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Berkeley City Council
Attn: City Clerks Department
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Delivered Via Email

December 9, 2003

Regarding: Appeal of Landmarks Designation for 3075 Telegraph Avenue.

Dear Members of the Berkeley City Council:

We are respectfully withdrawing our appeal of the Landmark Preservation Commission. After further discussions with the commission, it seemed unanimous that the members would agree to our plan of altering the former Concrete Grid Forms Company. Attached you will find the proposal we made to the commission. We think that ultimately our plan will enhance the public's appreciation of this Berkeley Landmark.

We understand that by withdrawing our appeal, we are giving up our right to appeal the designation in the future.

Sincerely,



Sam Sorokin
Partner

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Landmarks Preservation Commission
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Regarding: 3075 Telegraph Avenue (Southside Lofts)

December 1, 2003

Dear Commissioners:

The Dairs and I are hoping that our revised project will successfully provide the city of Berkeley, with not only a building that will provide much needed housing and additional retail to the Telegraph corridor, but will also help to highlight the historical significance of one of its former buildings.

As you know at your last meeting, you decided to landmark the former the "Glass Block and Concrete" structure located at 3075 Telegraph for its historical importance to our community. While utilizing the spirit of your decision, the Architect and I have come up with a proposal that improves the public's ability to appreciate the landmark. The Concrete Grid Forms Company did a lot to revolutionize the way concrete glass blocks can be used affordably and positively in construction. They invented a process to form 4-foot by 8-foot panels of concrete and glass. As was noted in your decision, it is these panels that are upon closer scrutiny, what is historically significant. Recognizing this, we have decided to alter our plans and utilize these panels in our project.

More specifically, we plan to hire a concrete saw company to remove the three well preserved panels from the Northern upstairs elevation and the one well preserved panel from the Western upstairs elevation. (These are the only complete panels on the second floor) Utilizing a diamond blade saw, we will use care in delicately removing the panels. These four panels will then be stored and secured on site during the following construction period to build the Southside Lofts. We have already received a bid (see attached) from the Penhall Company, a well-known organization that specializes in this type of work. We also plan to use the same company to demolish all the existing structures. This will assure that everything will be coordinated properly.

Upon finishing the construction of the Southside Lofts, we will take the panels and place them in one of three locations on the site. We hope to receive your guidance in helping us choose the most appropriate location. The following are the options:

1. Place them in front of the entrance to the parking area on Dowling Street. This provides access to the general public, allowing more people to view and appreciate the landmark.
2. Place them behind the parking spaces, where the original building stood. This will maintain the positioning of the original structure.
3. Incorporate them in our landscaping plan for the garden.

Either way, we will have a plaque placed in front of the panels with the following inscription:

The office of the Concrete Grid Forms Company was erected on this site in 1938 with the help of consulting architects Walter Steilberg and Bernard Maybeck. The building served both as an office and as a demonstration building, displaying their innovative product, a modular concrete unit with integral fenestration. The modular panels became a notable part of modern Berkeley architecture.

These panels were retrieved from the original building before its demolition in 2004. They are a representation and demonstration of the process and ideas of the Concrete Grid Forms Company.

More information on this building is available at The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association located at 2318 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704 and on our website at www.southsidelofts.com.

In addition we plan, with your help, to create a booklet about the landmark and place it on record with BAHA, as well as digitally on the project's website. Members of the public will then be able to view pictures of the former building and information about its inventor/architect and the specifics about the process itself.

We believe that our revised plans will not only mitigate the impact our project will have on the landmark, but will actually enhance the public's appreciation of it. We hope that you all agree with our proposal and approve our alteration permit and the overall design of the Southside Lofts.

Sincerely,

Sam Sorokin

CC: Zoning Adjustment Board