

June 24, 2016

Ann Clevenger
City of Oakland, Bureau of Planning
250 Frank H. Ogawa, Suite 2114
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Ann:

We are an organization of Oakland and Berkeley residents gravely concerned about the impact of the proposed construction of condominiums and expansion of Claremont Hotel facilities.

We understand that Mr. Jamie Choy of Signature Development informed Janet White, one of our members, that the documents available at the Planning Department (41 pages of Conditional Use Permit PLN#16-053, which is public record) are not the current plan relevant to case number ER16-010.

Our community stands to be profoundly impacted by the Claremont's planned expansion. We find it distressing and, frankly, unacceptable that a full set of current plans were not available for this landmarked property at the time scoping for the Draft Environmental Impact Report began (May 31, 2016), and were not, as late as June 20, 2016 available for public review.

To properly inform our neighbors and the community as a whole, we need the full set of *current* plans as a digital file that is high-resolution and full color, comparable to the 41 pages of the CUP filed 2.25.16 for PLN#16-053.

The public must have access to current plans, and we need to be able to share and discuss them with our neighbors. A process that does not provide full information to the public and allow sufficient time for informed discussion prior to any decision-making is premature and consequently invalid.

We further believe that the Landmark Preservation Advisory Board had not been fully informed in detail about current plans when they considered the proposal. They cannot perform their function or make informed recommendations if they do not have full up to date documents to review. That Board should be allowed to review the project with full, proper and *current* documentation

If the public is to have adequate opportunity to review this project, and submit questions and comments, full public disclosure of current plans is necessary. This disclosure should include all schematics, elevations,

renderings, views, and maps of all aspects of the proposed project, such as those relating to expansion of the club, club facilities and entrances to the property (including the service road off of Claremont Avenue), as well as those relating to the proposed condos and houses. Plans should also include updated street and aerial views from all sides including Domingo and Tunnel Roads and Claremont Avenue. This project has a cumulative scope and impact that must be seen to be understood.

We believe that the scoping session for the Draft EIR is premature. It should begin again with proper documentation, or should be extended to allow review of full current plans by the public. The Claremont community should have adequate opportunity to review them, and evaluate their scope and impact. Appointed and elected officials also need these plans, if for no other reason than that they can then evaluate our communications with them.

The project, if permitted, would impose permanent, irreparable invasive impacts upon the communities surrounding the Claremont Hotel, on the cities of Oakland and Berkeley as a whole, and upon traffic and emergency access throughout the Bay Area. Short-circuiting or rushing the full CEQA review process would be committing an irrevocable wrong to the surrounding communities. By potentially disfiguring the State landmarked Hotel grounds, it would mar an historic legacy of the people of California.

Therefore, to fulfill the public process in compliance with CEQA, we request that the Notice of Preparation be reissued with a new deadline, or that the current scoping period be extended until well after the public has full access to current plans and adequate time to review them, compose responses and frame questions. Any extension should take into consideration that many residents are on summer vacations and deadlines should accommodate this reality. Otherwise we may fail to ask appropriate questions, consider possible impacts, and in general make fully informed comments during this scoping process. This is precisely the process that CEQA is designed to insure.

Sincerely,

David Kessler
President
Neighbors Against Claremont Property Expansion
"Save Our Claremont"