



Bernal Heights

East Slope Design Review Board

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bhesdrb@gmail.com

December 26, 2022
Daniela Hammond
Inverse Project
Escazu, Costa Rica
danielah@inverseproject.com

RE: 1619-1621 York Street
Block/Lot #5530/011 + 010
CC: Ella Samonsky, SF Planning
ella.samonsky@sfgov.org

Dear Daniela,

The Bernal Heights East Slope Design Review Board held a neighborhood meeting on December 15, 2022 to review drawings dated November 14, 2022 for the proposed remodel and addition to 1619-1621 York Street. The meeting was held over Zoom and attended by approximately nine neighbors.

The Board believes that the project is in general conformance with the Bernal Heights East Slope Building Guidelines. The proposal is relatively modest in size for this double lot, and would provide a distinct and interesting architectural expression at this visually prominent location. We particularly like that the scheme maintains the facade's open garden-like relationship to York Street, and does not intensively develop the corner, instead stepping down with the hill. We are hopeful that the project could be well-detailed and have the high level of material quality expressed in the presentation.

We recommend, however, that the architect and/or project sponsor meet with the Planning Department soon to review a number of Planning Code issues that are beyond the scope of our Guidelines, but would materially affect the project. In particular, we believe that Planning should advise on applicable height limits and required setbacks at this very steep and unusually shaped site, and whether any variances would be required to build the project as proposed.

In a related matter, the neighbors at 1629 York Street, uphill from the subject property, noted that the proposed expansion at the rear of the top floor would eliminate their view to the west. They encouraged the architect and project sponsor to consider cutting it back as a neighborly gesture. Your future discussions with Planning about applicable height limits and required setbacks at the rear may additionally inform a consideration to reduce the extent of the rear addition, which would otherwise be very high above Peralta Street, rather than pursue variance(s).

In addition, we heard from a number of neighbors before and during the meeting who expressed concern about losing a distinctive older house, and remodeling it in a way that seemed out of scale with neighboring homes and too modern. Other neighbors supported the design as an expression of its time, and noted that it was helpful to see the presentation to understand better how the proposal fit into the context. Some shared that it was a matter of having differing taste.

The Board notes that using a lighter color for the primary material could help the house contrast less starkly with the older homes around it. Also the mid-site entry door could be confusing, as it appears that the entry (and street address) is on the gabled facade facing York Street.

The Board thanks you for presenting the plans to the neighborhood and invites you to schedule another meeting to review refinements in response to clarifications from Planning and the points enumerated here. Please email us at bhesdrb@gmail.com to schedule once you have revised the drawings.

Since the Board is not a City agency, it does not have the power to either approve or disapprove the application.

Cordially,



Wendy Cowles, Chair
On Behalf of the Bernal Heights East Slope Design Review Board