

DANIELLA THOMPSON  
2663 LE CONTE AVENUE · BERKELEY, CA · 94709

4 March 2023

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Fatema Crane, Secretary  
Land Use Planning Division  
2120 Milvia Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Your denial of my request to initiate the Henry Osgood Noyes House (1892)

LPC Commissioners:

Some of you have known me for many years, while others, I believe, have never heard of me. I'm a historian, author of hundreds of articles about Berkeley's architectural history, long-time editor of the BAHA website, and the recorder of the following 21 landmark applications:

1. **Rev. Dr. Robert Bentley House** (A.H. Broad, 1900), 2683 Le Conte Avenue  
Designated 2 Feb 1998
2. **George Edwards House** (A.H. Broad, 1886), 2530 Dwight Way  
Designated 6 Apr 1998
3. **Josiah J. Rose-Goldsmith House** (Josiah John Rose, builder, 1891), 2919 Lorina Street  
Designated 8 Sep 1998
4. **Theta Xi Chapter House** (Drysdale & Thomsen, 1914), 1730 La Loma Avenue  
Designated 4 Jan 1999
5. **Prof. Stuart Daggett House** (John Hudson Thomas, 1924, 1938), 1427 Hawthorne Terrace  
Designated 14 Jul 2003
6. **Laura Belle Marsh Kluegel House** (John Hudson Thomas, 1911), 2667-69 Le Conte Ave  
Designated 3 August 2006
7. **Koerber Building** (Berkeley Building Company, 1923), 2054 University Avenue  
Designated 3 September 2009
8. **Mary J. Berg House** (William Garfield May, 1901), 2517 Regent Street  
Designated 1 November 2012
9. **Lucinda Reames House No. 1** (A. Dodge Coplin, 1902-1903), 2503 Regent Street  
Designated 2 October 2014
10. **Lucinda Reames House No. 2** (A. Dodge Coplin, 1903), 2509 Regent Street  
Designated 2 October 2014
11. **William Wilkinson House** (A. Dodge Coplin, 1903), 2511 Regent Street  
Designated 2 October 2014
12. **Channing Apartments** (Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr., 1913), 2409 College Avenue  
Designated 5 February 2015
13. **Hull Undertaking Co. & Little Chapel of the Flowers** (Hutchison & Mills, 1923);  
Francis Harvey Slocombe, 1928), 3049-3051 Adeline Street  
Designated 3 September 2015
14. **Bennington Apartments** (1892; 1915), 2508 Ridge Road  
Designated 4 February 2016

15. **Ali & Marion Yazdi Building** (William I. Garren, 1933), 2910–2912 Telegraph Avenue  
Designated 7 July 2016
16. **Captain John Slater House** (Thomas J. Welsh, 1894), 1335 Shattuck Avenue  
Designated 2 February 2017
17. **Charles H. Spear House** (Robert Greig, builder, 1904), 1905 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way  
Designated 6 July 2017
18. **Thomas & Louise Hicks House** (Chapin A. Martin, builder, 1904), 2901 Benvenue Ave  
Designated 1 March 2018
19. **Captain James & Cecilia Luttrell House** (Ira A. Boynton, 1889), 2328 Channing Way  
Designated 2 July 2020
20. **William & Esther Payson House** (Lord & Boynton, 1889), 1915 Berryman Street  
Denied 6 August 2020
21. **James T. Stocker-Loni Ding House** (James T. Stocker, 1901), 1940 Hearst Avenue  
Designated 3 March 2022

Until a few years ago, the LPC always complied with my requests to initiate historic structures, and as you can see from the list above, I always delivered thoroughly researched, comprehensive landmark applications in a timely manner.

It was therefore a deep disappointment to me that the five commissioners present at the LPC meeting of 2 March 2023 decided to take no action on my request to initiate the Henry Osgood Noyes House (1892) at 2531 Ridge Road.

I had provided the commission with an 8-page document in which I outlined the reasons for my request. In the cover letter, I wrote that I could deliver a complete landmark application within a month (I have researched and written about this property and others in the Daley's Scenic Park tract numerous times). I also explained, in writing, as well as orally, that for various personal and family reasons, it is a hardship for me to gather signatures on a petition.

Given the age of the Noyes House, its being the last recognizable Queen Anne Victorian in the Daley's Scenic Park tract, and the house's unique history, I would have expected that an LPC initiation would be readily forthcoming.

I can only conclude that the five commissioners present on 2 March 2023:

1. did not read my 8-page explanatory document, which was included in the agenda packet; or
2. read the document but decided in advance that the structure does not possess sufficient merit for initiation.

Whether the first or the second assumption (or a combination of both) is true, they serve as a disincentive for preservation and deter community members from writing landmark applications. If the commissioners did not read the request for initiation, they would not be likely to read the full landmark application either (mine are hefty tomes). If they did read the document and decided *a priori* that the structure is not worthy, I would be wasting my time toiling over a landmark application, in addition to having to gather petition signatures.

On the evening of the 2 March 2023 LPC meeting, I did not stay past my public comment remarks owing to urgent family obligations, but it was reported to me afterwards that "Commissioner Montgomery mentioned three prior initiations that did not result in submissions and did not want to have any more of that happening."

Even if some initiations do not result in submitted applications (which has never been my case in the past 25 years), what does it cost the commission to make the work of preservation a little easier for applicants? Why punish the entire preservation community because of a few omitted submissions? Why do the commissioners ignore the massive work required to complete and submit a landmark application?

Your commission's name includes the word "preservation," and Berkeley would be a better place if your actions honored the name.

I request once again that you initiate the Henry Osgood Noyes House (1892) at 2531 Ridge Road. If you do, I will complete the landmark application. If you don't, this will be the end of my efforts on behalf of this building.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniella Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniella Thompson