

1803 Bonita Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94709  
December 9, 2002

Berkeley City Council  
2180 Milvia Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

**Re: Landmarks designation appeal for 1326 Allston Way, Berkeley**

Dear City Council:

All landmark designations are important in preserving and honoring our past. I believe the application before you to landmark the City Corporation Yard site and the Ratcliff Building is perhaps the most important to the history of our city, and especially, in defining Berkeley's municipal government. As the author of this application, I hope that each of you will take the time to read it.

I would like to share the following concerns as you consider this appeal:

For the record, please be aware that the LPC conducted three separate public hearings over the span of four months during which Public Works, the developer and owner of the site, never participated or raised any objections. At the last of these hearings, both commissioners and residents voiced concerns about Public Works' lack of participation at the hearings and throughout the LPC process.

In fact, Public Works did not legally notice any neighborhood groups or residents around the Corporation Yard about any of the LPC hearings. City staff had been meeting with this community as late as March 2002 so it wasn't as though they didn't know who these affected neighborhood groups and residents are. Consequently, it's not surprising that few attended the hearings.

Several commissioners expressed that this conduct by Public Works was disrespectful to residents and the LPC process. One commissioner stated that this has been the historic posture of staff when city projects are on the LPC agenda, like the recent shellmound application. Additionally, they stated that this administrative ploy burdens both the commission and the legal process.

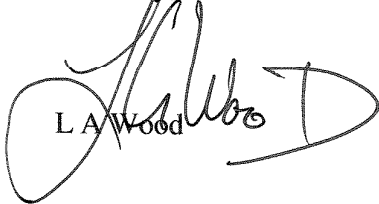
After the August LPC meeting and its approval of my application, their recommendation was not placed on the City Council agenda. After waiting two months, I began to publicly ask about this "special handling" of the Corporation Yard landmarks application. Unbelievably, it has now taken four months to be placed on your agenda.

As the applicant, I expected to be formally noticed at least fourteen days before the City's appeal to the LPC hearing, as is legally required. I finally received a notice eight days before the scheduled appeals hearing, and then only in response to my inquiry. The process outlined above of handling my application reveals serious procedural problems. (See attachment.)

In January of this year and several months before my landmarks application, the Public Works director made a presentation to the LPC. Part of that staff presentation centered on the Yard's 1987 incomplete capital improvement project and the city's pending use permit for moving city employees into trailers on the Corp Yard site. Seismic concerns over the Ratcliff Building obviously warrant the relocation of staff. However, the evaluations of staff as set forth in the appeal are simply based on future site development plans, and not about the true historic nature of this site, the architectural significance of the Ratcliff Building, and the need for their preservation.

I request that you deny the appeal, and further, that you recommend, before approval of any future capital projects at the Corporation Yard, a complete Environmental Impact Report be prepared as well as a formal re-evaluation of the Yard's fifteen-year-old Master Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L.A. Wood'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end. Below the signature, the name 'L A Wood' is printed in a simple, sans-serif font.

L A Wood

Mon, Dec 9, 2002 11:11 AM

**From:** Kelly, Sherry <SKelly@ci.berkeley.ca.us>  
**To:** "'berkeleycitizen.org@attbi.com'" <berkeleycitizen.org@attbi.com>  
**Date:** Monday, December 9, 2002 8:52 AM  
**Subject:** Corporation Yard Public Hearing

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Dear L A,

I have checked and our office mailed out notices on November 25th from a mailing list given to us by Planning. We reviewed the list and it appears your address is not on it (it usually doesn't have a name, just "occupant" and address). I don't know why you weren't included on the list, however we mailed out this notice to you on Thursday after getting your e-mail.

The public hearing is scheduled for the 12/17 agenda.

Sincerely,

Sherry Kelly, City Clerk 981-6910

Please include on City Council Agenda

Toni Horodysky  
2213 Acton Street  
Berkeley, CA 94702

Mayor and City Council  
City of Berkeley

Council Agenda: December 17, 2002

**Re: Landmark Status for Corporation Yard Ratcliff Building and Environs**

There should be no doubt in your minds that the Walter Ratcliff Building at the Corporation Yard is a historic and architecturally significant structure worthy of Landmark Status.

This building, designed by Berkeley's first City Architect, was built in 1913. It was one of the first industrial buildings in the United States to be designed to blend into its surrounding neighborhood and to present a friendly face to its environs. This brick building has beautiful detailing and looks more like a school or Art studio than its true function.

Here are two early views of the Ratcliff Building:



The real question behind this Appeal by the Public Works Department is whether a City Department is subject to the same standards and rules as ordinary business and homeowners in this City.

The Public Works Department did not have the courtesy to attend and speak at the Landmarks Commission hearings, although the meetings were continued for several months providing much opportunity to do so.

Public Works Department is in violation of its Use Permit, gradually having placed 20 large storage containers on the property, all without benefit of Use Permit.

In its Application for a Use Permit during its last construction project in 1988, the Public Works Department in its CEQA report and in its Use Permit proposed rebuilding a Sound Wall along the southern border of the property and expanding off-street employee parking by restriping and removing several small structures on the northern side of the lot. It took eight years and protests from neighbors to get the Sound Wall built. The employee parking has never been increased.

Further, during this construction project, plans shown to the community in the Use Permit were revised, and a new building was constructed which encroached upon the adjacent Strawberry Street Park, in clear violation of Measure L.

The Public Works Department met with neighbors in March to discuss plans for work at the Corporation Yard, and stated repeatedly that they had no plans for construction or demolition at the site. In fact, they have a Master Plan, approved by the City Council in July 1988 which includes demolition of a nearly half of the Ratcliff Building.

As a follow-up to the issues raised at the March 20, 2002 Community meeting on April 2, 2002, we submitted a series of 25 questions to Patrick Keilch of the Public Works Department, regarding Corporation Yard changes. Following are excerpts from our questions and his replies of July 3, 2002:

1. *Please confirm that you have no plans for any construction at the Corporation Yard as stated at the meeting.*

*[Keilch Patrick] At this time we have no plans for construction at the Corp Yard*

3. Please confirm that you have no plans to raze and replace the Quonset hut or any other buildings or parts thereof, other than moving the Lawn Bowling storage facility from the Corporation Yard.

[Keilch, Patrick] Correct, we have no such plans to raze or replace such buildings.

17. Why were the mitigation projects of the 1987 Use Permit never completed? Such as: planting trees along Allston Way, restriping employee parking lot to create 22 more spaces, demolishing 3 small buildings along Allston way to create additional employee parking. Why did it take 10 years, including one year of protests, to build the planned wall along Bancroft Way?

[Keilch, Patrick] Obviously, because the City did not take the actions or allocate the resources to do these things or took longer to make the decision and allocate the resources for measures which were completed. This certainly legitimate question but is a comment to make a point, I believe, as much as a question.

18. The 1987 Use Permit shows the proposed Paint Building as a long, narrow building along the west property line with Strawberry Creek Park. The drawing of the Corporation Yard at present shows a shorter, wider building that straddles the property line, encroaching into the Park. When and why were the plans changed? Measure L requires a two-thirds vote of the citizens to change the use of park or open space. On whose authority was Measure L violated?

[Keilch, Patrick] We don't have the research yet to answer all these questions. This is information we need to research more to determine. I'm asking Alex and Planning to further elaborate on this.

So the question before you today is whether a City Department is subject to the same standards as anyone else in the City.

We ask you to deny the Appeal and designate the Ratcliff building and its environs as a City Landmark.