

Marc Babsin, Emerald Fund  
John Clawson, Equity Community Builders

[By email]

Re: CCA Oakland Development Proposal

August 25, 2022

Dear Marc and John:

The RCPC is generally very supportive of your efforts to develop a substantial amount of housing on the former CCA site. We appreciate the evolution of the design to maintain a significant, publicly accessible open space as a primary feature of the plan and the adaptive reuse of Macky Hall and the Carriage House as principal contributors to the character of that open space. In contrast to earlier plans, this proposal preserves the integrity of the historic wall along Broadway, along with the carriage entrance and grand staircase, adding an accessible entrance to reach the enhanced upper meadow, which is another positive development.

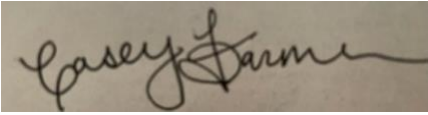
Below please find two big-picture comments on the proposal. Attached to this letter please additionally find a number of more specific and technical questions and comments about which we would like to continue a dialog with you.

Since useable open space is scarce in our neighborhood, it is our hope and expectation that the presently ill-defined programmatic use of Macky Hall and the Carriage House will be clarified. These resources should contribute to the vitality of this meadow and its woodland setting, and access paths and available activities should be clearly signed, illuminated, and apparent near these entrances. Public restrooms and other appropriate community-oriented amenities should be part of this program. In addition, please make sure that this critical open space is designed so that it feels safe for all, including children and the disabled community.

The current proposed project unit count is now at 510 units, with 10% (51 units) anticipated to be affordable to those earning 110% of AMI for the area. Both figures are increases from your prior proposal, which is good progress. We would like to keep working with you and the City to explore any and all means for increasing the project's percentage of affordable housing and/or deepening the affordability of the project's affordable units, while keeping the project feasible to build. Clarifying unit types, counts and distribution will further inform future reviews.

It is our hope to see this project move forward expeditiously to optimize the benefits it could bring to our community by increasing the diversity and number of our residents, enhancing the economic vitality of College Avenue, and creating a large and accessible open space at the terminus of College Avenue, our neighborhood "Main Street."

Sincerely,

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Casey Farmer".

Casey Farmer  
Chair, RCPC Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Kenneth Rich".

Ken Rich  
Chair, RCPC Land Use Committee

cc: Rebecca Lind, Department of Planning and Building

## RCPC Specific Comments and Questions on CCA Proposal 8-1-22

### Development and Amenities Program:

1. Please specify the unit types, count and distribution of unit types by percentage. Also, it is unclear as to where the townhouses are located.
2. What are the anticipated commercial uses along Broadway within the building and in the courtyard entered via the Carriage Gate and/or the Clifton side of Building A?
3. What are the uses intended for Macky Hall and Carriage House? Will any of this space be made available to the community for scheduled activities?
4. What is envisioned for programmed activities within the meadow area and open space?
5. Will the program in the amenity wing of the upper building be accessible to the community?
6. Does this amenity program interact with the public space in ways other than visually?

### Urban Form and Architectural Character:

The CCA site sits at College Avenue's southern terminus, linking Rockridge to UC Berkeley, where each educational institution has contributed significantly to the American Arts and Craft Movement and the Northern California/Bay Regional Style with its multiple reinterpretations. As the guidelines indicate, these traditions are at the heart of Rockridge's character and quality as a place. In addition to the site's dramatic topography, it is located at the termination point of the Broadway commercial corridor, which then splits into two residential boulevards, where height limits drop significantly, as they do on College Avenue. Thus, the project must negotiate these architectural and urban form transitions with grace and respect, feeling new, yet fitting gracefully into the context.

This is not a generic housing site. As such, it calls for an urban form and architectural character that respects and responds to its presence and position in the urban fabric, the City's history, the architectural traditions of the region, and the sustainable environmental aspirations of the State. Hopefully, this project's response to context will serve as a model for other sites in and adjacent to our neighborhood.

We would like to continue working with you on the following aspects of the project's overall urban form:

- 1) Relationship of the project to adjacent existing buildings and potential future development sites such as the Ridge
- 2) Height and setback relationships between Building B and the adjacent apartment buildings
- 3) Relationship between the project and the existing developed portion of the Ridge Shopping Center and how they might be connected in the future, as the present design concept makes no connection.
- 4) Heights, setbacks and massing of the building along the Broadway frontage

### Architectural Character

We also have continuing concern and interest in the following issues of the project's architectural design. In general, the modulation of the buildings' facades has improved the overall aesthetics of the building to create a base-middle-top composition as articulated in the guidelines. This is further

enhanced by changes in materials, though the precise nature and character of these materials is to be determined. Further development is needed to make these buildings worthy of their unique setting and consistent in character and quality with the architectural traditions of the region. We would like to continue a dialog with the project sponsor focusing on:

- 1) Ensuring that the building facades do not appear too industrial or “boxy”
- 2) Enriching the facades with some sort of three-dimensional window treatment and/or balconies
- 3) Adequately screening rooftop mechanical structures

#### Landscape and Streetscape:

- 1) Can tall growing trees be planted between Macky Hall and the 90’ tall façade that looms behind it to enhance its context as the focal point of the meadow?
- 2) Could benches be inset along the historic wall and the sidewalk be widened to accommodate the heavy pedestrian flows?
- 3) Could the wall be illuminated to enhance its landmark role and improve neighborhood safety?
- 4) How will streetscape and site lighting be handled?
  - a) This is important, as this section of Broadway can feel dark and unsafe in the evenings, particularly along the long concrete wall, where the few streetlights are buried in the trees.
  - b) Will the pathway and meadow area be publicly accessible and illuminated in the evenings?
  - c) Will Macky Hall and the Carriage House receive enhanced illumination?
- 5) How does this project truly connect to the history of the site? Other than preservation of a few artifacts from the CCA site, what other actions could be taken to tie this development back to the site’s historic relevance to the Bay Area artworld?
  - a) Could there be sites for commissioned sculptures, or exhibits incorporated into the landscape?
  - b) Could some of the blank ground floor walls along Clifton become commissioned murals?
  - c) Could the courtyards and walkways within the site also be opportunities to tell the story of the site or the arts community that arose here?

#### Sustainability and Resilience

These characteristics of the project are not mentioned in either the site guidelines or the conceptual design presentation, yet we note that California energy codes are among the most advanced in the world, and we are amid a historic drought.

What are the sustainability and resiliency goals of this project and how will they be achieved?

- 1) Could and will this be a Zero Net Energy (ZNE) - Zero Carbon Building?
- 2) Will there be on-site grey water harvesting or storm water collection?
- 3) Will the project seek LEED or other environmental performance third-party certifications?
- 4) Could the Meadow and surrounding tree groves serve as stormwater retention areas?

#### Emergency Access:

- 1) A full review by the Fire Marshal and Fire Department is warranted
- 2) How is fire access being managed to ensure that multiple emergency vehicles and fleeing residents can be accommodated via a single entrance and exit along the Paseo and Clifton?
- 3) Will fire-fighters be willing to enter the narrow passage between two buildings or scale up the slope from Broadway to reach the interior of the site?

#### Transit and Ride-Share Access:

- 1) How do service and ride-share vehicles access, park and leave the site?
- 2) What are the intended intersection improvements at the intersection of Clifton and Broadway, as this area is already severely congested due to multiple signaled intersections?  
How will the bus stops be improved to provide seating and shelter at the base of the wall along an exceedingly narrow sidewalk for the current and anticipated pedestrian traffic load?

Errata:

We would appreciate your correction of Rockridge's boundaries in the context diagram on Page 7.

