

September 6, 2016

Ann Clevenger, Case Manager
Oakland City Bureau of Planning, Suite 2114
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Claremont Hotel Case # ER16-010
Oakland City Landmark (LM01-404, Ordinance # 12348)
California Register of Historical Resources (Pursuant to Section 4851(a)(1) of public resources code.

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am writing to you as the Case Manager for the City of Oakland concerning the developments planned for the Oakland Landmark Claremont Hotel property. I have written to you several times already and I am sorry to be bothering you again, but this time I want to focus on the problems of the Environmental Impact Report and California Environmental Quality Act (EIR and CEQA), as it relates to the general public input into the process and specifically as it relates to the National State Historic Resource Register nomination of the Oakland Landmark Claremont Hotel property.

It is my understanding due to very recent comments by the Signature development company at the Berkeley Tennis Club on August 30th that it is their intention to divide the property and sell off part of the Claremont Hotel property to accomplish the plan to build an underground parking garage and on top of which to build a multi-family building of about 43 units, and in addition to build either two or one single family residence(s). This does not take into account the planned changes to roads, removal of trees, construction of a concrete wall, etc. How is this going to be accomplished when the property is a nominated as a National Historical Resource and found eligible and therefore placed on the California Register of Historical Resources?

I would hope that the upcoming Environmental Impact Report is not only sufficient in quantity, but is executed in a manner calculated to adequately inform the public, including but not limited to a statement of objectives with underlying purpose and ownership of the project along with the projects technical, economic and environmental characteristics. This EIR must look into a range of alternatives - and that would also mean that the City look into locating the proposed multi-family building and underground parking elsewhere, close to mass transit. The current proposal would significantly cause a negative aesthetic, view shed, noise, greenhouse emissions, traffic impact and water impact on the Claremont Hotel property. (See PRC # 21099(a)(7). The Landmark Claremont Hotel grounds do not qualify as a Priority Development Area. (PDA). See also resolution # 82526 in this matter. This California Register Historical Resource is not near a major transit stop (a site containing an existing rail transit station) (See PRC #21064.3).

From my reading of the National Register of Historical Resources nomination of the Claremont Hotel property, (and on the California Register of Historical Resources), there is a significant portion of the grounds that accompany the building that are also nominated. I will attach two maps from the nomination document forwarded to me by the office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation. It would appear that "a project that may cause substantial adverse changes in the significance of a California Register property may require compliance with local ordinances or the California Environmental Quality Act". I would suggest that selling off part of the property (or even retaining the portion of the

property), would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the Landmark Claremont Hotel as one of the significant aspects of the hotel building and the space around it. The construction of underground parking, multi-family dwelling and single family dwelling would fall within that space. It would appear that the nominated property runs along the line of Claremont Avenue to the north, along the upper boundaries of parcel 048H-7670-027-00, north and northeast boundaries of parcel 048H-7670-019-00, along the line of Alvarado Place and then westwards along Alvarado Road and down the line of the Short Cut public right of way to the line of Tunnel Road and then along the easternmost boundary of parcel 064-4225-003-00, and follows the curb line of the internal road on the property and thus northwards across the entrance drive from Russell/Domingo corner, along the rock retaining wall, fence and the curb line of the driveway and then between the club building and the old power house to join Claremont Avenue. I also gathered at the August 30th town hall meeting with Signature building at the Berkeley Tennis Club that the Old Power House was to be changed. This building is also nominated as a contributing building so would need to be considered in the California Environmental Quality Act requirements. I have written to you earlier in detail about the total nomination description of the property.

Map #2 notices vantage points and I would hope the EIR will note protected sight lines of the hotel building from immediate downhill streets and from distant public views that provide an appropriate sense of open space around the building and to be able to show negative impacts below an acceptable level of significance. The addition of raised tennis courts on top of a parking garage to the west of the Landmarked building would impinge on the sight lines of the California Register property. The example of a raised sport court on top of a parking garage can be seen in Berkeley in front of the City Landmarked Bowles Hall. (Photograph attached). One can no longer see the landmarked building. This clearly significantly impacts the historical significance and the aesthetics of the environment and the proposed raised sports courts at the Landmark Claremont Hotel would do the same. The current Claremont Hotel property project does not take into consideration the impacts that would be experienced by the historic Berkeley Tennis Club. The views from the Berkeley Tennis Club would be seriously negatively impacted.

It is quite clear that this Landmarked Claremont Hotel property requires detailed and thorough CEQA research. The CEQA guidelines (Appendix G., sect XVI(a)) This would mean that all relevant components of the circulation, egress/ingress, to the Landmark property needs to take into account all intersections, streets, highways, and freeways of both Berkeley and Oakland and the State Highway #13. The intersection of Domingo and Russell Streets are a very dangerous place to consider an enlarged entrance to the historic property. The main entrance to the hotel property off Tunnel Road, Cal Trans highway #13, can cause an immediate and significant gridlock. This project may cause significant parking and traffic-related impacts on the surrounding environment and those impacts require mitigation under the EIR and CEQA as well as increased safety hazards due to increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The EIR needs to look into the effect of traffic at all times of the year and including during events in the local communities of Oakland and Berkeley. The cumulative effect of simultaneous projects such as Alta Bates project, PG&E proposal on Stonewall must be taken into consideration. Other projects may exist of which I have no knowledge. The importance of access for emergency vehicles needs to be researched. As the anniversary of the Fire Storm twenty-five years ago approaches we need to be very mindful of the emergency/fire vehicles problems that arose due to blocked roads. (As noted in the FEMA fire report - not attached as too lengthy).

As a person who is very much interested in maintaining the historic nature and significance of the Oakland City Landmark and California Register of Historical Resources for east bay residents and visitors, I would suggest that the proposed project would cause many significantly negative impacts and that mitigation would not reach the level of insignificance required by the California Environmental Quality Act. Throughout the history of the East Bay many beautiful buildings have been destroyed due to excessive development that caused the building to be either moved, torn down or so significantly compromised as to

find it (the historic building) loses the grandeur for which it is known. The project currently proposed within the grounds of the Oakland Landmark Claremont Hotel is inappropriate for the property and I would ask you how the developers and owners would in any way find that the project contributes positively to the California Historical Resource.

Could you please answer my questions. Thank you. I would like my comments and questions to be part of the project record.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy P. Markel
Oakland, California

cc: Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation
John King, San Francisco Chronicle
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OHA
BAHA
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