

Arden Wood Neighbors, Developers Closer

NEIGHBORS' POINT OF VIEW

By Eric Castongia, Zephyr Real Estate

Big Changes presented on the Proposed Arden Wood Development

The developers of the proposed housing project on the Arden Wood property sponsored two workshops in February to present their new vision for the 4.6 acre parcel. In Republic Urban's words, you talked, we listened. Their new scheme was a significant and welcomed departure from the original 13 and six story towers, which were loudly opposed by neighbors.

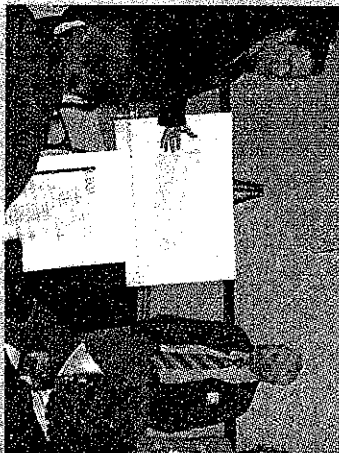
The new scheme consists of four new, low-rise buildings straddling a village drive, culminating at a cul-de-sac. Two existing buildings are to stay and be remodeled as part of the development; building 701 which is currently staff housing and the director's house. Robert Mendelsohn, President of Republic Urban Properties San Francisco Branch, states that although a Planned Unit Development will still be needed to build the project, it will be built to existing zoning guidelines, with the height staying within the 40 foot height limit.

As part of the workshops, four stations were set up: 1) Architecture, 2) LEED Certification, 3) Landscaping, and 4) EIR/Approvals. For participants to discuss various issues and questions with experts in each area. There was not a follow up portion of the meeting to ask questions, as a group. Mr. Mendelsohn stated that he would be happy to present the revised project to the neighborhood for input. Some of the project specifics:

- 60-75% of the existing trees are planned to remain
- Green space will be maintained at the perimeter of the site
- Three walking paths were highlighted for access from the development to the West Portal transit hub, one of which was shown behind the Arden Wood Christian Science facility
- The entry and exit to the development will be on 19th Ave. Cal Trans has not yet given approval for the access
- The 18th Ave. and Wawona gate will be used

DEVELOPERS' MESSAGE

By Robert Mendelsohn, Republic Urban Properties



Over the past year, the West Portal community has been providing us with their thoughts and ideas about the project, and we have been listening. As a result, we have made significant changes in the design of the proposed development and we believe this project will truly be an asset to the community for generations to come.

First unveiled at our community workshops in February, our new design no longer includes two buildings at 6 and 13 stories each, but now consists of four buildings, which are the same height as The Grove Condominiums (an average height of 40 feet each) and totals 141 units. There will be one entrance and exit for the development from 19th Avenue which will be private and will not interfere with The Grove's existing fire road. We also have an extensive landscaping plan that complements the existing dense tree canopy on the site and lowered building height will effectively screen the buildings. Additionally, roof top gardens will further mask the development from above.

Addressing your traffic concerns is also a major priority for us. Over the course of the project, we will be working closely with the City, CalTrans, and an independent traffic consultant to help mitigate any traffic and circulation challenges that are identified through the EIR process. Additionally, our on-site parking and

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only for emergency vehicles

- The revised scheme plans for 141 units-down from 162
- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification-a rating system by the U.S. Green Building Council to promote environmentally sensitive construction (renewable resources, sustainable site development (such as collecting rain water for landscape irrigation) and energy efficient construction. Republic Urban is shooting for a 'Gold' Certification
- The developer plans on filing plans for their environmental evaluation application (pre-Environmental Impact Report) within the next month

• The developer may opt to pay a fee in lieu of providing for the city's Inclusionary (or workforce) housing requirement

The neighbors I spoke to about the revised design were optimistic, although they were not yet ready to give their full support, having some outstanding concerns, here are a few:

- Sufficient on-site parking. The anticipation is that many new residents will have multiple cars and not enough parking. The City would like to discourage people from using their cars, so their requirements are for a maximum of one space per household. Given the number commuters out of the City in this area, and insufficient options for public transit, neighbors see that as overly optimistic.
- How will site traffic go South on 19th Ave. In a previous scheme, the site's entry and exit at the 19th and Wawona traffic light, allowed a left turn from the site to go South and end dangerous U-Turns in front of St. Cecelias.

To create an acceptable project, the developer, neighbors, Cal Trans and the City of San Francisco will need to remain involved and committed to resolving the issues special to this area. With neighbor involvement, the proposed project has gone far since its inception. Stay informed, involved and vocal.

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Robert Mendelsohn and Mike Van Every at Arden Wood Workshop

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circulation plans will further address concerns about guest and/or resident traffic and parking on nearby neighborhood streets.

Just as with our initial proposed design, our updated project is always evolving to address the concerns of the community. We plan to continue to meet with the community throughout the planning and approval stages of the Arden Wood development. The EIR process also provides the community the opportunity to address the scope of the report, followed by a public comment and review period before a final EIR is issued.

We are pleased that so many neighbors were able to attend our workshops and we are reviewing and addressing all the comments given in response to the new design in the coming weeks. If any neighbor was unable to attend, or if you have additional comments, we still welcome your feedback. Please visit www.ardenwoodsf.com for additional information as well as to contact us about the proposed project.

Robert Mendelsohn is a retired San Francisco Supervisor, and currently heads Republic Urban West. ardenwood@republic-urban.com or www.ardenwoodsf.com

Editor's note: as of press time, the ardenwoodsf site has not been updated to reflect the new designs.