

September 2, 2016

Ann Clevenger, Case Planner
Oakland Planning Department, Suite 2114
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Claremont Hotel Project #ER 16-010

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am writing to you again concerning this proposed project by the developer, Signature, at the Landmark Claremont Hotel.

Signature has gone on record (in the press and at public meetings) claiming that they have engaged in a community process whereby they have solicited and incorporated public concern, met with 800 people, and that the public's response has been overwhelmingly positive. Nothing could be further from the truth. At no time at these meetings did Signature take any kind of roll, nor did they make draft plans available for perusal (despite numerous verbal and written promises to the public). Thus it is no wonder that their count is grossly inflated. It is unclear how they could honestly depict the response as being positive (see below).

We attended the LPAB hearings on the project and the planning commission hearings and thus listened to descriptions of other proposed projects that did indeed involve significant community input and revisions that truly reflected that input.

Many community members have attended all of the public meetings held by Signature; at most the meetings have represented 150-200 people. As you have already heard from other letters, many Oakland and almost all Berkeley households affected by the project have never been notified. The public concern, outcry, and outrage at this misguided development at these meetings has been overwhelming, most recently at the Berkeley Tennis Club. It was not until just this past week that the proposed project was shown to members and friends of the Berkeley Tennis Club, the most immediate neighbor of the Claremont Hotel property.

At that meeting the representative of Signature informed those in attendance that he is also an investor in the hotel. Interesting! He informed us that 'there is land around the building that is protected'. Finally! And I would hope that the full measure of the California Historical Resource nomination be taken into account. The information given was of no help at all to those who had many questions because we were informed there was nothing firm yet. How can that be the case? And how can the general public and Tennis club members make fully informed decisions when no concrete information is provided? The comments and questions were not addressed fully at all. It is the cumulative effect of such a large project which can have no other purpose than to increase the use of the property (1,500 more members of the club, more tennis courts and players, an 'event lawn' for unknown number of people, 86 or so entitled owners and hotel guests and employees, etc.) on the surrounding environment that is continually brushed aside.

I would like my comments and questions to go into the record for this case. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Wendy P. Markel
Oakland, California