

## Burns, Anne M

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**From:** Larisa Cummings <pidicummings@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:30 PM  
**To:** Burns, Anne M; Gong, Sharon  
**Subject:** Re: 2920 Shattuck - comments to DRC re 4/20 mtg and to ZAB re 4/27 hearing

Hi Anne and Sharon, please see below additional cite in bold italic to the 2017 Berkeley City Council Bicycle Plan - I would like this updated version of my comments shared with DRC and ZAB because the cite is important and has been overlooked by all parties, including all city reports - please confirm, thanks.

Larisa

On Tue, Apr 18, 2023 at 7:13 PM Burns, Anne M <[ABurns@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:ABurns@cityofberkeley.info)> wrote:

We are working to get your email on-line as well. - Anne

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**From:** Larisa Cummings <[pidicummings@gmail.com](mailto:pidicummings@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:44 AM  
**To:** Burns, Anne M <[ABurns@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:ABurns@cityofberkeley.info)>; Gong, Sharon <[SGong@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:SGong@cityofberkeley.info)>; Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) <[Planningzab@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:Planningzab@cityofberkeley.info)>  
**Cc:** Ching/Battles <[battles.ca@sonic.net](mailto:battles.ca@sonic.net)>; Reed Dillingham <[reed.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:reed.dillingham@gmail.com)>; P D i l l i n g h a m <[paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com)>; Dave Auerbach <[dave.auerbach@gmail.com](mailto:dave.auerbach@gmail.com)>; mojo au gogo <[sentientcalifornian@gmail.com](mailto:sentientcalifornian@gmail.com)>; Mor <[Mor.goldberger@gmail.com](mailto:Mor.goldberger@gmail.com)>; Julian <[Juliangrzn@gmail.com](mailto:Juliangrzn@gmail.com)>; Yee Kuo <[kuogwyee@hotmail.com](mailto:kuogwyee@hotmail.com)>; FB <[cryodoc@mail.com](mailto:cryodoc@mail.com)>; Ania Shapiro <[shapania@gmail.com](mailto:shapania@gmail.com)>; Eve Shapiro <[eshapiro99@gmail.com](mailto:eshapiro99@gmail.com)>; Nathan D George <[nathan@ndgre.com](mailto:nathan@ndgre.com)>; [xin.jin17@gmail.com](mailto:xin.jin17@gmail.com); David Trachtenberg <[david@trachtenbergarch.com](mailto:david@trachtenbergarch.com)>; Gianna Ranuzzi <[giannara@comcast.net](mailto:giannara@comcast.net)>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <[mayor@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:mayor@cityofberkeley.info)>; All Council <[council@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:council@cityofberkeley.info)>  
**Subject:** 2920 Shattuck - comments to DRC re 4/20 mtg and to ZAB re 4/27 hearing

**WARNING:** This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms. Burns and Ms. Gong,

I live on Newbury Street and am an immediate neighbor to the 2920 Shattuck project. I resubmit my 3/13/23 comments (below) to the DRC and to the ZAB about the project. It is my understanding from Ms. Burns' 3/15/23 email to me that my 3/13/23 comments will be submitted to the ZAB for the upcoming 4/27/23 hearing. Please confirm and submit these further comments too. Thank you.

None of my 3/13/23 concerns have been addressed by the revisions to the plans, except for the possibility of Canary Island Pine tree selection at the property line.

Most of the DRC's recommendations from the 3/16/23 DRC meeting have been ignored or overlooked, as follows:

### **DRC Summary – March 16, 2023**

**Preliminary Design Review Modification received an unfavorable recommendation to ZAB with the following conditions and recommendations for Final Design Review (FDR): MOTION: (Tam, Pink) VOTE (6-0-0-1) Kahn - absent.**

### **Conditions**

- **Restudy the massing, and in particular the Shattuck Façade; consider taller mass at corner.**

Ignored/overlooked – the project remains completely out of sync with the surrounding community in every respect. It is outright de-humanizing. Beyond the absurd scale and extremely rectangular and monotonous nature of the project it is evident from discussions at DRC meetings (re 2920 and 3000 Shattuck) and with project principals that it has limited design customization potential primarily because the developer intends to use modular units. This choice greatly undermines the architectural styles that have been a hallmark of this beautiful community. The narrow hallway is endless. The studios are entirely uniform *and by far, market rate*. It is, in short, atrocious and even Stalinist as the DRC has already stated. At the 3/16/23 DRC committee meeting, one of the members said plainly that it looks like an Eastern Soviet bloc building. In a 3/20/23 meeting with immediate neighbors, owner/developer Nathan George informed us that *the selection of modular was for our benefit as neighbors - to reduce construction time by months*. No thank you. We need livable architecture that respects this community and its historic beauty.

This is particularly alarming because the developer intends to build two other very similar projects at 2847 and 3000 Shattuck, three within one+ indisputably dangerous block of Shattuck Avenue. Due to the narrowing of the street north and south, and traffic, it is obvious that the infrastructure here cannot sustain this kind of development. The developer's persistence in ignoring neighbor concerns about need for onsite loading and unloading - expressed repeatedly and to the ZAB and the City Council regarding prior plans to develop 3000 Shattuck - is particularly galling.

In light of this and all the other planned housing developments in this vulnerable South Berkeley community, we are under direct threat of imminent loss of quality of life. All of the development on this side of town must be looked at more holistically with priorities for health and safety.

- **Provide a better buffer for neighbors on the West side.** Ignored/overlooked - aside from more suitable potential selection of Canary Island Pine tree at property line
- **Make design relate more to this neighborhood.** Ignored/overlooked
- **Make the design unique, not like the other nearby projects.** Ignored/overlooked
- **Look at rendering of project from Newbury.** Ignored/overlooked
- **Consider alternate for metal panel that better relates to the neighborhood.** No relationship

### **Recommendations**

- **Bring down the height and building mass if possible, even if only a slight floor to ceiling reduction.** Ignored/overlooked

- **Design is too repetitious; need more human scale; look at more horizontal elements.** Unimproved
- **Recommend looking at a project rendering that includes other nearby new projects.** Ignored/overlooked
- **Look at acoustic impact of the roof deck [there was further DRC discussion about preventing roof deck views of Newbury backyards].** Ignored/overlooked
- **Provide permeable pavers at parking, as well as softer parking edge / entry from Russell.** Pavers are in the plans now, but the entry/exit from Russell Street is inherently dangerous due to established bike path/high density pedestrian activity - there is no safe resolution to this existing hazard. *Russell Street at the project site has long been highly used as an officially designated Bike Boulevard, and as such, requires special consideration of adverse impacts by project developers and the city - but this policy requirement has been ignored, including in the latest DRC Staff Report dated 4/20/23, to the peril of the community. See 2017 Berkeley City Council Bicycle Plan, policy PL-1, pp. 2-2 thru 2-3 at <https://altago.com/wp-content/uploads/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan.pdf>. See also, p. 4-19 of that Plan, where it is documented Russell/Shattuck is a high collision intersection for cyclists.* Further, a mere 9 parking spaces for over 200 units is ludicrous for this insular neighborhood
- **Recommend large trees on west property line.** Addressed - personally, I ask again for a commitment to preserve my very large native Big Maple tree
- **Recommend bird safe glass.** Ignored/overlooked

This process has been entirely unsatisfactory and is increasingly alarming. It is appalling that the developer has such intense intentions here, to excavate over gas stations and auto repair shops, taking advantage of state laws aimed at bonus density development to encourage affordable housing that is barely contemplated. Altogether over 500 studio units in three projects, with only 10% affordable, is no solution. This will not work for the people, the environment, birds and other animals, or the future needs of this community.

Sincerely yours,

Larisa Cummings

2913 Newbury Street

510-435-9812

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Larisa Cummings** <[pidicummings@gmail.com](mailto:pidicummings@gmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Mar 13, 2023 at 4:03 PM

Subject: Re: From Newbury Street

To: Nathan D George <[nathan@ndgre.com](mailto:nathan@ndgre.com)>, <[xin.jin17@gmail.com](mailto:xin.jin17@gmail.com)>

Cc: Ching/Battles <[battles.ca@sonic.net](mailto:battles.ca@sonic.net)>, Dave Auerbach <[dave.auerbach@gmail.com](mailto:dave.auerbach@gmail.com)>, Eve Shapiro <[eshapiro99@gmail.com](mailto:eshapiro99@gmail.com)>, Gianna Ranuuzi <[giannara1@icloud.com](mailto:giannara1@icloud.com)>, Julian <[Juliangrzn@gmail.com](mailto:Juliangrzn@gmail.com)>, Mor <[Mor.goldberger@gmail.com](mailto:Mor.goldberger@gmail.com)>, P D i l l i n g h a m <[paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com)>, Reed Dillingham <[reed.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:reed.dillingham@gmail.com)>, moju au gogo <[sentientcalifornian@gmail.com](mailto:sentientcalifornian@gmail.com)>, Les Shipnuck <[shipnuck@comcast.net](mailto:shipnuck@comcast.net)>, Ania Shapiro <[shapania@gmail.com](mailto:shapania@gmail.com)>, Burns, Anne M <[ABurns@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:ABurns@cityofberkeley.info)>, <[cryodoc@mail.com](mailto:cryodoc@mail.com)>, Larisa Cummings <[pidicummings@gmail.com](mailto:pidicummings@gmail.com)>

Hi Nathan - and Xin,

It is disappointing that you have not been able to make two proposed weekend meetings with us - as I informed you it is difficult for us to meet during the week due to work. Time is increasingly of the essence here. A few of us are available to meet tomorrow between 6:30-7:30 or Wednesday between 5:30-7:30. Please confirm which day/time and send ZOOM info. We would like Xin Jin to participate too, especially since he lives in this community. Thank you.

In the meantime, here is a list of some of our concerns about 2920 specifically - we know it's going to be reviewed at DRC this Thursday and is moving fast through the review process. Please note that DRC Planner Anne Burns is being copied here as our deadline to comment on 2920 for DRC is tomorrow - these are also my comments to the DRC.

Due to 10-story height and density of 2920 Shattuck building - 221 units with only 10% for very low income - we have numerous concerns and objections -

Size and Scale and Design - especially altogether - with 2847, 2920 and 3000 Shattuck:

-We are very alarmed by the latest plans, with two 10-story buildings and one 9, these plans are larger than ever, especially given that you also aim to develop 2847 Shattuck and 3000 Shattuck around the same time - and three within one+ block is overwhelmingly inappropriate. Additionally, the buildings are unattractive, accentuating extreme height differences, and out of sync with existing architecture.

-We also question the need for all of this housing right here right now. We must stress that building all of this at once is a big risk and big threat to our community. We favor affordable - these mostly are not. Numerous new apartment buildings up the street have had vacancies for years now. See, e.g., <https://www.parkerberkeley.com/> - \$2,000 off to move in - we see this regularly, including here:

150+ new market rate apts incl move-in incentives nr S. Berk - screenshots attached. Especially in a changing economy with more remote work and BART ridership down dramatically, what needs are being served here?

-It's well documented that this part of Shattuck is very dangerous -  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-02-28%20Item%2014%20Referral%20Creation%20of%20an%20Intersection.pdf>,  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022-05-10%20Item%2025%20Addition%20of%20Semi-diverter%20Traffic.pdf>, <https://aa.law/blog/increase-berkeley-traffic-collision-deaths-2021/>

-You have said so yourself - as we have reminded you before, you directly stated to City Council a few years ago that Russell/Shattuck should not be highly developed because it's "sandwiched" - please listen at 3:36:36-3:38:44 in link below, and particularly 3:38:06-3:38:16 where you say that if you are at Russell "sandwiched" between the Berkeley Bowl you should be at 3 stories. [Video](#)  
(5 hrs, 18

Lack of notice:

Several of us did not get notice of your 2920 plans for discussion with you last summer. We recently located notes in the city documents of a small meeting with a few neighbors, but not all of us were informed - and this is very disappointing. Evidence of mailing to specific addresses has not been located. To date, several of us have not gotten any notice of 2847 plans either. This is very concerning as we live very close by, should have received notice, and not be under this kind of pressure to respond.

Health and Safety concerns and Environmental concerns, more specifically:

-A lot more people (assuming the units are occupied...) impacting already sandwiched Russell/Shattuck - especially when factor in kitty-corner 2847 Shattuck plans;

-Traffic flow concerns re driveway on Russell that will affect pedestrian and busy bike blvd including route to/from at least three nearby elementary and middle schools;

-Lack of loading to prevent congestion on Shattuck which is not two lanes as represented in renderings - A.3.7 going south from Berkeley Bowl is one lane with a parking lane that only becomes two lanes south of Russell for 1/2 block to make a left turn lane at Ashby and then merges back into one lane immediately south of Ashby (same concern re 3000 Shattuck project). Shattuck also merges into one lane north of Ashby making the intersection of Russell and Shattuck with no traffic light extra tight for an already busy corridor;

-Loss of sunlight for very significant part of the day affecting quality of life especially children who live on Newbury close to Russell;

-Loss of solar - very significant to Newbury properties closer to Russell, three+ of which currently have solar;

-Loss of views - will block all views of hills from Newbury;

-Vehicular traffic/pollution in a very small neighborhood already impacted by the Berkeley Bowl and Shattuck/Ashby.

Property line:

-The current 15-20 ft cinder block wall along our property provides a high degree of security and privacy that we highly value;

-We would like whatever replaces that to offer the same or better level of privacy and security, while also being more attractive than the current wall with appropriate tall trees - we have landscape architects in our Newbury neighborhood who have good ideas;

-We want to preserve our trees!

Sincerely,

Larisa Cummings

510-435-9812

On Mon, Mar 13, 2023 at 6:46 AM Nathan D George <nathan@ndgre.com> wrote:

Hi Larisa,

Unfortunately, that does not work for me. I have 5 little kids, and this Saturday I will be with my oldest at his important championship swim meet during that time.

I am fairly flexible during the week to speak with any one of you, even if just after work, depending on the day.

Thanks,

nathan

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Nathan D George | President & Founder | NDG Real Estate

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**From:** Larisa Cummings <[pidicummings@gmail.com](mailto:pidicummings@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 4:55 PM

**To:** Nathan D George <[nathan@ndgre.com](mailto:nathan@ndgre.com)>; [xin.jin17@gmail.com](mailto:xin.jin17@gmail.com)

**Cc:** Ania Shapiro <[shapania@gmail.com](mailto:shapania@gmail.com)>; Ching/Battles <[battles.ca@sonic.net](mailto:battles.ca@sonic.net)>; Dave Auerbach <[dave.auerbach@gmail.com](mailto:dave.auerbach@gmail.com)>; Eve Shapiro <[eshapiro99@gmail.com](mailto:eshapiro99@gmail.com)>; Gianna Ranuuzi <[giannara1@icloud.com](mailto:giannara1@icloud.com)>; Julian <[Juliangrzn@gmail.com](mailto:Juliangrzn@gmail.com)>; Les Shipnuck <[shipnuck@comcast.net](mailto:shipnuck@comcast.net)>; Mor <[Mor.goldberger@gmail.com](mailto:Mor.goldberger@gmail.com)>; P D i l l i n g h a m <[paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:paul.y.dillingham@gmail.com)>; Reed Dillingham <[reed.dillingham@gmail.com](mailto:reed.dillingham@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** South Shattuck projects 2847-2920-3000

Hi again Nathan, it looks like Saturday am 3/18 9-10 works best. Ok? Weekdays are hard due to work.

On Tue, Mar 7, 2023 at 12:37 PM Nathan D George <[nathan@ndgre.com](mailto:nathan@ndgre.com)> wrote:

Hi Larisa,

My parents are coming to town this weekend for my daughter's birthday and I can't speak on Saturday.

I can be available most mornings this week and next week except for next Wednesday.

I think Zoom is easiest.

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Nathan D George | President & Founder | NDG Real Estate

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**From:** Larisa Cummings <[pidicummings@gmail.com](mailto:pidicummings@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 2:18 PM

**To:** Nathan D George <nathan@ndgre.com>

**Cc:** xin.jin17@gmail.com

**Subject:** Re: From Newbury Street

Hi Nathan, thanks for your response and willingness to meet. Right now 4 or 5 of us who live in the immediate vicinity may be able to meet this Saturday between 1-3. Does that work for you? In person or zoom? I can confirm later or look into next week.

Best,

Larisa

510-435-9812

On Mon, Mar 6, 2023 at 7:07 AM Nathan D George <nathan@ndgre.com> wrote:

Hi Larisa,

Let me know when you are available to discuss this week, days and times.

Thanks,

nathan

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Nathan D George | President & Founder | NDG Real Estate

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**From:** Larisa Cummings <pidicummings@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, March 5, 2023 2:47 AM

**To:** Nathan D George <nathan@ndgre.com>; xin.jin17@gmail.com

**Subject:** From Newbury Street

Hello again, please contact me about your three 2800-3000 Shattuck plans.

Thank you,



Larisa Cummings

510-435-9812

