

**From:** [Carol Denney](#)  
**To:** [Zoning Adjustments Board \(ZAB\)](#)  
**Subject:** Project: 1917 tenth Street, Use Permit #ZP2025-0020  
**Date:** Friday, September 19, 2025 11:53:33 AM

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To: Zoning Adjustments Board,  
Re: Project: 1917 tenth Street, Use Permit #ZP2025-0020  
1947 Center Street, Second Floor,  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear Commissioners,

Please do not affirm the proposed three 3-story detached single-family homes "with 2-car garages for each residence" which makes a mockery of the effort to create appropriate housing opportunities in appropriate places, Use Permit #ZP2025-0020. I am an over 40-year neighbor to this area of Berkeley, and see that your materials are simply inadequately addressing the damage to one of the historic areas for which we, as a neighborhood, are appropriately designated a landmark on the National Register of Historic Places.

The oldest Finn Hall was not simply a building, but was a neighborhood-serving conduit to jobs, education, cultural events, theater, music, and has continued to provide services uninterrupted despite long odds and very difficult issues. There are two neighboring low-rise buildings which were linked to Finn Hall, and offer an opportunity I'm not certain the commissioners have had to see through the eyes of the Finnish community of the early 1900s which cherished its powerful neighborhood connections.

It should be obvious that the size of this project would obscure the sight-lines of one of the most beautiful buildings in the neighborhood and disrupt the musicality of the connections it has to its nearby neighborhood buildings. The stately, but not overwhelming three stories of Finn Hall, a beautiful, functional building, are best honored by low-rise buildings, and the new state opportunities offered to advance density are not reflected in this proposal at all.

This looks more like an inappropriate way to capitalize on state-based opportunities without improving neighborhood density at the expense of one of the finest examples of Finnish architecture at its architectural and cultural peak. Please don't approve this permit. These single-family, two-car-garage three-story homes are a fishing expedition to see how much respect we've lost for cultural and architectural excellence and congruence.

I am just a neighbor, but I'm one of a few dozen neighbors who are organizing to try to help save Finn Hall and its cultural opportunities for our neighborhood and the national interests which recognized it as worthy of national appreciation. \*

Carol Denney  
1970 San Pablo Avenue #4  
Berkeley, CA 94702  
510-548-1512

# \*Toveri Tupa – Finnish Hall

**August Trille, Designer, 1908**

— Listed on the National Register of Historic Places —

[Toveri Tupa – Finnish Hall Marker image. Click for full size.](#)



Photographed by Barry Swackhamer, March 21, 2012

1. Toveri Tupa – Finnish Hall Marker

Inscription.



City of Berkeley Landmark  
designated in 1979

Toward the end of the 19th-century, a large Finnish immigrant community was located in west Berkeley. Together they constructed this wooden building which integrates traditional Finnish and American vernacular elements. An auditorium with stage, a kitchen and dining hall, a library, and a sewing room helped make Toveri Tupa (“Comrades’ Lodge”) a center of community life.

Vigilante mobs vandalized the building after striking workers were fed here during the West Coast General Strike in 1934. In 1935, ideological divisions led to the construction of a separate Finnish Brotherhood Hall on Chestnut Street. This building then became known as “Red Finn Hall.” Sold in the 1970s, the Hall continues in use as a cultural and community center.

Erected 2000 by Berkeley Historical Plaque Project.