

## Statement of Design Intent

### Eagle Ave. Multi-Family Housing Project

2437 Eagle Avenue, Alameda, California, 94501

May 20, 2015

#### Introduction/Overview:

The site for this family housing project is a .83-acre (36,000 sq. ft.) parcel located at the corner of Eagle Avenue and Everett Street, one block north of Park Street near downtown Alameda. The property was previously owned by the Alameda Unified School District and in 2012 it was rezoned from M-2 (Industrial) to NP-R as part of the newly designated North Park Street Residential District. Medium density residential is planned in this area. The site is currently an empty lot surrounded by chain link fencing, and it has been vacant and visually unattractive since the School District closed and removed the modular buildings used for Island High several years ago. In October 2014, the site was transferred by sale to the Housing Authority of Alameda for the sole purpose of redevelopment as affordable housing.

The neighborhood within which this site is situated has a diverse character. There are single family and multi-family residential buildings to the east and south, and commercial and industrial buildings to the west and north. On the same block along both Eagle Avenue and Everett Street, there are commercial businesses, which is indicative of the side by side development of both industry and workers moving into the area to work near the northern waterfront throughout the years. The project site has excellent access to public transit, employment, services and recreation. Located nearby within walking distance are many services, such as the Bridgeside Shopping Center which is 2-1/2 blocks to the northeast, the Marketplace and restaurants on Park Street, McKinley Park which is 5 blocks to the west, the Alameda Main Library, the Alameda Cineplex, 2 elementary schools, and several churches.

2437 Eagle Avenue is located within ¼ mile (4 blocks) of AC Transit bus stops that provide service directly to downtown San Francisco and to the Fruitvale BART stations to allow people to get to regional job centers. Enclosed and secure bicycle parking and transit passes will be provided to all resident families to encourage less use of cars and more opportunities for pedestrian interaction with the surrounding community.

#### Architectural Design:

The proposed project is organized in the row house building type as recommended for the NP-R zone. All of the new units will be for affordable family housing. Twenty-two units are being proposed, comprising of (6) 1-bedroom units, (9) 2-bedroom units, and (7) 3-bedroom units. Each of the three unit types will have a fully accessible unit on the ground floor. Also on the ground floor, there will be 5 visitable and adaptable units for a total of nine accessible/adaptable units. Amenities for shared use include a

services, landscaped grounds, a designated children's play area, and parking on site for both cars and bicycles.

Three buildings are being proposed, which will alternate between two and three stories in height. The separate buildings bring down the scale of the design for a more harmonious transition along the street. In each building there will be a mix of flats and townhouses to provide a balance of privacy and accessibility for people with disabilities.

The architecture of the building exteriors have been inspired by design elements of the local neighborhood, such as sheltered entry porches, tall articulated windows, and gabled roofs. Fiber cement siding, panels, and board and batten, are used to emulate and accentuate the vertical proportions that are often displayed in Stick style architecture of the Victorian era. Columns of bay windows, the varying roof lines, and the composition of the façade materials are carefully designed to further break up the mass of each building and articulate the individual units. This helps to enhance the residential character of the street frontage and further bring the project's scale to be more in line with that of the adjacent properties.

Incorporating the outdoors is an important part of our design to create a humane and connected environment for future residents. Large windows allow more light and air to penetrate deeper into each unit, and the unit plans are arranged to provide both privacy and visual sightlines to the common areas and the open spaces. Each unit has an efficient floor plan to minimize the overall building footprint on the site while providing for the maximum amount of landscaped grounds and parking spaces on the site. Ground floor units will have semi-private patios in the rear, which then lead to shared outdoor spaces. Some of the upper units will have balconies that are situated over covered porches for the lower units, which can be outdoor useable space for residents of those units.

### **Site Design:**

The buildings are organized on the site to maximize access to natural light and to facilitate natural ventilation through each unit from the north and south directions. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic are separated with different entrances, with the car entrance from Everett Street, and the main pedestrian entrance on Eagle Avenue. The parking lot is tucked away from view from the street in the northwest corner of the lot.

The main pedestrian entrance on Eagle Avenue is a delineated space defined by a pair of benches on each side of the main entry path and surrounded by landscaping.

This will be an area where the resident families and the community can come together and get to know one another, and the green setting will provide an inviting and peaceful tone for the transition from the street into the site. Throughout the project site, there will be trees and landscaping to provide a park-like environment.

The main entry path has a trellis, which will be open along the path to let in dappled sunlight, and covered with roof panels over the bike storage to protect it from weather. The trellis leads the eye to a central play area, which sits at the intersection of the entry path from Eagle Avenue and the main cross path along the middle of the site that accesses Everett Street. Next to the central play area, a large courtyard area is located outside the community room and offices, and social interaction and community activities can take place inside and outside as needed.

In our design, we recognize circulation paths throughout the site as more than just pathways, and even common tasks such as the mail box area, or the bridge between buildings, are viewed as opportunities for interactions and connectivity that will build a sense of community and place for the residents. The main path along the middle of the site will narrow and widen to provide small areas of flexible spaces for various social and recreational activities. Ornamental landscaping will adorn the pathways and a paving pattern in the concrete path will wind through the site.

### **Landscape Design:**

The landscape design provides for inviting areas for shared use, and buffer zones for the units and between the units and the street. These zones connect the residents to the community while maintaining a sense of privacy. Along the street, the existing planting strip along Everett Street will be rejuvenated, and a new 4' wide planting strip will be installed along Eagle Avenue where there currently is only a 12' wide concrete sidewalk. An existing mature Pin Oak tree in the front setback of Everett Street will also be preserved. New trees in the planting strips will be Yarwood London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) trees along Everett Street and New Harmony Elm trees along Eagle Avenue. These are both commonly seen trees in the neighborhood, and will extend and continue the shaded tree lined pedestrian experience along these streets.

Small trees (Honey Locust, *Gleditza tricanthos*) are placed along Eagle Avenue to build on the layered lacy green screen of the New Harmony Elms, shrubs and grasses in the setback area between the buildings and the sidewalk. This screen visually softens the buildings and helps integrate them into the neighborhood pattern while providing a lush setting at the sidewalk edge. Tall columnar trees (Copper Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*

'Red Obelisk') and Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*) line the parking lot edge and provide shade and screening from the neighboring properties.

The proposed plant palette has been carefully selected and placed according to sustainable bay friendly landscaping guidelines, and the design was developed with a balance of residential scale, neighborhood context, and seasonal interest in mind. Drought resistant and native plants are planted throughout the site. Integrated into the landscaping will be bio-retention areas to manage stormwater on site. Together, the landscaping and the architecture will complement the scale and look of the existing street scape, and help to define the vibrant character of this community.

### **Sustainability:**

Our design is intended to provide high quality housing with durable materials which are sensitive to the environment and promote healthy light and air for its users. This project is an integrated design featuring a high performance building envelope and energy efficient water heating and HVAC systems. The overall design performance will exceed Title 24 California energy requirements and CALGreen standards by a minimum of 10%. This all-electric building will be near net-zero ready, and we will work with AMP to obtain approval of a solar PV system. The project will be certified under Green Point Rating and Bay Friendly Landscaping certification. LEED standards will be used as the basis of system design, although LEED certification will not be pursued.

### **Key Design Features:**

- Bicycle Parking
- Access to Public Transportation
- Energy Star Appliances
- Ceiling Fans
- High Performance Building Envelope
- Engineered Lumber
- High Efficiency Heat Pump Water Heaters
- Low VOC & Recycled Materials
- Stormwater Management
- Drought Tolerant Plants
- Low Flow Plumbing Fixtures
- Oversize Windows to provide ample daylighting
- Natural through ventilation for Healthy Indoor Air Quality
- Cement Board siding, panels and trim
- High Ceilings to allow natural light to penetrate deeper into units