

TITLE: PALACE OF FINE ARTS-SAN FRANCISCO ARTS, CRAFTS, COMMUNITY AND HOSPITALITY
SPONSOR: EQUITY COMMUNITY BUILDERS (ECB)

OVERVIEW: Our vision for the Palace of Fine Arts is to create a grand public concourse that embraces the history, arts, products, crafts and culture of San Francisco, particularly celebrating the building's legacy from the Panama Pacific Exposition. The concourse will extend the full length of the Palace, opening the south entry to welcome the neighborhood, and connecting through to the prior Exploratorium entry to the north. The concourse will be punctuated by the restoration of the grand historic central entry across from the rotunda. The 700-foot length of the concourse and the space fronting the colonnade and lagoon will open to embrace the public, matching the Ferry Building and other well-known interior public markets and promenades in size and scale, with a broad public purpose of featuring the arts and welcoming the community. We envision a lively, interactive public experience throughout the ground floor as a complementary and natural extension of the recreational experience of the adjacent park and the broader northern waterfront, including: curated installations of art and sculpture; studios, galleries, artists in residence, maker spaces, hands-on classes; interpretive and interactive exhibits that tell the story of the Palace of Fine Arts, the Pan Pacific International Exhibition, and Bernard Maybeck; a cooking school, restaurants, cafes and a small marketplace; outlets for San Francisco crafts and products, featuring local manufacturers; and places and structures, inspired by the arts, where families and kids of all ages can play and learn.

A powerful revenue generator must be created to support the high cost of rehabilitation, maintenance and operation of the public programming of the Palace of Fine Arts. Based on our experience at Cavallo Point Lodge, the strength of the local market, and this prime location along the San Francisco waterfront, we believe a hospitality use can be the economic engine that supports the larger project, while not overpowering its public purpose and access. The hospitality use strongly enhances public access to the Palace and the many cultural and recreational destinations available along the northern edge of San Francisco, including those found at the Golden Gate Bridge, Crissy Field, the Presidio, the Marina, and Fort Mason. The iconic 1915 Exhibition Hall will be sensitively rehabilitated to preserve and honor the past, with new interior additions to accommodate the public uses at the first level grand concourse, and approximately 175 guest rooms at two new mezzanine levels.

The programming focus for the renewed Exhibition Hall will be the arts and maker culture – a focus on ingenuity and creativity, a modern parallel to the Exposition. The arts represented here can be as diverse as digital photography, ceramics, painting and sculpture, extending to wine making, culinary arts, product design and the performance arts. The arts theme will permeate the guest rooms and facilities, with installations in the public areas and a curated program with local artists throughout the guest rooms, restaurant and common areas.

The hospitality use offers a unique opportunity to control parking and traffic. Guest parking demand is substantially lower than many other uses and can be controlled through an attendant program for guests, while employee parking can be limited through transit programs and incentives. The ground floor public uses are anticipated to largely complement and serve existing visitors and residents.

The financing sources for the proposed development include conventional bank financing, historic tax credit equity, and equity from our development entity and from investors. Strong market justification indicates the project will attract the required investment, and support substantial lease payments to the Department of Rec and Parks.

To achieve this vision, ECB, developer of Cavallo Point, the Thoreau Center, the Bay School, and the Strand Theater, has assembled an outstanding team of professionals with experience on many relevant projects, including: LMS (Cavallo, Fort Mason Pier 2) and BCV Architects (Ferry Building, Market Square/Twitter), Page & Turnbull (PFA Feasibility Study, Ferry Building), CMG Landscape Architects (SFMOMA), Cahill (Argonaut Hotel), Fisher Development (The Metro), Rutherford & Chekene Structural Engineers (Pier 2, Ferry Building) and Nelson/Nygaard Traffic Engineers (Cavallo, PFA Feasibility Study).