

08 May, 2017

Dear members of the LPAB –

This letter is in regards to PLN16053; ER16010 - Oakland Landmark Claremont Hotel, Historic Resource Evaluation.

You have no doubt received many emotional letters from members of the public, expressing fear, dismay, outrage...that the Claremont Hotel – a beacon to the neighborhood and a Landmark structure whose grounds are on the California Register of Historical Resources – would once again be threatened by ill-conceived development plans designed to reap short-term financial gain at the expense of stripping the historic hotel of its surrounding property.

You would have received many more if there were adequate notice and opportunity for the public to review the HRE.

It is the height of irony that **an Oakland city landmark with a history that goes back more than 110 years**, and for which 200 pages of Historic Resource Evaluation were written, should get **less than 10 days** (from the day notice of the review meeting was issued) of public review and consideration.

I respectfully and sincerely hope that the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board takes more than 10 days in considering its advice to the planning board, and – **given that public input is vital to the process and to acceptance of any outcome** – that at least one more public hearing be scheduled, so that the HRE may be given proper and thorough consideration, both by the public and by the LPAB itself.

I would also argue that **a follow-up hearing is essential as the HRE presents several factual and material inadequacies that must be remedied before the LPAB can responsibly fulfill its public duty to preserve this treasured landmark:**

- City Ordinance 12438 (2002), specifically requests that the LPAB issue advisory input “to protect sight lines toward the hotel building and to provide a sense of openness around the hotel.” Yet the developer has provided no perspective renderings that depict the hotel and the proposed residential tower in context together. **Without such renderings to consider, there is no way for the LPAB to adequately assess the impact of a large building – of architectural massing similar to the entire south wing of the hotel and located just 50 yards away – on the “sense of openness around the hotel.”**
- The developer’s consultants are attempting to literally “redraw the map”. The map on page 200 of the HRE suggests that the footprint of the porte cochere is not part of the landmark structure – they do not label it in blue, as their legend shows they should – and they do not include it in their lip-service “historic district”. **The footprint of the porte cochere is specifically included as part of the city landmark (Section 3 of Ordinance 12438), even though the structure of the porte cochere is not.** The LPAB must insist that the landmark status of the porte cochere footprint not be compromised for one very simple reason: to ensure that any improvements to the porte cochere itself – which the hotel has already proposed to rebuild – be in keeping with

and sensitive to the landmark structure to which it is attached, and that as such, it be subject to appropriate review.

- Finally, the HRE postulates that the “Auto Court” is “noncontributing” on the basis that it now holds paved parking lots for the hotel and its restaurants. However, in 2002, ***with the same parking lots present***, the entire 12-acre southern portion of the property was deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and that same entire 12-acre southern portion was listed as a California Registered Historical Resource. All of this stems, fundamentally, from the status of the hotel as an Oakland Landmark and the importance of the openness around the hotel as an essential component of its historical setting. **Listing on the CRHR guarantees CEQA review prior to any alteration or redesignation of the property.** Therefore, without review by the California State Office of Historic Preservation of **these specific plans**, and completion of a **full and appropriate CEQA review** – *which must include project alternates that might enhance the sense of openness contributed by the southern portion of the property – such as restoring the original terraced gardens* – any redesignation of CRHR land by the LPAB would be both premature and possibly unlawful.

I implore you, as a resident of the Claremont neighborhood, to give the process, the public that you serve, and this iconic landmark which you are duty-bound to preserve...to give the Claremont Hotel the careful and considered deliberation that its 110 years as a local treasure deserve.

**Please do not short-change yourselves, nor this irreplaceable Oakland treasure, of the time, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness that the issues before you today deserve.**

Respectfully,  
Bryan Grziwok

19 Alvarado Road

I request that this letter be made a part of the public record.