


 THE BERKELEY
ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE
NEWSLETTER

Number 35

Oct.-Dec. 1981

WILKINSON LODGE THREATENED

Wilkinson Lodge, the more than half-century old (1928) boys' residence at the School for the Blind, is standing right in front of the bulldozer. National Senior Citizens Council, Inc., a Michigan based elderly housing developer which would like to build up to 200 units of senior housing where Wilkinson Lodge has stood for 53 years, has already told the city that preliminary plans call for clearance of the former boys' residence.

The rub is that, just last August, the State Historic Resources Commission, at a meeting in Murphys in Mother Lode country, unanimously approved BAHA's nomination of the Blind and Deaf Schools to the National Register of Historic Places as an historic site. BAHA specifically named now threatened Wilkinson Lodge in its National Register nomination.

David Gebhard, the UC Santa Barbara architectural historian, singled out Wilkinson Lodge--in his 230-page building-by-building study of the site for the UC Regents--as "the most picturesque building within the School for the Blind." Elsewhere in his detailed description of the former boys' residence he said, "This building represents one of the most successful pre-1930s Spanish Colonial Revival images within the School for the Blind. Its domestic scale should lend itself easily to conversion to housing."

The future of the Blind and Deaf Schools property has been a political battleground for more than five years--ever since the State Department of Education announced that it was building a new facility in Fremont and moving the century-old Berkeley institution there--like it or not. The question of whether or not the University of California would get the surplus site from the state appears to have been settled last July when the new City Council voted to approve UC acquisition for sorely needed student and faculty housing. The last remaining hurdle--and it's a pretty tall one--is a pending lawsuit by parents of blind students, who are contesting the move to Fremont. A decision is expected in the near future.

The problem does not lie with U.C. Their Regent-approved plan for reuse of the Blind & Deaf Schools site would spare Wilkinson Lodge as it would all the other buildings on the 50-acre site. The U.C. plan, which is for 100% rehabilitation, calls for neither demolition nor new construction.

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NOTICE

Although we allow 3 weeks delivery time, several BAHA members received their OFFICE PARTY and IRISH CASTLES announcements after the event. If you live in the Bay Area and receive this Newsletter more than 2 weeks after the date stamped above, please let us know at the office. (845-6591)


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continued from page 1

The elderly housing sponsors, who make pretty unlikely villains, were added to the mixture during the years-long squabble over future control of the site. Critics of the UC student housing plan, eager to find an alternative use (any use!) to counter UC acquisition of the site, came up with National Senior Citizens Council, Inc., and their housing consultants, Cooperative Services, Inc., about six months ago. The City Council, at the same time that it OKed UC acquisition of the site, also called for a feasibility study by Cooperative Services of "up to 200 units of elderly housing." UC acquiesced.

Ever since, the middle-western housing sponsors, their consultants and architects, have been nibbling around the edges of a proposal which they will unveil at a special December 7 meeting of the Planning Commission. They have already indicated, however, that Wilkinson Lodge does not figure in their plan.

The issue will not be settled on December 7. Far from it.

These are some of the obstacles that remain:

1) The most imposing roadblock is the protection afforded by the National Historic Preservation Act to structures either already on the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for the Register, as Wilkinson Lodge clearly is.

Any developer who is using Federal dollars in project development as the elderly sponsors will, must conduct a Section 106 (Nat. Historic Preservation Act) review of the project. That review, which Brad Paul of the National Trust for Historic Preservation calls a "mini-EIR", must identify mitigating alternatives. One obvious one is rehabilitation of Wilkinson Lodge rather than demolition--an idea that there is no evidence the sponsor has ever considered.

Consent to the project, based on the Section 106 survey, must be obtained from the funding agency, in this case HUD, and from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which polices the Act. Outcomes of the process could take the forms of withdrawal of funding, requirements for modification, etc.

2) The largest and most vocal neighborhood based association, the 400-member Blind School Site Coalition, has as one of its basic organizational tenets--"Maintenance of the site's historical, architectural and visual qualities, preserving the campus-like setting. There should be renovation rather than demolition and new construction."

3) The July City Council resolution, authorizing the elderly housing feasibility study, called for building no more than three stories. There is good reason, now, to believe that the sponsors will claim that they must be allowed four to five stories to make the project pay.

More later !

--Pat Devaney



LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION NEWS

The following historic buildings have recently been designated City of Berkeley Landmarks: Anna Head School, Haviland Hall, First Unitarian Church, and Shattuck Apts. The James Edgar House, formerly the Phoenician Restaurant, and the Masonic Temple are pending discussion at future LPC meetings.

The Masonic Temple is of particular interest. Although it houses the busy Crocker Bank on the ground floor, the upper stories have been vacant for many years. Three years ago BAHA was privileged to sponsor a downtown business luncheon in the old Masonic meeting hall. We had a chance to see the lovely interior with its offices, little theatre, ballroom, kitchen and elegant meeting hall. Developers are proposing to put a mezzanine in the meeting hall and re-design the rest of the interior to include staircases and develop marketable spaces. If BAHA members are interested in preserving the interior (or the exterior), they should come to an LPC public hearing on Jan. 18 (call 644-6490 for location).

The James Edgar House should also be of interest to lovers of Victorian architecture. This sample of Italianate workmanship is possibly the second oldest house in Berkeley, the Edgars coming to the college settlement by the year 1870. It is one of the few remaining Victorians in the Telegraph Ave. area. Arguments against landmark designation contend that the restaurant alterations are too severe to the facade. However, these changes can be compared to those on many of the first floor facades on previously designated commercial structures, such as Oxford Hall (Good Earth Restaurant) and Roos Bros. building. Proponents of designation contend that these changes do not obliterate the total design and historic importance of these buildings. Whatever your position is, come to the Dec. 21 LPC meeting when this will be discussed.

The LPC has also recently made a series of recommendations regarding the Delaware Street Historic District. These include 1.) preservation of all the existing buildings and moving onto the site abandoned buildings of similar historic merit and comparable architecture, 2.) closing the street at 5th but leaving it opened at 6th St., 3.) involving LPC in picking an architect and in developing buildings nearby or buildings themselves that are eligible for the National Register. There are 8 such buildings in the vicinity. The LPC has been actively involved with the Redevelopment Interdepartmental Task Force and Carl Anthony, the consultant.

Other items pending LPC discussion are the definition of a historic district, UC's West Side Study and the printing of a landmark certificate for designated structures. There are over 40 designated city landmarks and the commission invites anyone interested to submit an application. For more information, call 644-6490.

--Stephanie Manning

WEST SIDE STUDY

The University of California, faced with severe needs for student and faculty housing, as well as plans for additional office space, has begun an urban design study of the area at the western edge of the campus along Oxford Street. Sedway/Cooke, a prominent urban and environmental planning firm, has been hired to conduct the study.

The West Side Study area encompasses the western section of the campus, and Oxford and Fulton Streets from Virginia to Durant. Because of the proximity to the central business district and because the University is interested in further joint development with the private sector, the study is also looking at Shattuck Avenue between these boundaries. (The University has already leased extensive office space downtown, including six of the seven floors of the Chinn Building now under construction at the corner of University and Shattuck.)

The study, directed by Thomas Cooke, will provide an inventory and evaluation of existing conditions, proposed land uses & urban design criteria. University properties along Oxford & Fulton Streets under consideration for more intensive development include Oxford Tract, the University Garage, the University Extension & Printing Departments. There are also plans for new academic space on the western part of campus.

In addition to the housing and office development possibilities, some of the planning problems being addressed by the study are: more effective transition between the campus and downtown, possible redesign of the West Entrance Drive, improved pedestrian links between the campus and downtown (including suggestions for foot bridges over Oxford), better parking and public transportation.

A Study Advisory Committee has been created, with about 60 representatives of University staff, city government, downtown business & local communities. Several members of the BAHA board attended the first 2 of 10 meetings planned for an 11 month period. Five publicly advertised workshops will also be held.

While attention is being paid to identifying & preserving the natural (Eucalyptus Grove & Strawberry Creek) and architectural resources of the West Side, there are economic factors which may influence this goal. Sedway/Cooke is assessing market conditions affecting the area and the economic feasibility of various development alternatives, taking into consideration the relationship of improvement to land value.

Because of these concerns, it is essential that we ask the University for a commitment to the preservation of the character and scale of Berkeley's traditional downtown commercial district with the recycling of existing buildings a major goal.

The State Historic Resources Inventory conducted by BAHA in 1977-79 identified 73 properties in the study area as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Five buildings have already been selected for the Register, and ten more applications are pending. Local designated landmarks include the Roos Bros. building, the Morse Block, the Studio Building, Kress, Oxford Hall, and Shattuck Apartments, and applications are being prepared for others.

Two buildings are currently waiting a decision on designation by the Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission: the Masonic Temple (Crocker Bank) and the University Garage. A new owner of the Masonic Temple has come before the commission discuss plans for remodeling the building for office space on the two floors above Crocker Bank, which will continue in its present location. The University Garage, 1952 Oxford Street, will be heard in December. Built by Walter Ratcliff Jr. in 1931 in Spanish Colonial style, the elegant garage with its lovely arcades, arched windows and Moorish marketplace courtyard is one of the buildings the University considers to involve minimal use of land and a possible location for development. It is important that the University consider adaptive reuse as an alternative.

Other buildings of special interest in the study area include: the 4 story clapboard Walnut Street Apartments at 1907 Walnut, behind Berkeley Hardware, designed by George L. Mohr in 1909; the Odd Fellows Temple at 2288 Fulton; the Acheson Physicians' Building; the Acheson building housing MacFarlane's and 6 other shops designed by Earle Bertz in 1925, with ornamental cornice and arched clerestory windows surviving underneath the MacFarlane's sign; and the University Printing Department at 2120 Oxford (1938-40, by Masten & Hurd) with a beautiful Streamlined Moderne interior.

--Arlene Silk

Friends of

TERRA



COTTA

Tour

On Friday November 20 several members of BAHA joined "Friends of Terra Cotta" on a tour of the Gladding, McBean terra cotta plant at Lincoln, California. (Lincoln is 12 miles north of Roseville.)

Gladding, McBean was founded in the 1870s and has produced a wide variety of clay objects during its 100 year existence. Its most noticeable products are the architectural terra cotta decorations which adorn such noteworthy buildings as the Wrigley Building in Chicago, the Woolworth Building in New York, and the Breuner Building in Oakland. Today the company produces sewer pipe and roof and floor tiles and architectural terra cotta. Its architectural terra cotta workshops are able to reproduce decorative ceramic objects for buildings being restored as well as for new construction.

"Friends of Terra Cotta" is a national preservation organization devoted to the preservation and documentation of this historic material. For further information write: Friends of Terra Cotta, c/o California Historical Society, 2090 Jackson Street, San Francisco 94109.

After touring Gladding, McBean, we stopped in Roseville for lunch and exploration. A 1920s theater with a glazed tile facade caught our eyes. Finding it open for a matinee we went in and discovered to our delight that this theater, the Roseville, was being operated by the Placer County Arts Council and in the process of being restored by volunteers. We also found 2 lovely handpainted tile fountains with a Spanish flavor in the large foyers of this 1926 theater, which were produced by Gladding, McBean. The Placer County Arts Council's address is: 104 L Street, Lincoln 95648. They are also members of the Theater Historical Society, 624 Wynne Rd., Springfield, PA 19064.

WEEKLY GAZETTE SERIES

For over 7 years since the first one appeared in 1974, the GAZETTE has published articles provided by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association in a weekly series. The following list of articles is continued from the last Newsletter and will be completed and continually updated in the future. BAHA will provide xerox copies of an article for \$1, or 50¢ each for 2 or more.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 260. Wilkinson House, 1879
2730 Dwight Way
Clinton Day
14 NOV 1979 | 263. Tupper & Reed, 1925
2275 Shattuck Ave.
W.R. Yelland
12 DEC 1979 | 267. Santa Fe Depot, 1903
Charles Whittlesey
10 JAN 1980 | 271.
Keeler House, 1895
1770 Highland Place
Bernard Maybeck
6 FEB 1980 |
| 261. Bishop Berkeley Apts.
2709 Dwight Way
William Weeks, 1928
28 NOV 1979 | 264. Hohl House, 1906
1834 Delaware St.
19 DEC 1979 | 268. College Women's Club
2680 Bancroft Way, 1928
Walter T. Steilberg
16 JAN 1980 | 272.
Farm Credit Bldg., 1938
2180 Milvia St.
James W. Flachek
13 February 1980 |
| 262. Durant Hotel, 1928
Durant & Bowditch
William H. Weeks
5 DEC 1979 | 265. Travel Service, Inc.
100 Berkeley Square
Hudspeth & Dean, 1940
26 DEC 1979 | 269. Bade House, 1906
2616 College Avenue
Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr.
23 JAN 1980 | |
| 266. Lorin Theatre, 1914
3332 Adeline Street
Hiram K. Lovell
3 JAN 1980 | 270. Hearst Hall, 1899
Bernard Maybeck
30 JAN 1980 | | |

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS



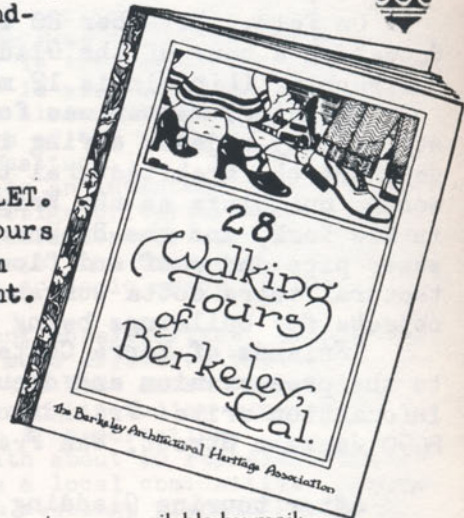
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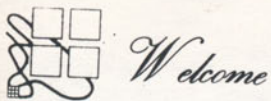
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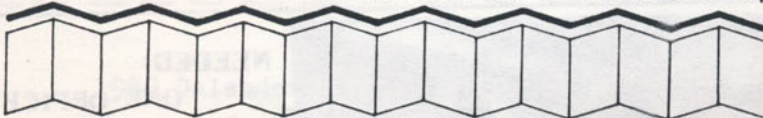


This year **PREMIUMS** are being offered as follows:

Memberships in the contributing category will receive a copy of Jacomena Maybeck's Maybeck, The Family View; and memberships in both the sustaining/business and patron/corporate categories will receive both the book and a Maybeck poster designed by Robert Baldock and Wesley B. Tanner, Printer. Patron/corporate members will also receive a "Music in the Street" poster designed by Robin Thomas Sweet for the Summer 1980 Shattuck Avenue concert series.



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