

San Francisco Planning Commission;  
1650 Mission St. Suite 400  
SF, CA, 94103-2414

Subject: Discretionary Review Reform

Dear Commissioners;

The Parkmerced Residents Organization represents 3,500 units and about 10,000 tenants living within the area of Parkmerced bordered by Brotherhood Way, 19th Avenue, Lake Merced Boulevard and Holloway and Font Ave's. The mission of the PRO organization is to maintain the quality of life and the residential character within these boundaries.

Discretionary Review is an essential tool that helps our organization review and maintain the quality of space that has vaulted Parkmerced into the national spotlight [www.tclcf.org](http://www.tclcf.org) Marvels of Modernism, "Landscapes @ Risk" 2008 by the Cultural Landscape Foundation. Charles Birnbaum has noted the "integrity" of the landscape design and the possibility of being a "National Landmark" as a masterplanned community.

The noted changes suggested by the planning commission of replacing the DR hearings with a single hearing officer seems to ignore the issues involved and complexity of projects and review by planning of changes that occur in our district consistently without adequate review. The fact that over 30 units were at one point being worked on with definitive character and scale changes, with only permits for 3 units noted on the DBI website at the time of the work shows that the department of interior standards for landmark properties, or ones that have the possibility and have not been adequately reviewed, suggests improprieties and lack of proper oversight in regards to permits issued.

We are convinced that the planning commission hearing process adds value to the discussion, and the newly founded Historic Preservation Commission will provide additional balance to the overall review of changes to the possible large scale landmarks and districts in the city.

Expecting a single hearing officer to review projects seems that a lack of view-points, and clear un-blemished morality of the single hearing officer, would make a very unrealistic situation.

To reduce the overall DR workload is commendable, but there should be proper public and noticed review (TO ALL TENANTS and BUSINESSES) in the areas surrounding such large scaled properties. Even for more minor work should be required due to the larger visual impact such work creates.

Neighborhood Feedback and communication to neighborhood organizations, and tenants groups including PRO [www.parkmercedresidents.org](http://www.parkmercedresidents.org) should be required of such permitting so that input and comment is given prior to wholesale changes on site with little discussion of the impacts and possible cost pass-throughs to tenants.

With a solid focus on neighborhood specific criteria to such changes, in addition to institutional growth and proposals that affect prior outlined districts, and impact our areas when they are neglected should be incorporated so that DBI, and Planning Dept, and the Historical Preservation Commission can input the DR process to mandate adequate upkeep, and care so that parcels do not fall into neglect and need DR review for the changes in upkeep proposed.

The Parkmerced Residents Organization urges the Planning Commission to direct planning staff to work with neighborhood groups and tenant organizations to best refine and incorporate neighborhood and existing tenant input into the overall planning process so that disrepair and

negligence, defferred maintenance and subsequent sell-off of land does not become the norm, which perpetuates further DR processes.

Sincerely

Aaron Goodman VP @ PRO

[www.parkmercedresidents.org](http://www.parkmercedresidents.org)

[www.parkmercedlandscape.blogspot.com](http://www.parkmercedlandscape.blogspot.com)

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