

COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



TO LET NEIGHBORHOODS KNOW WHAT'S COMING DOWN BEFORE IT LANDS ON THEM

NEWSLETTER No. 2

JANUARY 1976

BERKELEY, CALIF.

Statement of Editorial Policy

The CNA Newsletter is, thus far, the production of just a few members who have minimal energy to spare. We eagerly welcome any replies to purported facts or personal opinion set forth in this newsletter, as well as any original contributions of fact or opinion. Likewise, help of all sorts -- typing, layout, reproduction, distribution -- is more than welcome. In the event more material is contributed than we have the energy to type, lay out, reproduce, etc., we reserve the right to summarize and refer readers to the source for full details. Nothing submitted will go unmentioned and as much as humanly possible will be printed in full. Needless to say, all such material herein represents the views of the writer and not necessarily of the Council of Neighborhood Associations as a whole.

Submissions may be made to any officer of the CNA.

-- Glenn Harris

THE BICENTENNIAL BULLDOZER

PART I. THE SCHOOLS:

From the "Preliminary Report" on Berkeley School Rehabilitation, distributed by the Ad Hoc Committee for Berkeley School Rehabilitation:

You know that the Berkeley Unified School District has a \$6.4 million construction program to meet the requirements of state law on earthquake standards in school buildings. Late in October 1975 the District Building Coordinator requested a Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association committee to study Cragmont, Jefferson, and Willard Schools, scheduled for total demolition, and John Muir School, which is to be gutted and rehabilitated. The charge of this committee was to list items of historical or aesthetic value which might be salvaged from the four buildings.

(continued next page)

THE SCHOOLS continued.

At first the committee was concerned to identify minor elements which could be saved. But as we toured sites, examined plans for new construction, and spoke with site committees, school faculty, students, and BUSD staff, we became thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of handsome, spacious, substantial buildings about to be replaced by much smaller structures, hurriedly planned to meet minimum standards. The more information we gathered from neighboring districts and state, local, and site committee sources, the worse the situation appeared to be.

We share the paramount concern for the safety of Berkeley's children. We recognize the need for compliance with the state law. We feel that this can be accomplished without the sacrifices of space, economy, and architectural value which mark the present building program.

Therefore, as citizens, taxpayers, and parents of children in the Berkeley schools, we have decided that it is imperative to form an ad hoc committee to make our findings widely known and to seek re-examination of the school building program.

[The five-page report, which goes on to summarize what the committee sees as "serious problems in the District's planning process," is available from Jo Ann Price, president of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association.]

PART II. THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND DEMOLITION CONTROLS

The Draft Master Plan does not include a revised zoning ordinance. A note in the introduction to the Master Plan indicates that the MPRC will be working to revise the existing ordinance to be consistent with Master Plan policies. The Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance which mandated the Master Plan revision also called for revision of the zoning ordinance. But can the zoning ordinance really be thoroughly revised in a month? It's a big job. Simply dealing with the problems that have arisen with the C-1 zone could easily take several months. Presently the NPO demolition controls protect the residential districts from bulldozers, but if there is any time between the expiration of NPO demolition controls and the establishment of a new zoning ordinance, residential neighborhoods will be left unprotected and we could well see the demolition of approximately 150 residential units in a very short time.

The protections of the NPO should not be allowed to expire until a revised zoning ordinance is prepared and adopted to protect residential neighborhoods. An adequate revision of the zoning ordinance will take more than a month. The deadline for complete revision of the zoning ordinance and the expiration of NPO protections should be extended to give adequate time to do the job properly.

--Henry Pancoast

THE BICENTENNIAL BULLDOZER continued

PART III. COUNCIL ACTION DOOMS BARKER HOUSE?

Trend-setting Berkeley has come up with a most peculiar way of celebrating our nation's Bicentennial: a commemorative demolition of one of the city's historical landmarks, the Barker House.

John Loring Barker was one of the founders of Berkeley. He played a leading role in seeing that Berkeley was incorporated as a separate city instead of becoming a part of Oakland. He introduced electric lights and steam trains to central Berkeley. He pushed tree planting by the city. He was a founder of the Berkeley Gazette.

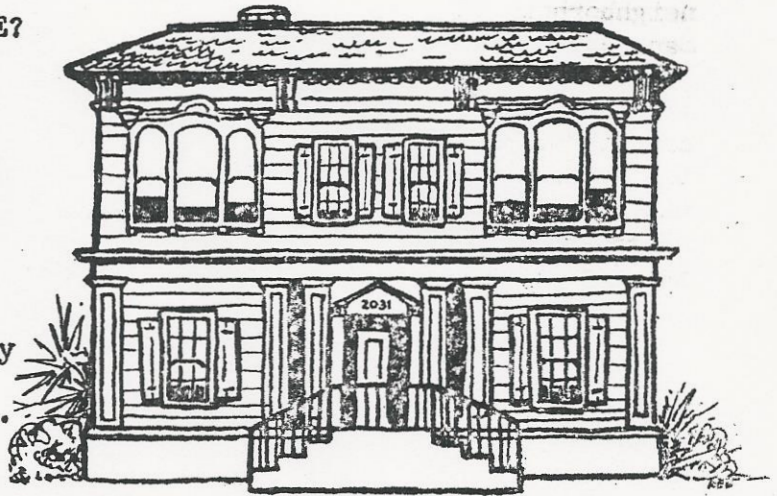
Nevertheless, Barker's home--an Italianate Victorian building built in 1877 and still standing at 2031 Dwight Way--is scheduled for destruction. It has the misfortune to stand next to Herrick Hospital; Herrick plans to demolish the Barker House and build a 4-story medical office building on the site.

When Herrick went before the City Council to get a series of variances to carry out their expansion plans, a number of proposals were made by members of the public to save the Barker House. One proposal was to use the house for medical offices. Another was to move the house to another site or give someone an opportunity to take the house and move it.

Throughout the Council debate that night, most members of the Council and the public thought that a separate vote would be taken on each of Herrick's requests--which were many. But at the last minute, refused to permit the separation of voting on the variances the hospital was requesting. The Council members were forced to vote for or against the whole package of hospital expansion proposals. Thus the Council gave Herrick a blank check for everything they wanted and made no provision for preservation of the Barker House. Herrick has been given an OK to demolish the Barker House.

How's that for preservation of our heritage?

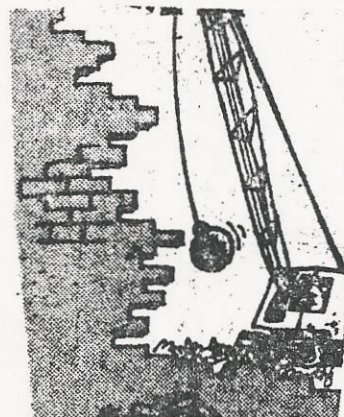
--Henry Pancoast



Barker House

DRAFT MASTER PLAN AVAILABLE

The initial run of 30,000 copies of the Master Plan are now available from the Comprehensive Planning Department Office at 2030 Milvia (Milvia & Addison). As of January 6, most of the copies had been picked up for distribution by neighborhood associations. Those associations which have not picked up copies should do so immediately because there simply aren't enough printed to provide one for each household in Berkeley. If copies are picked up now there still might be time to get more copies printed so that each household can get one.

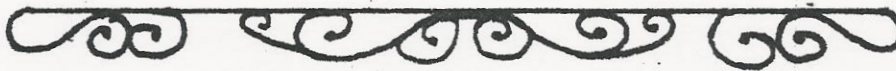


NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE GORED: DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

The proposed traffic initiative to remove all traffic diverters in the city will nullify an important part of the only implemented neighborhood plan in the city. This neighborhood plan, approved by the San Pablo Neighborhood Council and the City Council, called for the installation of landscaped traffic diverters. The trees in these diverters are now good-sized and utilities and fire hydrants are located in these diverters. It will be expensive to remove them. But more unsettling is that a commitment by the city to protect these neighborhood streets was made and the residents have since made heavy investments in upgrading the neighborhood. They were told their rehab efforts would be protected from the deteriorating impacts of heavy traffic.

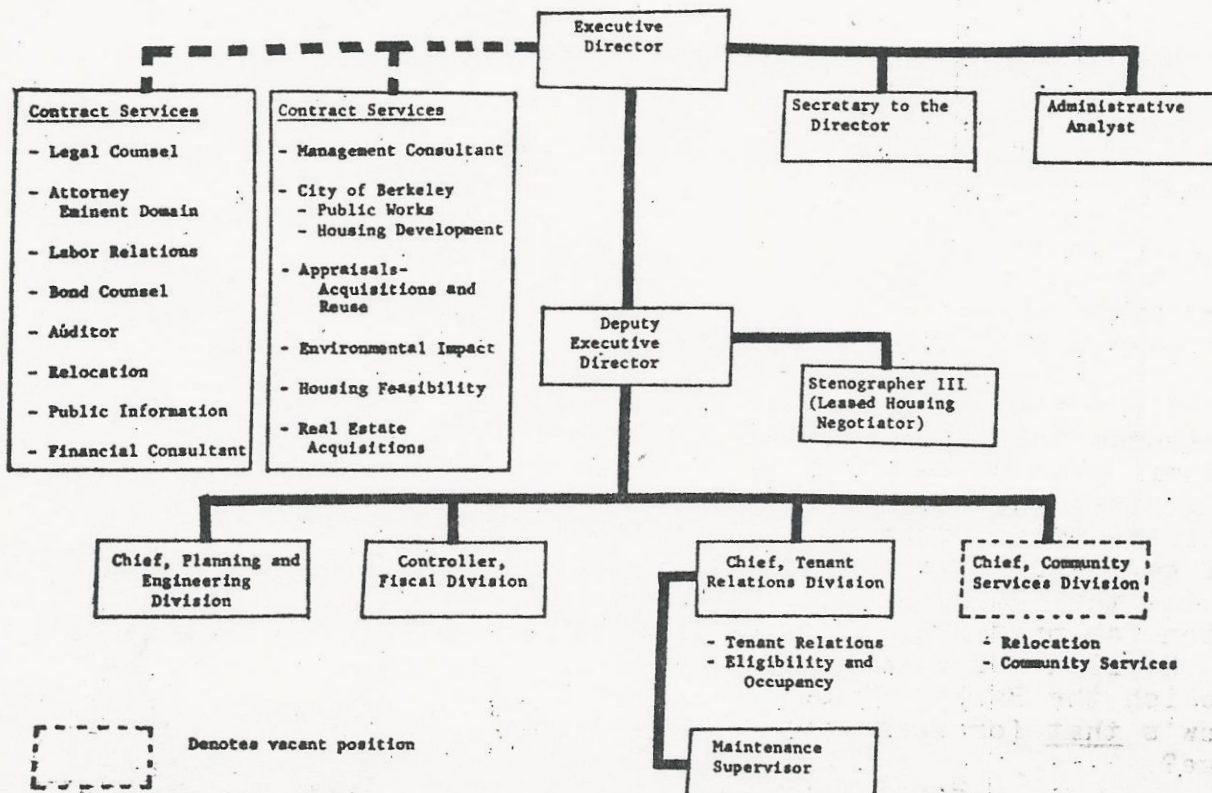
The Traffic Initiative calling for the removal of these diverters overturns this adopted neighborhood plan and sets a precedent for future actions to overturn neighborhood plans. If the neighborhood plan of one of the best organized and most powerful neighborhood groups, the San Pablo Neighborhood Council, can be knocked out by an initiative then any neighborhood plan and any zoning can be destroyed by the initiative process.

Henry Pancoast



CNA NEWSLETTER PUZZLE #1

1. For what organization is this chart a "plan of organization"?
2. What is the organization organized to do? (Answers elsewhere)



NEIGHBORHOODS IGNORED AGAIN:
HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Berkeley's Housing and Development Department says that NRIP stands for Neighborhood Rehabilitation Inspection Program. As the program is presently outlined NRIP might equally well stand for "Neighborhood Rent Increase Program" "Neighborhood Redevelopment Incentive Program" or Neighborhood R.I.P.

The NRIP is a test project to work out procedures and safeguards for a city-wide Residential Rental Inspection Program. (RRIP) The "action plan" for this program was presented as an item for Council Information in Packet for the Dec. 16, 1975 meeting. The RRIP, when instituted after the three year trial in the NRIP, pilot area, would involve city-wide mandatory inspection of rental properties; it would also involve mandatory code enforcement with some exceptions for hardship cases. "Hardship" is narrowly defined and would be hard to qualify for. A limited number of municipal loans (again hard to qualify for) would be available to landlords. The only rent controls in the program are the minimal ones built into the municipal loans.

Otherwise, the RRIP as written amounts to mandatory code enforcement (right down to "worn bathroom floor covering, missing tile grouting," etc.), high interest bank loans for the thousands, and costs passed on to the tenants in the form of higher rents-- or eviction notices, where redevelopment seems more economical and a variance can be acquired. (no more NPO, you know).

Right now, the designated demonstration district for the NRIP is the NOBBS neighborhood bounded by University, Sacramento, Cedar, and San Pablo. The neighborhood association was not consulted on the planning or choice of the area or notified that it had been selected, even though the program clearly could have a massive impact on NOBBS wide diversity of residents and also on development around the North Berkeley BART Station. On top of that, the first priority of the Housing and Development, according to the "action plan" is to develop a neighborhood group in the area!

15- N'HOOD RIP continued

NOBBS was not only not notified that a major city program was going to come into their neighborhood but also the existing neighborhood organization is being by-passed and staff is to organize a new one.

NOBBS opposed the imposition of the program in its present form upon their area, for a number of reasons. If we are successful in that opposition, the program (with modifications) will be shifted to another neighborhood. The NRIP action plan lists 7 neighborhoods as meeting six of the desired criteria for selection: North Berkeley, Flatlands, So. Campus, Le Conte, Willard, Bateman and So. Berkeley Model Cities. SUDS and McGee N'hoods meet fewer of the criteria but may be considered.

All neighborhoods in the city should get a copy of the RRIP Action Plan to see whether or not you want such a program in your area. Some neighborhood is going to get the NRIP in the next two months, but the rest of us will get it in 3 years.

There's a real need for code enforcement in Berkeley; many landlords force their tenants to live in intolerable conditions. But the program which answers that need should provide adequate safeguards on many fronts ignored by this document-- and it should not go into any area without extensive consultation with the neighborhood associations involved.

Glenn Harris

Postscript on N'hood RIP

The Housing Advisory and Appeals Board discussed the NRIP Action Plan at their Jan. 5th meeting. It was moved at this meeting that acceptance by the neighborhood be required before it be designated as the NRIP demonstration district. It was argued that since there had never been a public hearing on this program the people likely to be affected by it never had a chance to express their concerns about the program. It was argued that the Dept. of Housing Program should have to be "sold" to the neighborhoods. Councilmember Ramsey intervened in this discussion at this point. The motion requiring N'hood acceptance was defeated by a 5 to 3 vote.

Henry Pancoast

OPINION

"Sacred Cars"

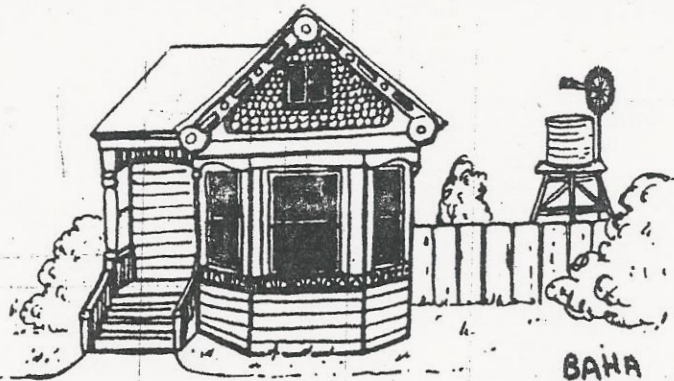
The proposed traffic initiative ordinance if adopted will elevate the car to the same status as the sacred cow in India. The ordinance makes commuter convenience the prime value in Berkeley, over-riding all other values and concerns. The quiet enjoyment of one's home and protection of the quality of life will take a back seat to commuter convenience. Every quiet neighborhood street in the flatlands becomes a potential heavily-travelled short cut.

Adoption of a rigid, inflexible ordinance to deal with traffic control seems particularly inappropriate. It is a blunt instrument which will leave the city no opportunity to "fine tune" its traffic management controls as changes in traffic volumes and patterns occur.

It is curious to note that most of the major proponents of the initiative are hill dwellers from the lowest residential density areas of the city--areas which have the most cul de sacs, dead end streets, and winding roads to assure less traffic and reduced speeds. These areas also have the highest rate of car ownership in the city. It seems they don't want heavy traffic or speeding cars in their own areas, but they don't mind other neighborhoods being stuck with it.

Apparently the peaceful enjoyment of a residential neighborhood is to be reserved only for those who can afford exclusive neighborhoods.

Henry Pancoast



BAHA

CNA is grateful to the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association for their kind permission to use their drawings of Berkeley houses. Such drawings are identified by "BAHA".

Answers to CNA Newsletter puzzle #1

1. The Berkeley Redevelopment and Housing Authority. (Chart from the management study by Booz, Allen, and Hamilton 1975.)
2. We asked several people, and got these answers: (a) To spend money (b) To monitor contracts (c) To contract to monitor organization (d) To develop an industrial park (e) all of the above (f) none of the above.

Election of CNA Officers

The election is item 5 on the agenda of the January 12 meeting. The procedure (if there are no objections) will be nominations from the floor, followed by any statements the nominees wish to make, followed by the voting. The newly-elected officers will preside at the remainder of the meeting.

The present officers are: Chairperson, Glenn Harris (NOBBS); Vice-Chairperson, John Hart (Cow Hollow); Secretary, Henry Pancoast (Flatlands); Treasurer, Elaine Cole (Cedar Street).

REMEMBER that only dues-paying member associations may vote (one vote per association) in the election. The \$2.00 dues for the new six-month term must be paid in order for your association to have a vote.

Books for Neighborhood-Types...

Milton Kotler, Neighborhood Government: The Local Foundations of Political Life. (Berkeley Public Library 352.008 K848)

David Morris & Karl Hess, Neighborhood Power: The New Localism. Beacon Press, Boston, 1975. (BPL 309.262 M831n)

E. F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful. Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1973. (BPL 330 Sch86s)

Herbert H. Smith, The Citizen's Guide to Zoning. Chandler Davis Publishing Co., West Trenton, N.J., 1972.

Roland L. Warren, Studying Your Community. Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1955.

Richard F. Babcock, The Zoning Game. (BPL 352.961 B114)

Albert Solnit, The Job of the Planning Commissioner: A Guide to Citizen Participation in Local Planning. UC Extension Publications, Berkeley, 1974.

