



How to Make Micro-Units Work with Good Design

Aug 3, 2015 by [SF Housing Action Coalition](#)



Last week, twenty-five SF Housing Action Coalition (SFHAC) members walked through the City's newest micro-units at The Panoramic during a tour led by the project's developer, Patrick Kennedy of [Panoramic Interests](#). The building at the corner of 9th and Mission Streets includes 160 micro-homes, with studios as compact as 274 square feet and three-bedroom suits around 630 square feet. With all of the units fully leased to the California College of the Arts (CCA) and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, we'll soon see these efficient homes put to the test.

The functional design of the apartments compensates for the lack of space. Most of the furniture is built-in. Storage was not an afterthought; bay window benches function as kitchen seating and drawers pull out from underneath the bed. Each unit is equipped with a utility wall intended to hang gear, strong enough to hold a 50-pound kettle ball. Simple things like high ceilings (nine feet), good natural lighting and not being able to hear your neighbor add to the overall livability of the homes. Patrick joked about the sound proofing between apartments as being his contribution to world peace. He demonstrated the acoustics, courtesy of [Charles M. Salter Associates](#), by blasting music in one apartment and having the tour move next door. We couldn't hear a peep.

The lobby includes booth seating, communal tables and fireplace lounging, all designed to encourage residents to interact. Every floor above the lobby has common space too. However, the most spectacular area is the roof deck. Not only will residents enjoy spectacular views, but they'll have some swanky hangout space as well. Heated seating, benches, drought resistant planters, "critter" art and enough open space for yoga sessions are all programmed into the roof, designed by landscape architect David Fletcher.

Transportation options won't be a concern for residents at this car-free building. To start, a [TransitScreen](#) monitor located inside the building's entrance displays all of the various transportation options on a single screen, including bus, train, ride services, etc. Plus, these micro-homes are located only one block away from the Civic Center BART Station, and the Mission Street MUNI bus lines run outside the front door. If residents choose to bike, they can park their bike in one of the 185 secure spaces in the basement (more bike parking than apartments!). Another fine detail Patrick Kennedy was pretty pleased to point out is the heated bench located at the front door, so you can comfortably wait and relax while you wait for your Uber, Lyft or taxi to arrive.

New technology has been incorporated including a laundry room with machines that send you a text when your wash is done. The lobby includes an automated package service, so no-one is needed to receive your UPS shipments.

Innovate design, smaller homes that naturally affordable and the right location can be terrific solutions to provide more housing options for San Franciscans. Let's hope they don't stop at The Panoramic!

Panoramic Project Team (All SFHAC members):

Developer: [Panoramic Interests](#)

Architects – [Workshop 1](#) and [Kwan Henmi Architecture and Planning](#)

General Contractor – [Pankow Builders](#)

Acoustics: [Charles M. Salter Associates](#)

Lighting – [Alva Lighting](#)

If you'd like to join SFHAC tours and get a peek inside the City's newest buildings, then [become a member!](#)

[More Photos From The Tour](#)









