

March 25, 2010

Mayor Bates & City Council
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: 2707 Rose Street—Appeal of Use Permit #09-1000038

Dear Mayor Bates & Councilmembers:

The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) is supporting the appeal of Use Permit #09-1000038, approved by the Zoning Adjustments Board on January 28, 2010. We base our support of the appeal on historic preservation issues and on errors and omissions in the project application.

The Structure History report submitted on May 19, 2009 claims that “there is no architect of record and no associated persons of historical interest” for the existing structure. Both claims are wrong.

The 1917 building permit for the Dunham house at 2707 Rose Street, which was submitted as part of the Structure History report, clearly shows A. Appleton as the architect.

Abraham Appleton (1887–1981) was a notable figure in Bay Area architecture. He studied under John Galen Howard and William C. Hays at the newly founded School of Architecture at the University of California, completing his studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Howard and Hays thought highly enough of him to have employed him in their private practices. Before establishing his own practice in 1920, Appleton was a junior partner in Hays’ practice.

At the time he designed the Dunham house, Appleton was also employed by the University of California as Inspector of Buildings on the campus. His client, Lucia Dunham, was a well-known mezzo-soprano with an active concert schedule and a teaching position at the University of California, where she was a collaborator of Prof. Charles L. Seeger. In 1921, after the death of her husband, Lucia Dunham returned to New York, where she became an influential teacher at the Juilliard School, training many future concert and operatic singers.

Abraham Appleton went on to establish a successful and long-tenured architectural practice in San Francisco with Samuel Lightner Hyman (1885–1948). The firm of Hyman and Appleton designed the National Bank of Petaluma (1926); an elegant 10-story apartment building at 2100 Pacific Ave., SF (1926); the Jewish Community Center of SF (demolished); Sinai Memorial Chapel, SF (1938); Hebrew Home for the Aged, SF; Visitacion Valley School, SF (1937); and many homes.

Hyman and Appleton remodeled the 16-story Crown Zellerbach building (1908) at 343 Sansome Street, SF, in distinctive Art Deco style. A two-story terracotta-clad commercial building at 2080 Chestnut Street was designed in a similar style.

After Hyman's death, the firm changed its name to Appleton and Wolfard. In the 1950s and '60s, Appleton and Wolfard designed eight modern branch library buildings for the San Francisco Public Library—more than any other single firm. They also designed the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park (1960).

None of this information was made available in the Structure History report.

Moreover, the project application claims that there are no designated historic resources in the vicinity. In fact, the immediate neighborhood is an architectural treasure trove, including but not limited to the following:


- **Greenwood Common**, a City of Berkeley Landmark (designated in 1990) developed by William W. Wurster, with landscape design by Lawrence Halprin and eight houses designed by important mid-century architects.
- **La Loma Park Historic District** (designated in 2002), comprising 13 properties, including two designed by Bernard Maybeck, one by Ernest Coxhead, one by Henry Gutterson, and one by John Ballantine.
- **Rose Walk**, a City of Berkeley Landmark (designated in 1975), designed by Maybeck and lined with houses by Henry Gutterson.

The proposed project overlooks Shasta Road, where there are two properties listed on the State Historic Resources Inventory—one practically next door and the other across the street.

Considering the existing structure's architectural provenance, its notable first owner, its being a survivor of the 1923 Berkeley Fire, and its location surrounded by numerous historic resources, the project should have been brought to the attention of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Yet the City staff update sent to the LPC concerning this project defined it only as a new construction, without mentioning the demolition or the historic context of the neighborhood.

The proposed project should be sent back to City staff and to the applicant for preparation of an accurate and complete application, followed by a new hearing before the Zoning Adjustments Board, with input from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Sincerely,



Daniella Thompson
President