only our overall neighborhood/city) our concern then(mine now) is it clearly states the parameters for this parcel (1580), which this development violates on so many levels. It is just plainly out of scale (lot size), and as a longtime community member I'd like to see another asset not another addition of a behemoth "out of scale nightmare" for our underserved community. The scope and scale is totally out of wack and not within the zoning parameters. It is NOT a commercial zone - it is HR1000 - thus ranting one unit (500sq ft unit) per 1,000 sq ft. Thus I'm asking the City planning staff, review board and City Attorney to reject this proposal for the following reasons:

USE:

While it can be argued a HOTEL is a COMMERCIAL or RESIDENTIAL use, a Hotel with a Cafe/Restaurant would certainly put it in Commercial zone, as rules governing restaurateurs are generally different than those governing hotelers. "Restaurateurs have no duty to receive all persons who are in a presentable condition and are able to pay for services while hotelers must provide shelter. Providing leeway to restaurateurs ; set dress codes, establish house rules, and set their business hours, etc in commercial operation Note: Local/State laws vary with common-law requirements and traditions. Restaurants and inns are subject to regulation under various local/state powers. Many states delegate the responsibility of regulating inns and restaurants to administrative bodies or agencies such as a state hotel and restaurant commission, or a state board of health. Restaurants and inns are not public utilities, and may not be subject to the regulations of a public service commission unless they are acting as agents for a public utility. The general requirement for state regulations on inns and restaurants is "reasonableness." Most states require restaurant and inn owners to apply for and receive a license to operate such facilities." ICU Case Law, Cornell University

I only mention this, as there is mention of "Cafe" in application, clearly an additional "commercial" operational use, thus a cafe/eatery would and should NOT be allowed. Unknown hours, no off street parking etc. Please note and review the City of San Rafael Zoning changes to this parcel (in 1990s) from R-5 to HR -1000 * with the express intention of removing ALL commercial uses not just from the Lincoln Ave corridor , ie: D street and others. Note: HR-1000 is a high density residential designation - no longer allowed under this rezoning: Offices,Malls, Restaurants ,Yards ,Stations.etc. Only Hi-Density Housing. Thus since there was not a restaurant there, and thus grandfathered somehow, it was Nursery (Also Note: now not allowed with closed and loss of continual use provision) , so even grandfathering in a CAFE would not be allowed. If the developer did a cursory research of the City's zoning this would be clear, and thus if wanted a Hotel and restaurant they simply should have bought the Villa Inn across the street. It has both and could be resurrected under grandfathered if they kept the operating permit and continued use of facility and maintaining continual use. If not it too would not be allow with out a variance. Think of all the commercial deliveries: Food, Industrial Supplies, Laundry etc. again: Commercial use. Also Note: The Zoning has worked with conversion a more than a few offices to much needed workforce housing. And several businesses still remain with continual use from R-5 zoning: Hotels, Ambulance yard etc. All well and good. Thoughtful, honest and well intentioned redevelopment takes time (and btw: water).

2020 Vision

Working over the years and countless hours of San Rafael Planning Committee, City Staff (time) and local groups a broad vision was

produced for the City of San Rafael. Vision 2020. It covered many "visions" and a roadmap to adhere to, many that have come fruition: Rafael Theater restoration, "Alive after Five" and Chamber, BIDs and community promotion to gain more use after "Office Hours", In fill development of lots, second units, etc. It is working all be it "questionable" in the approval of some recent developments. The LHNSA along with other area neighborhood associations worked tirelessly to create this vibrant reimagined use of their community as "Outlining assets" and "a spoke" to the to (downtown) city/ property/parcels within. Each "Area District" contributing a specific need or asset. For the "Lincoln Avenue corridor", as it was revered to, it had a larger vision of redevelopment into a city gateway "welcoming corridor" from the North US101. Agreed to set backs from the street as not to create a "Tunnel Effect" in approach. Staggered , set back from street with a MIXTURE OF owner occupied condos/townhouse and apts for work force housing central to workforce and the vibrancy of nearby downtown shops, office and business. This was due to the fact of the City's desire of widening/adding lanes to Lincoln Avenue in the future. Thus how would a Blvd. with no off street parking and a 4 story Hotel built at the sidewalk even be even safe to children and pedestrians , aesthetics aside ?. We have area children with their bus stop right there at that intersection. With this proposal it appears NO visual corridor for Grand Ave. cars turning left. Stop Light required I assume (cost approx \$200k) Currently Accident heavy, one pedestrian death, numerous accidents, hit and run 's, and lastly my neighbor is in a wheelchair from crossing at that very intersection! Need I say more!! Safety of our OVERALL community is at stake with this development. Am I against redevelopment of this property? - no! Redevelopment of the property sensibly , within the confines of 2020 Vision, building codes etc. YES! This development has so many variances to be asked/allowed of City's building codes. The house and yard in back (BROOKDALE) will never see the sun for Many months out of year for gods sake! While I can see this proposal may check off a box of two, it creates way more unchecked boxes and violates our local community has a whole. I don't see how contract workers /work trucks, or accompanied equipment could even use a "car lift". I could go on and on. If the City Staff and Planning committee actually went to existing Hotels on weekdays you would see that this is quite typical of current Hotel use in Marin county. Out of town, and out of state workers doing work in Marin County as locals can't afford to live here, thus hired from outside. The goal of Vision 2020 was to gain and retain City citizens to have them stay and spend locally longer, thus creating sales tax revenue. While a Hotel adds a different kind of Tax, at what cost to the city (EMT/Fire/Police calls), and transient residents that don't contribute long term to the economic sustainability of the city, only a short term occupancy tax is derived.

Lastly, perhaps this is just a bait and switch development as the only

way they could gain all these variances from the city is to have it as low income housing or special housing program? It appears MORE within the new State Building codes of provided Intermodal transportation corridor. What happens when SMART goes Bankrupt? Thus not "Boutique Hotel a conversion it appears. This just does not make sense for our community or the surrounding neighborhood period. I like many of my neighbors in the general vicinity would generally like to see it as a small Condo/ Townhouse development, Senior Appts, etc(see comments) with off street parking underneath , following many of the guidelines pointed to in this letter.

SIZE -matters:

The property is way too SMALL and NARROW to accommodate this proposal (plain and simple). NO SET BACK - it states the sidewalk as one! In my humble opinion" out of character" of the neighborhood and not welcomed in its current planned proposal by this nearby neighbor.

Now before your write this letter off as a NIMBY, I'm not a NIMBY I welcome a small /med development that fits within the parameters of the zoning, With safe visual corridors to aid safe crossing of our cars/children etc, not a development that shatters all the regulations/guidelines. Again: To be clear, I'm not against a reasonable development of this property, just un-nerved by the sheer scale and scope and out of bounds of the existing zoning. It appears more research needs to be done by developers as there appears to be just modest to medium demand for Hotel housing, more for entry level owner occupied housing with additions of large tax base (\$\$\$) for city and county. If built It is more than likely be converted to the true use of the intentions of the developer. I can not support nor can I encourage (tax paid)City staff and Planning Commissioners to approve this HOTEL. Period. I feel generally my neighbors and/or community requires a THOUGHTFUL ,overall planned development falling within the guidelines/vision set forward my City and Community /our Neighborhood/corridor set forth over the years and not just be thrown out the window either.

Please let's soundly reject this project and have them come back with a true asset to the neighborhood. Not a disaster in waiting.

In Conclusion:

Some community neighbors /LHNA Committee Members bring up good/valid points/?'s and have also made public /voiced their concerns (see below):

Mike Williamsen:

Can you send details on "further requests Variances?"

38 parking spaces – is that enough for 46 units?

Parking for staff – where will they park?

Parking for construction workers – where will they park?

Parking for guest drop-offs?

Stop light on Grand?

When will story poles go up?

Wouldn't it make sense to place hotels and such in the downtown area near public transportation and services?

Can the building be stepped back on the top floor to get more daylight onto Lincoln?

Neighbor to east on Brookdale - how is it affected?

Posted by:


LHNA Representative

Wow. This is shocking. Totally out of proportion for the neighborhood. That nursery was in a very small space.

Posted by:

Ann Sachetti

Do we have that many people needing hotel rooms in San Rafael?

Annie Nelson

As someone who lives directly across the street from the site, I do not look forward to the additional traffic and transience to the people in my neighborhood. Lincoln already has a lot of that. Not to mention the months of construction noise we will have to cope with. As a former city employee, I can say that if the city planning department has already (or is leaning toward) granting the variances, it's unlikely the project will change significantly before execution no matter what the neighborhood says. But I will happily join in any effort to bring a quieter, local business into the space.

18 Apr

Dana Phillips

- Dominican

I thought that due to our water shortage/going into a major drought that MMWD was halting issuing any new permits for new construction. I did try to find something to back this up as I thought I saw something about it a couple of weeks ago but was unable to find anything regarding current water hook-up request.

Carol Galloway

- Gerstle Park

That property is earmarked for a retirement home.

Philip Greene

- Terra Linda

why do we need a new hotel during an active pandemic

Greg Knell

- Terra Linda

Because of the State's operation home-key. Hotels are to be repurposed for homeless housing so there is actually a shortage. The rundown motel there has been considered for the program.

Jennifer Arcuni

- Lincoln Hill

how disappointing, i live in the oaks complex directly across and our bedroom faces the street-- it was nice looking out on sloat and we had hoped a new local business or cafe/restaurant or mixed use indoor/outdoor community space serving the neighborhood would eventually be housed here, not a 4 story hotel. i am concerned for a number of reasons. a retirement home or much-needed affordable housing would also be community-centered uses for the space but i am not sure that hotel project is really beneficial or best use of space.

Dana Phillips

- Dominican

Regarding parking - PARKING? What parking?!

this makes no sense at me. Where does the hotel staff park? Lincoln is packed with parked cars, and backed up often with so many more people using LINCOLN AVE EXIT rather than Central SR due to the train.

Myself

San Rafael

So this mirrors a few of my concerns, but many folks are confused about the zoning and use of this property, due to the demise of the long time commercial operator : Sloat. I suggest the City attorney reach out to our LHNA group with clarification and further review and information to the surrounding community

Many thanks for your work for bettering our community, this project is riddled with issues and in need of way too many variances and just fails on a safety of the community aspect. A dangerous intersection with school children being picked up 5 days a week. Please (please) reject and put in a thoughtful development and addition to our community not a "barely allowed " use development riddled with issues and create MORE issues, noise,etc. for a residential neighborhood.

Kindly

Robert Ford

Lincoln-San Rafael Hill Neighborhood Association
Co-founder & President, Nina Lilienthal-Murphy

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, Ca. 94915-0983

October 13, 2021

RE: 1580 Lincoln Avenue Proposal

City of San Rafael
Design Review Board
Attn: Krystle Rizzi, Planner
1400 – 5th Avenue
San Rafael, Ca. 94901

Dear Design Review Board,

As the President of the Lincoln-San Rafael Hill Neighborhood Association, I will be high lighting the issues and concerns the neighbors have with this proposal of 1580 Lincoln Avenue as a new hotel to our area. Our concerns are with the height of the proposal, the location, traffic impacts, the lack of water, and how deliveries will be made to this location.

- The Height – is too tall for this area. Most of our Neighborhood is made up of 2 and 3 story buildings. If this was lowered 1 story, we would be OK with this proposal. The extra height takes away views, privacy, and sunshine from neighbors, living in mostly Condo's and Apartments across the street, and on Brookdale, and will devalue their properties.
- The Location – is just wrong. Two hotels side by side in not needed in our neighborhood. The Villa Inn is a wonderful addition in our Neighborhood and houses enough guests to our area, but 2 hotels, are just not needed, especially next door to one another.
- Traffic – has there been a traffic study? if so, I would like to get a copy of that. We believe having a second hotel in the area would add more traffic to Lincoln Avenue, which is something we do not need. The commercial trucks: Garbage, Laundry pick up, food deliveries, appears to be on the Brookdale side, which have no way to turn around. How will deliveries be made??
- Water – As we all are aware of, on April 20, 2021 MMWD declared an “extreme drought conditions”, yet we continue to build not knowing what our future will bring. All of the residents are conserving water in our City, to help “out of town guests” so they can stay in a hotel. This does not work for anyone.

We in our neighborhood association hope the Design Review Board will look at this proposal from the resident's perspective, having bought a home or condo next to or across the street from this proposal, that extra top floor will literally take away their views, they'll get no more sun, and the guests in the hotel can look into their condo's and home windows, which impedes on their privacy, and of course

their property values will plummet. We are counting on you to protect and preserve our neighborhood character, and consider the impact of this proposal on the residents.

In the year 2000 all of the neighborhood leaders, working in harmony with the City on the General Plan 2020, we all came to agreement at that time, that we do not want a "tunnel effect" going along Lincoln Avenue. This was agreed upon by The Design Review Board, The Planning Commission, City Council, and then Mayor Al Boro, and our Neighborhood Association. I know we just passed the 2040 General Plan, but that does not mean that we summarily dismiss what was worked on for 2020 General Plan. Lining Lincoln Avenue with tall buildings, like the hotel proposal, will ruin the whole look of our neighborhood, take the sun away, and have a dark gloomy neighborhood. Together, let's try and not have this happen. This is extremely important to the Character of our Neighborhood.

We hope you take our concerns to heart, as we look forward to working together on this proposal.
Sincerely,



Nina Lilienthal-Murphy
Co-founder & President of the
Lincoln-San Rafael Hill Neighborhood Association



Email