

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Alcatraz Landing at Piers 31½ - 33, Alcatraz Cruises, City and County of San Francisco (Second Review)
(For Board consideration on February 6, 2012)

Project Summary

Applicant. Hornblower Cruises and Events (Alcatraz Cruises).

Project Representatives. Joe Wyman, Hornblower Cruises and Events; Stephen Buchholz, Heller Manus Architects.

Project Site. The proposed project is located at Piers 31½ and 33, within the San Francisco northeastern waterfront, near the intersection of Bay Street, Francisco Street and The Embarcadero, within the City and County of San Francisco (see Exhibits 1 and 2). Piers 27-29 lie to the south and Pier 35 (the existing San Francisco Cruise Terminal) lies to the north of the project site. The project site consists of the pier deck located between Piers 31 and 33 (known as Pier 31½) and a portion of the Pier 33 shed building.

Project Background. In 2006, Hornblower Cruises was selected by the National Park Service (NPS) as the transportation service provider to take passengers to Alcatraz Island (the Island) from San Francisco. For the past four years, Hornblower Cruises, doing business as Alcatraz Cruises, has provided ferry service to the Island from Pier 31½, pursuant to a ten-year contract with the NPS, and an existing BCDC permit (BCDC Permit No. M1985.013). Currently, the project site contains a “will call” window, a ticket sales office, two temporary canopies for ticketed passenger queuing, mobile vending carts, portable benches and water stations, and portable interpretive displays depicting the historic eras of the Island’s evolution. In addition, managerial offices are housed within the Pier 31 bulkhead building and an existing café (Alcatraz Landing Café) and restroom facilities are housed within the Pier 33 shed (see Exhibit 3). Currently, there are approximately 20-25 parking spaces provided on-site for NPS employees and contractors on the southeast side of the Pier 31½ deck.

Approximately 1.39 million guests visit the Island annually. The number of guests is limited by the NPS’s General Management Plan guidelines that limit seasonal service levels based, in part, on large nesting bird populations on the Island. Alcatraz Cruises makes passenger runs from Pier 31½ every 30 minutes between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., seven days a week. In addition, there are two evening departures to the Island (6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.). Guests to the Island may remain as long as they like and return on any available vessel. Although the total number of



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passengers per visit fluctuates throughout the day based on guest flow, the total number of guests per scheduled departure is limited to approximately 300 passengers. A typical visit to the Island is approximately two hours.

New and Revised Proposed Project. Alcatraz Cruises is proposing to renovate the existing structures and outdoor spaces at Piers 31½ and 33 to provide enhanced visitor services and an interpretive center associated with passenger ferry services to Alcatraz and Angel Islands (see Exhibits 4 and 5). According to the applicant, all proposed work will comply with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the preservation of structures in a National Register District, and they will seek LEED certification. Alcatraz Cruises proposes to make the following improvements (see Exhibits 6-29):

1. **On the Pier 31½ Deck.** Install visitor assembly improvements that include:
 - a. Installing visitor amenities throughout the plaza and waiting areas to include benches (using recycled plastic lumber), garbage and recycling container centers, pedestrian-scaled overhead lighting, and directional and informational signage;
 - b. Constructing an approximately 120-foot-long by 44-foot-wide (5,280-square-foot) pedestrian-scaled pavilion to cover the passenger queuing area where up to 300 visitors will to board the boat. The proposed canopy would be a simple arch with exposed trusses underneath to minimize visual impacts;
 - c. Constructing an approximately 300-foot-long by 42-inch-high, pedestrian metal picket railing along the Bayside of the Pier 31½ deck;
 - d. Installing interpretative displays and related artifacts placed on the pier deck, including a scaled model of Alcatraz Island and the surrounding Bay floor with interpretative panels, a display of Golden Gate National Recreation Area artifacts related to the history of the Island (such as a cannon replica), a series of interpretive panels depicting the historic eras of the Island, and a series of planters with native plants associated with the existing vegetation on the Island;
 - e. Constructing an “iconic” sign (pylon) and bollards to create a sense of entry to the pier deck from the Embarcadero promenade. The entry sign would include the NPS’s Arrowhead, Alcatraz Cruises’ logo, and a park entrance sign indicating that visitors are now entering Alcatraz Landing;
 - f. Creating a large-scaled compass rose on the pier deck surface surrounding the scaled model of the Island. The rose points would be appointed with the names of Federal and State Parks within the GGNRA and Bay;
 - g. Fabricating and installing a parks and public access information board adjacent to the Pier 33 Shed wall that would provide maps and information about nearby Federal and State parks; and
 - h. Reconfiguring and reducing the size of the parking (currently 20-25 spaces) and vehicular circulation area within the east side of the pier deck to include 6 spaces for NPS, 4 ADA accessible spaces, and 2 spaces for emergency parking (a total of 12 spaces) with appropriate signage and pavement markings, bicycle racks for up to 24 bikes, motorcycle parking spaces for up to 10 motorcycles, and an electric charging

station for alternatively powered vehicles. All parking on site would be provided by valet direction.

2. **Pier 33 Bulkhead Building.** Renovate the existing café and retail space by:
 - a. Re-designing existing canopies along the Embarcadero façade to comply with Port of San Francisco’s guidelines for the National Register District. Canopies would be oriented more horizontally rather than the present triangular shape;
 - b. Renovating the two existing doorways in the east façade to create double doors;
 - c. Replacing several windows in the east façade with a retractable glass-framed doorway to provide enhanced access to the plaza and east area beyond;
 - d. Fabricating and installing an overhead awning along the east façade to cover the existing remodeled doorways and retractable glass framed doorway;
 - e. Restoring the original window openings in the south façade of the bulkhead building to provide ticket service windows. This design feature replaces a stand-alone ticket booth proposed as part of the original project; and
 - f. Creating a new outdoor dining area on the south side of the Pier 33 Bulkhead Building (along the Embarcadero).

3. **Within the Pier 33 Shed.** Improve the southern portion of the pier shed to establish a Visitor’s Center, concession stand, restrooms, and a staff break room by:
 - a. Installing glazing and demising walls around the perimeter of the leasehold space (to the south of the main drive aisle) and infilling the two existing roll-up door openings along the south side of the pier shed wall. Glazing would be placed in the roll-up doors so that the doors can be lowered in front of the new glass for security during off-hours. Glazing on the interior walls would be installed above demising walls to retain views of the wooden rafter framing inside the pier shed;
 - b. Inserting a series of concession stand windows as part of the glazing into one of the roll-up door openings so that queuing takes place on the pier deck, rather than inside the shed;
 - c. Making life-safety and fire improvements, including extending overhead sprinkler systems into the demised space, providing sufficient exit widths and openings, and providing sufficient fire-rated demising walls and rated glass to meet Building Code requirements;
 - d. Replacing or refurbishing the existing industrial sash windows in the pier shed facade;
 - e. Providing visitor and staff bathrooms within the pier shed. Each bathroom would be equipped with low flow toilets, ADA accessible units and sinks, and baby changing stations;
 - f. Providing up to twelve Class 1 bicycle lockers inside the Shed space; and
 - g. Constructing a photovoltaic array on the roof of the pier shed to provide enough power for the entire land-side operations of the Landing. A back-up battery array will be installed inside the shed footprint. This array would replace the individual solar

panels mounted on lighting poles throughout the Pier 31 ½ deck as originally proposed.

4. **Along the Embarcadero Roadway.** Modify an existing driveway cut and curb segment in front of Pier 31½ by:
 - a. Relocating the drive-cut approximately 25 to 30 feet south of the present location to create a designated driveway to access the parking area; and
 - b. Closing the existing drive cut along the Embarcadero.

Prior Design Review Board and Waterfront Design Advisory Committee. The project was previously presented to the Design Review Board (DRB) and the Port of San Francisco's Waterfront Design Advisory Committee (WDAC) on October 18, 2010. At that meeting the DRB and WDAC members provided the following comments on the original project design:

- There was too much vehicle use of the space - it should be reduced, possibly with valet parking or fewer parking spaces.
- The site elements should be organized to create a quality public space.
- The site elements should be designed so that they are working together architecturally (pavilion, guardrail, interpretive, café structure and railing, entry sign, site furnishings).
- The project proponent should study the queuing pattern for visitors and consider having the lines run perpendicular to the edge of the wharf to maximize views for the public.
- The queuing structure could be used as an organizing element to make a quality public space that includes views.
- The project proponent should consider designing the access to the café with a door from the bulkhead side as is typically done along The Promenade.
- The project proponent should maintain The Embarcadero light standards in a smooth alignment if changes are proposed at the curb.

Response to Prior Board Comments. For this second review, Alcatraz Cruises has re-designed several elements of the proposed project in response to the DRB and the WDAC's previous comments.

- a. **On the Pier 31½ Deck.** The original project design proposed an outdoor dining area against the east facade of the Pier 33 Bulkhead Building and an enclosed dining area on the north side of the building. Alcatraz Cruises has eliminated these elements and now proposes series of moveable tables and chairs with rectangular umbrellas in the middle of on the pier deck that could be positioned to take advantage of the sun patterns throughout any given day. The original design also proposed a 25-foot-wide public access corridor, delineated by a row of benches on the east side and parking curbs on the west side, that would be free of any interpretive elements, benches, or other guest amenities and aligned from the Embarcadero northward to the Bay side of the Pier 31 ½ deck. The new project design eliminates the separate access corridor and instead integrates the public access area throughout the site. In an effort to open up the plaza area, improve views, and create better circulation, Alcatraz Cruises has moved the drive aisle at the entrance of the plaza further to the south, reduced the size of the parking area (through the use of valet management), removed a historic transport van, and relocated exhibits, interpretive displays, and public access benches. The revised project

also includes the addition of a large-scale compass rose around the scale model of Alcatraz Island as a central project feature to allow GGNRA docents to orient guests to the island and surrounding attractions. To open up Bay views, the applicants has re-oriented the pavilion so that it is parallel to the Bay edge, re-positioned it further to the north to open up views, and to changed the canopy design to consist of a simple arch with exposed trusses to minimize visual impacts. Lastly, at the entrance to the plaza, the revised project includes changes to the design of the entry feature to be more visually consistent with the surrounding architecture.

- b. **Pier 33 Bulkhead Building.** The original project proposed a stand-alone ticket booth adjacent to the pavilion containing the passenger waiting area. The revised design eliminates this booth and would instead propose to restore the original window openings in the south façade of the Bulkhead Building to provide ticket services.
- c. **Inside the Pier 33 Shed.** Alcatraz Cruises proposes removing the solar panels from each of the overhead lightposts located throughout the Pier 31 ½ deck, which would further enhance the open feel of the re-designed plaza area, and instead would construct a solar array on the roof of the Pier 33 Shed building. A back up battery array would also be installed within the shed footprint.

Overview of the Revised Public Access. As part of the revised proposed project, almost the entire site would be publicly accessible (except for the ticketed pavilion area). The revised design eliminates the separated public access corridor and instead integrates the public access area throughout the entire Pier 31 ½ deck area (as described above). As reconfigured, the space would provide an approximately 100-foot-wide pedestrian entrance onto the Landing. The revised project has also kept the approximately 300-foot-long by 15-foot-wide guaranteed public access corridor along the Bay side of the Pier 33 ½ deck as originally proposed.

Issues for Consideration by the Board. For this second review, Alcatraz Cruises and staff are seeking the Board's advice on the revised project design. Specifically, the staff requests that the Board offer comments and feedback on the following elements:

1. **Pavilion.** Whether the revised location and design of the pavilion provides adequate views to the Bay (both around and underneath the structure) and whether the proposed configuration and dimensions are appropriate for the space. In addition, in light of the fact that the outdoor dining area provides covered seating, which would be available to the public, staff is seeking comments as to whether is it necessary to have the pavilion canopy extend out over the public access seating along the wharf edge (as shown in Exhibits 8-10) or whether it should be shortened to cover only the queuing area.
2. **Revised Site Layout.** Whether the reconfiguration of the site layout (i.e. relocating interpretive displays, relocation of public access benches, changes to the outdoor dining area, etc.) provides a more usable and inviting public space and allows for improved pedestrian circulation around the pier deck.
3. **Entry Feature.** The applicant has revised the design of the entry feature, now proposed as a pylon monument, to in order to better relate to the surrounding architecture and be more consistent with the Secretary Standards. Staff is seeking is seeking comments from the Board

on the proposed entry feature design and whether any final changes should be made to the location, dimensions or scale of the entry feature.

4. **Furnishings and Fencing.** Whether the proposed fencing design provides adequate visual access to the Bay. In addition, staff is looking for input on the proposed furnishings.