

**Jacob, Melinda**

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**From:** Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment re: 2970 Adeline Use Permit #ZP2021-0140 / ZAB meeting 5/26

**From:** Serena Lim <sernacat@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 24, 2022 3:37 PM  
**To:** Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) <Planningzab@cityofberkeley.info>  
**Cc:** Serena Lim <serena@rowellbrokaw.com>; Jessie Zechnowitz <zeejessie@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Public Comment re: 2970 Adeline Use Permit #ZP2021-0140 / ZAB meeting 5/26

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Dear Members of the Zoning Adjustments Board,

My name is Serena Lim and I am both the Applicant for this Use Permit and an Owner of the subject property, along with my three brothers. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on behalf of my family – I want to share a little background about us so you can better understand why we're pursuing this project that requires a change of use.

My brothers and I were born and raised in south Berkeley, less than a mile away from this building that we hope to convert from entirely commercial uses to two residential apartments over two existing commercial storefronts. The building was originally built in 1905 with apartments over storefronts, and restoring that mix of uses would create an affordable place for my family members to live and work in Berkeley. This is most urgently needed for my eldest brother and his family. He, my sister-in-law, and their three-year-old have been renting two rooms at our mother's house for the last several years, in an arrangement that was meant to be temporary but is now the only affordable option for them as they raise their daughter. We also want to breathe new life into the building and spend more time there; we founded Oxtail Studio & Gallery downstairs in 2013, and "living over the shop" would mean our storefront could be more active. We also love the building because it has great historic character and holds many memories of our dad and his work.

Our dad was a Chinese-American immigrant who grew up in west Berkeley, graduated from Cal, and bought this building in the 1970's to run his architecture firm in the office space we now hope to remodel. He died unexpectedly in 2005 when I was 18, and a few years later I took over managing the property for my family. As I learned more about the building, I started to dream of remodeling the upstairs office back into apartments so that my brothers and I would always have a place to live in Berkeley – this was during the recession, when finding a living wage and an affordable place to live were becoming increasingly difficult. Almost a decade after losing my dad, I decided to follow in his footsteps and return to school to become an architect (which is where I've been for the last 7 years!).

We are not wealthy real estate developers – we're Berkeley natives trying to stay rooted in our hometown. We're only able to pursue this project (the project is only feasible) because we have the privilege of inheriting this building from our father, and because we're lucky to have an architect in the family and the generous support of the principals at the firm where I work; all the time and work spent developing this project so far has been pro bono.

As an architect and someone who cares about urban planning and the housing crisis, I'm also advocating for this project because it represents three valuable urban design strategies:

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- It's an example of "missing middle housing" development – relatively small-scale multifamily projects like backyard
- cottages on single-family lots, duplexes, triplexes, and smaller apartment buildings. Mid-sized projects increase housing options and affordability across many residential zones, not just the densest ones, but are increasingly rare because they are either
- too costly for individual property owners to pursue, or unattractive to commercial developers because they can't take advantage of economies of scale or turn as much profit as large-scale developments. (It's
- great that Berkeley is working to incentivize homeowners to build Accessory Dwelling Units, but I hope other types of mid-sized housing and ownership models will be incentivized, as well.)
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- It's an example of adaptive reuse in a historic part of Berkeley. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is the
- most climate-responsible form of development; it makes use of existing materials and infrastructure, improves the energy efficiency and safety of existing buildings, and is far less wasteful, ecologically destructive, or resource-intensive than new construction.
- Renovating old buildings is often just as costly as demolishing and building new ones, so adaptive reuse will need to be incentivized if we want to realize sustainable development within cities.
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- Finally, this is an example of "locally-owned incremental development," or slower, smaller changes made by locals
- who are personally invested in the community. When mixed with larger-scale new development, incremental development helps keep the cultural fabric of a city intact, and helps local people stay rooted.
- Incremental development has also grown more rare over the last several decades, as high costs of construction
- and stagnant wages make this type of investment increasingly risky or out-of-reach for people who are not professional developers.
- While large-scale housing developments on transit corridors are critical to addressing our community's need for housing, I feel what makes a place wonderful to live in is diversity in all
- things, including buildings, so I hope that the value of mixing incremental/old and fast/new development will not be overlooked.
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I hope you'll take all of this to heart as you consider our application, and support us in pursuit of this small project that could make a big difference in our lives. Thank you!

Best regards,  
Serena

**Jacob, Melinda**

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**From:** Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment - 2972-2974 Adeline Street

**From:** David Kellogg <david.kellogg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2022 2:17 PM  
**To:** Riemer, Allison <ARiemer@cityofberkeley.info>; Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) <Planningzab@cityofberkeley.info>  
**Subject:** Public Comment - 2972-2974 Adeline Street

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Dear ZAB,

The staff report appears to have an incomplete/outdated sb330 analysis. In particular, the May 26th hearing appears to be the second hearing for the purposes of sb330.

Allison - thank you for following up on the affordable mitigation fee issue. The staff report still isn't super clear, it took me a while to sort out that no fee was due because fractional requirements only apply when there's already a whole unit requirement, but it's good to see the reassessment anyways.

Best,  
David