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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

MAY 18 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

May 13, 2020

State of California
Office of Planning and Research 1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: University of California, Berkeley **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** University of California, Berkeley Long Range Development Plan Update and Housing Projects #1 and #2

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a resident of 1921 Walnut St in downtown Berkeley, CA. I have lived here for 10 years. The building is over 100 years old. On April 17, 2020 all tenants received a notice (Dated April 20, 2020) alerting us of UC's intention to purchase and potentially demolish our rent controlled apartment building.

I am very concerned because UC Berkeley is not being transparent with us regarding this building project. I have emailed directly with Kyle Gibson (Director of Communications at UC Capital Strategies – the recommended point of contact) and Michelle De Guzman (Director, Real Estate Acquisitions and Development – the author of the letter) and asked specific questions about UC's plan. Kyle Gibson wrote to me that there were no specific plans or actions being taken regarding 1921 Walnut St and that 1921 Walnut St is "for eventual, unspecific, future use". I have since found online UC's potential plan to demolish my housing building and build "Housing Project #1". I also found online a letter to the State of California indicating their intention to build student housing where 1921 Walnut St currently stands. I specifically asked Kyle if there were public meetings I could participate in and he did not name any. If I had not spent hours researching online the UC Regent's website, I would not even know there was open public comment available specifically regarding "Housing Project #1". It seems clear to me that UC is purposefully obfuscating their intentions perhaps in order to push through the sale of 1921 Walnut St and their housing project plans without directly engaging the community.

In UC's letter to the State of California, they wrote that the UC claims to have "conducted a robust engagement process with the campus community and the public". As the long-term tenants of 1921 Walnut St, my fellow tenants and I are major stakeholders in the community and we will be drastically affected by this potential development. Yet, UC has not even shared with us their plans.

The UC has many other potential sites to build housing. Most of those sites would not displace long term residents. It is possible for UC to build new housing without displacing us at 1921 Walnut St. In fact, as of January 22, 2020 the UC Board of Regents was planning on building the housing project around 1921 Walnut St, leaving 1921 Walnut St and the tenants in-place. Since January 22, 2020 the UC has now decided to purchase our building and begin the process of relocating the tenants at 1921 Walnut St, some of whom have lived here and have called this building 'home' for 25+ years.

Needless to say, this is all occurring during the Covid crisis where the entire region is in lock-down, our health and economic status is threatened and we as tenants have limited access to resources and support.

I ask you to please consider the timing of these actions, the serious impact this will have on us the residents, and our building at 1921 Walnut St. in the heart of downtown Berkeley. At the best of times it is heartless to displace a community, but now? To give notice during a worldwide pandemic, when the world and the country and our City are on lock-down? And how are we to interpret the complete lack of transparency with the tenants at 1921 Walnut St by UC through this process.

Kindly consider our request for intervention, and thank you for attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Natalie Logusch
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