



June 6, 2024

(By electronic transmission)
Historical Advisory Board
City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: Alameda Point Historic District Design Guidelines for New Buildings

Dear Boardmembers:

It is good that the subject guidelines have been drafted. They are somewhat overdue.

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) has the following comments on the draft guidelines:

1. **Page 1, paragraph 2, line 3.** Delete "while avoiding mimicking these contributing structures. In other words..." And replace with "However,...". Much of this document actually promotes what might be considered "mimicking" streamlined moderne architecture, but this should be acceptable with regard to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, given the other provisions in the text, such as "new development should not be confused for being an original building" and the provision that new buildings and additions be differentiated from the original buildings.
2. The Guidelines should include the following statement:

Ensure that any new structures and additions to existing structures within the NAS Alameda Historic District are compatible with the District and are visually subordinate and deferential to existing buildings and other features that contribute to the District.

This statement is needed to address the risk that new buildings will become overly prominent, so that the historic buildings are no longer the District's dominant features, potentially destroying the District's sense of time and place and disqualifying the District from the National Register of Historic Places.

3. On page 7, there are two guidelines that state the following:
 - *If a contemporary design is desired, strive to blend it in with the neighborhood's existing aesthetic patterns and residential form/massing.*
 - *Historical design style building should have precedents in the neighborhood.*

The wording in both guidelines is ambiguous and subject to interpretation. For the first guideline, what is meant by a "contemporary design" how would it differ from the "historical design style" referenced in the next guideline? Also, what techniques should be used to ensure that it "blends in"? And what is meant by the "neighborhood's existing aesthetic patterns"?

For the second guideline, the term "precedents in the neighborhood" should be clarified. Does this mean that at least one existing building in the neighborhood uses a historical style that the new building seeks to emulate?

4. Illustrations of the above guidelines, as well as other guidelines, would be helpful.
5. Qualifiers such as "consider", "should", "when feasible", etc. should be minimized.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, Chair
Preservation Action Committee
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

cc: Allen Tai, Steven Buckley and David Sablan (by electronic transmission)
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)