

Jacob, Melinda

Subject: FW: 2211 Harold Way

From: harvey smith [<mailto:harveysmithberkeley@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 02, 2015 11:12 AM

To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB); Sage, Aaron E.

Subject: 2211 Harold Way

TO: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)

As a resident of Berkeley I wish to express my opposition to the 2211 Harold Way project. Being a long time resident of Berkeley, I would like to present the broader picture of my opposition to this project. I will give you the proverbial forest in the hope of getting you away from looking at the individual trees.

I probably do need to remind you of broader forces at work in the U.S., which settle in on a local level in our city. We now have the largest gap income rivaling that of the Gilded Age as we were recently reminded by Janet Yellen, chair of the Federal Reserve. Meanwhile, the financial sector piles up higher and profits. Clearly we can see the connections: the flow of capital available for a project like 2211 Harold Way and displacement of even moderate income residents, not to mention those of low income.

There is a history here in Berkeley, too. In the 1960s there was a "ticky-tack" apartment building boom that most look back on now as a very bad idea. This spawned some level neighborhood preservation, but it seems we are back to a version of where we were then.

Even earlier in the 1930s and early 1940s, Berkeley experienced a wave of development, but this was large public development. Parks, schools, a new library and other public buildings were built. Current politics has pushed this approach to the side. Instead, cities must pander to developers and their financiers to develop a tax base to meet basic services. The private over the public has become a norm.

Berkeley can follow this national trend, but generally this is not the rule for our innovative city. We can stand up and say no to Shattuck Square becoming a version of Union Square or Times Square. We can say no to more people of moderate means being pushed out of our city, including those that create art, poetry, novels, nonfiction or music. We can say no to pushing out the nonprofits like the Habitot Museum, or businesses like the Shattuck Cinemas, Berkeley Ace Hardware or Berkeley Vacuum. (Whatever happened to the promised Gaia Books and the Fine Arts Theater?)

This proposed oversize building raises major aesthetic concerns, issues of views and light, but also concerns about public safety. Is our fire department prepared to deal with the probability of a high rise fire, or a fire with high wind, or an earthquake and fire?

I am sick of hearing developers tell us projects like this will create a "vibrant downtown." These projects will not. I would much prefer them just saying "we're in it for the money and could really give a damn about how it may impact Berkeley."

Let me make it clear I do not personally oppose development that is sensitive to place and to community and considers all residents of the city, not just those with deep pockets.

So, when you're going through the "trees" of your many regulations that apply to this project, I hope you can step back and see the "forest." Help protect the Berkeley we love.

Here is a link to my new book - <http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9781467132398/Berkeley-and-the-New-Deal>. Here are links to the National New Deal Preservation Association and The Living New Deal. Please take a look and if you like what you see, sign up to receive occasional updates. I hope you'll join us in pushing for a *New* New Deal! <http://www.newdeallegacy.org/> and <http://www.livingnewdeal.org/> See the latest newsletter - <http://livingnewdeal.berkeley.edu/newsletters/may-2014/> - or previous newsletter - <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs180/1103359479611/archive/1112348736410.html>.