

Town of Yountville
Irene Borba Director of Planning
Yountville Zoning Design Review Board.

Humboldt Jefferson Mixed Use Project.

Dear Ms. Borba.

My wife and I are residents of 6584 Jefferson St. We are one of the three families who homes have a private Driveway off of Jefferson which will be impacted the most by the construction of the Mixed Use Project on Humboldt. BB and I as well as our neighbors are in unison and lockstep as to the damage that this project will have on our homes and lifestyle. Our homes have been in the neighborhood for over 20+ years. We are under attack by a project that does not fit within the surrounding area or neighborhood. You have previously received letters in opposition from Clark Thompson and Bobby Rastomi voicing their opposition to the Development which is oversized and too bulky for the property among their other comments. BB and I concur with their comments and rationale and support them fully.

When this project was proposed over two years ago, we raised the issue that this was a case of selective Zoning and I still maintain that the zoning is inappropriate. However, we also spoke at the previous hearing about compromise. Since the hearing on the Town Plan, we have had no discussions with the owner ever!

What developer offered, belatedly, was a meeting today at 5pm one day before the hearing. Note that it was after the date and time that Ms. Borba was requesting final comments.

Transparency and timeliness are important. We received ability to see all of the reports on Thursday June 6, 2024, less than 5 days before the Hearing. We completely understand how busy the City Staff are currently, but meetings should be driven by giving all citizens time to analyze and comment. In late 2021 Associate Professor of Urban Planning Michael Manville wrote a Planetizen article about the nuances of city zoning requirements and the consequences for planning and development.

Developers are able to bargain with the city over parking and building height requirements by offering to contribute subsidized housing and building green spaces. "A zoning bylaw that contains onerous and unnecessary regulations might be good for bargaining, but it isn't a good zoning bylaw," Manville wrote. "Selectively enforcing rules can give officials more power to accomplish short-term goals, but it risks a long-term consequence of eroding faith in the rules themselves." Furthermore, selective zoning can lead to corruption when rules are not universally enforced. Manville concluded that zoning should be transparent and that "our goal should be good policies that yield good outcomes."

Planning Department

I would like to thank the Planning Department for encouraging the use of Story poles and signs as mandated which has helped the socialization of the project. We all recognize that the Department is shorthanded, and we appreciate all of the efforts they have made on this Project.

ZDRB

The Municipal Code states the purposes of the Design Review. Town of Yountville municipal code.17.188:

This chapter establishes procedures for design review of proposed physical improvements in order to implement General Plan and zoning design criteria by guiding the location, functions and appearance of development to promote and protect the safety, convenience, comfort, prosperity and general welfare of the Town. The purposes of design review are:

A.

To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the land and of the man-made environment, and the enjoyment thereof.

B.

To maintain and improve the qualities and relationships between individual buildings, structures and physical developments which contribute to the amenities and attractiveness of the Town or neighborhood; and

C.

To enhance and protect the use of buildings throughout the Town.

As part of the review the ZDRB must find:

§ 17.188.060 Findings and decision.

Following the public hearing, the responsible reviewing authority may approve the application and authorize a design review permit if the facts presented establish ALL of the following:

A.

The proposed development or physical improvement is appropriate for the site with regard to the siting and scale of buildings, pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation, and relationship of structures and open spaces to the streetscape.

B.

The location of structures preserves significant trees, natural features and identified public view corridors.

C.

The project will be compatible with neighboring properties and developments with regard to setbacks, building heights, and massing.

D.

The project will not be detrimental to neighboring properties and developments with regard to the location of parking facilities, siting of trash enclosures, placement of mechanical equipment, and privacy considerations.

E.

The project presents an attractive design, utilizing high-quality building finishes and materials, and design techniques to mitigate potentially bulky building forms, such as modulating varied rooflines, partial upper stories, setbacks for upper story volume and/or a variety of roof forms.

F.

Proposed landscaping provides sufficient visual relief, complements the buildings and structures on the site, and provides an inviting environment for the enjoyment of occupants and the public.

G.

The existing or proposed infrastructure and utility capacity are adequate for the proposed development; and

H.

The proposed project will comply with all applicable provisions of this Title 17 and will be consistent with the policies and standards of t§ 17.188.070.

Overall Comments

From an overall reading of the above and reviewing the impact of the Project on the surrounding properties, it is clear the building and structure as currently proposed fails to meet all of the requirements as stated in the Municipal Code.

The buildings size and Mass will adversely affect our Neighborhood to the north of the property and will also have a negative impact on the Art Park. I note that in the colored drawings, upon information and belief, they did not provide any view of how it would impact our properties and streets. This essentially turning our driveway into an alley way.

Building impact on our courtyard:

1. Height of building and setback. Please see the following photographs which address how our neighborhood will be impacted and closed in similar to now driving in an alley. All homes will be impacted by loss of view, reflection of sun off of walls, and potentially from creating a vortex. Mr. Rastomi and Mr. Thompson will be impacted by the Project directly blocking their views and sunlight. As Mr. Thompson alluded to in his letter nothing in the neighborhood is off this magnitude and mass. I note that the sketches or colored drawings do not show the north view of the building that impacts us. This project will impact the use and quiet enjoyment of all of our property. Please see the following pictures:
Picture 1 taken from our porch looking west towards Jefferson.
Picture 2 Taken from Clarks Gate
Picture 3 Taken from Mr. Rastomi's steps.
Picture 4 Taken Entering our Driveway.
Picture 5 The Black Walnut Tree relation to the building

2. Second story drive through. As shown on the proposed plans there is a drive-through to the car park for owners, customers, and staff. While this is on Humboldt, it is elevated so any noise will travel throughout the neighborhood and as result into our courtyard.

In addition, we have concerns regarding potential commercial use or for larger parties. There should be a time of early evening for any gatherings if the drive-through is approved and there should be zoning and deed restriction of no large groups no catering events and no food or wine services on the property.

3. Black Walnut Tree. We are concerned about the closeness of the building and proposed trash receptacles to the tree. This tree is a Heritage tree that must be protected. The building and proposed sidewalks will clearly impact the tree.
4. Trash Receptacles. They should be moved to Humboldt closer to 2008 Humboldt. South of the black Walnut tree Jefferson narrows and to have 12 trash receptacles is not appropriate nor conducive to our homes. With the City having increased the parking on Jefferson past the entrance to our courtyard there is little space for cars let alone trash cans. Jefferson during the day is effectively a one lane road that narrows considerably at Washington. See photo 6.

5. Traffic congestion. The TRIPS report really does not address how the congestion will increase on the corner of Washington, Humboldt, and Jefferson Street intersection due to foot and vehicular traffic. I am also concerned about any Loss of parking on Humboldt which will force additional traffic on Jefferson for parking.
6. Project on site parking. The location of the onsite surface and covered parking is pushed to the northeast corner of the lot. The corner is approximately 20 feet from our front door and approximately the same distance from Mr. Thompsons. We will be subject to cars driving in all day with doors opening and closing extremely close to our front door and even closer to our side windows. The car park should be on the Humboldt side of the property.

Retail Hours and after-hours parking.

1. In previous discussions regarding the Town plan restrictions were going to be placed on the property for no alcohol or wine sales and limited hours such that a gate would prevent parking overnight or parking after retail is closed in early evening.
2. We also have a concern that the elevated meeting areas are creating a larger problem of noise and abuse to meet the open space requirement. We, as noted above, want to understand why they need a break area or meeting area for residents of that size and height other than to try and comply with open space.
3. There should be a form of deed restriction on the property to prevent food sales, wines stores or catering on the property.
4. We will want to understand whether there are RTU's or HVAC and associate noise which will impact our property.

Summary,

On behalf of BB and myself and our neighbors Clark Thompson and Bobby Rastomi, we thank you for your consideration of these comments. As Clark and Bobby stated, we are in 100% agreement regarding opposing the proposed project as currently designed. We remain as we have for two years willing to discuss a reasonable solution that does not impact our right to quiet enjoyment and does not impact our property values. This letter incorporates by reference, Clark and Bobby's comments from their letters also.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments
BB and Carl Straub



Picture 6



Picture 5 5

Picture 4



Picture 3



Perspective

picture



Picture

2





picture 1