

Crane, Fatema

From: Charlene Woodcock <charlene@woodynet.net>
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Crane, Fatema
Cc: Berkeley Mayor's Office; Maio, Linda; Davila, Cheryl; Bartlett, Ben; Harrison, Kate; Hahn, Sophie; Worthington, Kriss; Droste, Lori; Sustainable Berkeley Coalition
Subject: 600 Addison Street Project
Attachments: Aquatic Park bird count.numbers; Aquatic Park bird count p.2.numbers

November 5, 2017

TO: Members of the Zoning Board and City Council

FROM: Charlene M. Woodcock, 2355 Virginia Street, Berkeley

RE: 600 Addison Street Project

I write to object strongly to this proposed development, on the grounds of its likely destructive environmental effects as well as the likelihood that it would further disturb tribal and archaeological resources and have a very deleterious, urbanizing effect on Berkeley's adjacent Aquatic Park, an important bird habitat and recreation site. This project would irrevocably urbanize Aquatic Park, Berkeley's amazing water bird habitat (see below for my 3-week bird count and Bill Woodcock's July photo). The existing Plexxikon building is just one story, set on ground about ten feet higher than the park. If buildings there were to rise to three stories they would loom over the park and dominate its east side. In Scheme 1, Buildings D and E do not meet the 100-foot setback from shoreline, nor does Building D in Scheme 2. There are numerous mature trees, 30 to 40 feet tall, which are absorbing carbon. They would be cut down and replaced with buildings and paved parking.

Berkeley's most urgent need is for low- and middle-income housing and housing for the homeless. Before the City entertains any demolition proposal such as this one, it is incumbent upon the ZAB and City Council, and especially those who were elected to address housing in the November 2016 election, to consider whether the existing buildings might be adapted to address these needs. I wonder if an elected council member or anyone on city staff has examined the buildings proposed for demolition with regard to the possibility of repurposing them for temporary housing for the homeless?

Compared to the existing use of the site—three buildings totaling about 55,000 square feet, 130 parking spaces, with half the site in benign use by American Rock & Soil to store soil and mulch—the proposed development would greatly increase the density of constructed space, people, and cars on this site—to a huge 475,000 gross square feet, half of it office space, and 830 parking spaces. It is not clear how this would serve the most pressing needs of Berkeley residents.

Obviously, bringing at least seven hundred more cars to this site will have a measurable effect on air quality, noise, greenhouse gas emissions, and of course will disturb the tranquility of the adjacent Aquatic Park. As for population and housing, unless the new employees are already-housed Berkeley residents they will add to our housing needs or drive their cars from elsewhere and thus add to our greenhouse gas emissions and traffic problems. There is already gridlock at the University Avenue entrance to Berkeley every weekday morning. How can these CEQA-listed environmental effects can be dismissed as insignificant?

Finally, all those in city government responsible for planning for Berkeley's future need not only to be addressing housing needs, especially for families and low- and middle-income residents, but also to prepare for the exigencies of climate change. One of the most obvious for us here in the Bay Area is sea rise and the need to set aside unbuilt areas near our shoreline that can accommodate inundation as the sea level rises and the violence of storms increases. Developers have no such concerns or responsibilities, so the pressure on the city will continue from developers intent on making profits by filling all available spaces with buildings. At the moment, the city has two environmentally important, archaeologically sensitive spaces that could provide the resilience we talk about if they are left open and unbuilt. This site between Addison and Bancroft and the nearby Spengers' parking lot atop the Berkeley Ohlone shellmound both ought to be preserved as open space for the long term good of the city of Berkeley and to reduce the destructive consequences of sea rise.

See below for my 3-week bird count and a July 2017 photo of the eastern shore of the Aquatic Park lake by Bill Woodcock.



Table 1

Aquatic Park mornings	7-7:45 7/21	7:15-8 7/22	7:20-8:15 7/23	7:40-8:30 7/24	6:45-7:35 7/27	7:15-8:15 7/30	7-7:50 7/31	7-7:30 8/1	6:50-7:30 8/2	6:50-7:30 8/3	7:30-8:15 8/4	7:20-8:10 8/6	7:15-7:50 8/7				
black-crowned night heron	19	34	29	3	19	24	14	19	22	22	15	12	2				
snowy egret	42	31	12	7	24	30	29	45	50	49	24	24	13				
great egret	33	11	9	1	7	14	11	11	17	24	11	20	5				
great blue heron	4	3	3		3	3	2	4	3	4	4	4	1				
stilt	8	6	15			4		4			10	4	5				
cormorant	5	6	9	4		3	1	6	12	10	6	4					
green heron																	
duck	44	60	45	13	59	69	54	63	49	73	33	85	75				
coot													1				
brown pelican																	
kingfisher																	
Canada goose				29		29		31		59	68	31	18				

