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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CITY OF BERKELEY

15 November 2005

Re: Appeal of Designation of Corner Frank R. Hull House, City of Berkeley
Landmark Structure of Merit #284

Mayor Bates and Members of the City Council, Thank you.

My name is Lesley Emmington Jones and I live at 195 The Uplands. I am before you tonight as a member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. My tenure on the Commission has been rather ~~extensive~~, intermittent from the very first Commission meetings in the mid-1970s to the present, with several stints in-between. Designation of the Corner Frank R. Hull House, built in 1903 by a "contractor" of the day named Frank A. Culin (see *Berkeley Gazette*, March 30, 1903, p. 3), stands out uniquely because it represents the City's recognition of ~~an historic neighborhood~~ ^{the} Ashby Station ^{neighborhood} - virtually ignored until just recently.

Undoubtedly you, like us, had little understanding of the emergence of Ashby Station at the turn of the last Century as a suburban development of homes and commerce along the streetcar lines and the inter-urban ^{Key System} ~~trains line~~ (the Key System being laid in 1903). Ashby Station sprang up even later than Lorin Station, where we now have banners along Adeline reading "Historic Lorin," — but both were built out by 1910.

Surely, even as City Council members, you, like the Landmark Commissioners, were not either very well aware of the corner of Otis and Russell Street because Otis is only one block long and it is tucked away behind the grand, curving, and wonderful historic Webb Block on Ashby, behind busy Adeline Street and even behind a neighborhood traffic diverter. But you should know that this section of South Berkeley was ^{named} ~~called~~ the Central Park Tract, ^{when the first subdivision was filed} filed in 1894, and that Otis Street was named for Stephen Otis, a San Francisco businessman who was one of the property investors.

itself
The Landmarks Commission focused on the history and historic resources of Ashby Station on behalf of the City in order to secure Federal Funding for the proposed Ed Roberts Campus. Both the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association and the firm of Page & Trunbull, Inc., issued reports that supported the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the State Office of Historic Preservation recognition that this part of Berkeley represented a significant historic context and a distinct architectural period.

The Hull Family, like the more prominent Webb Family, became a part of the early neighborhood right there on Otis Street. In fact, the Landmarks Commission designated the first home of the Webb Family, the Harry H. Webb House, a City of Berkeley Landmark Structure of Merit #265 in 2003. The Webb House, one of the first Arts and Crafts houses designed by architect Charles Manning MacGregor in 1904, is located on opposite end of Otis Street. And, most importantly the handsome Webb Block was designated City Landmark #278 in 2004.

Victorian/Colonial Revival House styles
the
The story of the Hull ~~Family~~ on Otis Street and Hull Family contribution to the development of Otis Street is well told in the Landmark Application. It is a tribute to the neighborhood today that the community took it upon themselves to initiate the Corner Hull House, so that it might be recognized as a significant link to the past and as an important architectural feature of the neighborhood's character and preserved as such for future generations.

As you have been told the Landmarks Preservation Commission deliberated carefully for this designation and, thus, prepared a Notice of Decision that reflected the criteria of the Landmarks Ordinance. The Commission is now prepared to work with the current owner of the Corner Hull House, or a future owner, to guide any proposed alterations so that this lovely historic house, might continue to give a special sense of place and time on Otis and Russell Streets. Indeed, a subcommittee of 4 Commissioners is already formed and ready to go. We hope you will support our designation accordingly.
the neighborhood and the Landmarks Commission