

Answers @ the Speed of Business

Real Estate & Land Use Case Studies

Several years ago, Silicon Valley Law Group's Real Estate & Land Use Group was approached by a public company. The company needed help in negotiating a sizable lease to accommodate their rapid expansion. The landlord had multiple offers but had not yet talked to our client. We had only one hour to prepare for the negotiations and no time to meet privately with our new client (the company's Director of Facilities) in advance. On the way into the landlord's office our client quietly requested that we keep it simple and that we get this building under contract. We basically negotiated the lease as we read it for the first time, while ensuring that our client concurred with our comments as we went along. Two hours later we had a signed lease. The landlord made substantially all of the changes we requested. We negotiated an extra month of free rent as the last deal point. Our client was very pleased, and since then has used Silicon Valley Law Group for over 75 transactions.

Normally the sale of a building that has been unoccupied for more than a decade would be applauded by the community. However, in the case of St. Brigid's Church, one of the oldest churches in San Francisco, the emotions ran high. On August 13, 2005, the Archdiocese of San Francisco announced that it had signed a letter of intent with the Academy of Art University for the purchase of St. Brigid. The press release indicated that the Academy intended to use the building for school and community events, and Archbishop William Levada said in a statement that he was impressed by the Art Academy's "proven track record in preserving a number of San Francisco historic buildings and using them for purposes that benefit the entire community." While the purchase price was agreed to, the details were a greater obstacle. Over the next two months, the SVLG Real Estate & Land Use team with the aid of the SVLG Environmental Group assisted the Academy in closing the transaction. The complexities of the transaction included a lengthy negotiation over easement rights of the Archdiocese and the Academy regarding the use of the schoolyard located immediately behind St. Brigid, and the division of the personal property located within the St. Brigid building. With threats of possible lawsuits to enjoin the transaction, historical landmarking and possible "red tag" issues looming, the SVLG team was successful in quickly closing the transaction.