

## NANCY McPeak

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**From:** Allen Tai  
**Sent:** Monday, July 29, 2019 10:27 AM  
**To:** David Sablan; NANCY McPeak; ERIN GARCIA  
**Subject:** FW: 2070 Lincoln on current HAB agenda  
**Attachments:** 2070 Lincoln grocery 1934.jpg

[Public comment](#)

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**From:** Judith Lynch [mailto:judithlynch7@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 29, 2019 10:23 AM  
**To:** Allen Tai <ATai@alamedaca.gov>; Thomas Saxby <tsaxby@tsaxbyarchitect.com>; Judith Lynch <judithlynch7@gmail.com>; Buckley, Chris <cbuckleyAICP@att.net>  
**Subject:** 2070 Lincoln on current HAB agenda

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Good morning Gents and Thomas I send this to you as you are the only person on the current board I have met. Valerie Turpen already alerted us to the 1934 image showing the commercial facade at that time of 2070 Lincoln. on page 40 of Taking Care of Business. Flip back a page to see (upper right) a 1990s image of the same place, shorn of decor but showing its 1953 neon sign. (permit history says sign added in 1954). I know we are not to second guess but if this image had been available when the "study list" was organized its former facade would have been added given its intact nature at least at that point. As you can tell I am interested in the sign itself and would hate for the sign to be dismissed because information we have now was not available in 1970s. Chris and PAC and others are commenting on the facade changes, I would just like to see a potentially historic neon sign kept in some way. Thanks for your attention, Judith (Lynch)



August 1, 2019

(By electronic transmission)  
Historical Advisory Board  
City of Alameda  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue  
Alameda, CA 94501

**Subject: PLN18-0405--Certificate of Approval and Historic Sign Designation--2070 Lincoln Ave.  
(Item 7-A on Historical Advisory Board's August 1, 2019 Agenda)**

Dear Boardmembers:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) has the following comments on this application:

**HISTORIC SIGN DESIGNATION.**

We agree with the staff recommendation that the sign conforms with the historic sign criteria as set forth in the checklist, urge the board to designate the sign as a historic sign and adopt Condition 4 in the resolution that the sign be refurbished and cleaned and reinstalled on the building.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF OVER 30% OF THE BUILDING TO CONSTRUCT A SECOND-FLOOR ADDITION.**

Although the building has been insensitively remodeled, apparently in 1958, the attached 1934 photograph indicates that it was previously an attractive structure and characteristic of wood-frame one-story commercial buildings from the turn of the 20th century. The attached 1897 Sanborn map shows the site as a vacant lot, indicating that the structure was built between 1897 and 1909. Had the building not been remodeled, it is likely that it would have been given a rating in the 1978-79 Citywide Historical Architectural Survey high enough to have placed it on the Historic Building Study List.

Consideration should therefore be given to restoring at least Lincoln Avenue side to its 1934 appearance, using the 1934 photograph and other historic photographs that AAPS has accessed as a reference. From these historic photographs, the following important architectural features can be identified:

1. Paneled storefront bulkheads (probably wood) below the display windows, which also appear to have been wood.
2. Tall transom windows divided by vertical muntins or mullions into relatively narrow lights.

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3. A prominent cornice above modillions.
4. A parapet above the cornice, surfaced with channel rustic siding, divided by vertical strips into ten apparently equal sections.
5. Ionic capitals on pilasters dividing the storefronts.

We have a higher resolution version of the attached 1934 photograph and are in the process of obtaining authorization for wider distribution of that photograph as well as other old photographs, all from the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association Archives that show the historic architectural details. We plan to bring prints of these photos to the Board's August 1 meeting.

There should be investigation beneath the existing stucco surfaces to determine how much, if any, of the original surfaces, including the transom windows, survive and could inform and be reused in a restoration. Staff has advised us that the applicant has performed some degree of investigation, but we have not yet received any detailed description of the investigation results. The transom windows, if still extant, may also be accessible from the interior, possibly with other elements.

**Such investigations to determine how much historic fabric still exists under newer surfaces should be standard procedure for design review of projects involving removal of the newer surfaces and remodeling, with potential destruction, of historic fabric under the newer surfaces. Maintaining this historic fabric as much as possible should be required, even for projects not proposing a complete restoration, so that possible future restoration will not be inhibited.**

If original surfaces still exist under the stucco, "shadows" of missing trim, such as the bulkhead panels, cornice and other projecting elements, would normally be revealed and would provide exact measurements of the missing elements' cross-sections and positioning. That information, combined with the high-resolution version of the 1934 and other old photographs and the building's existing configuration should provide enough documentation for a façade restoration.

Such a restoration may need to incorporate minor adjustments to the original storefront door and window openings to accommodate the proposed four store spaces. (There appear to have originally been five spaces as shown on the attached 1950 Sanborn map.)

If the existing building's historic facade is restored, the new second-floor should ideally be set back at least 5 feet from the two street lines to subordinate its appearance relative to the first floor. The second floor proposed floor plan would need to be reconfigured to accomplish this, possibly extending the second floor over the proposed parking spaces at the building's southeast corner on Willow Street and converting the enclosed area at the southwest corner to habitable space to provide additional floor area to compensate for the reduced floor area due to the setbacks.

The applicant's plans indicate an overall existing building height of 17 feet with a first floor floor-to-ceiling height of 14 feet, indicating that the building has an existing parapet ca. 3 feet in height. The ca. 3 foot high parapet would mask the lower 3 feet of the new second floor. In addition, the proposed 3 foot parapet at the top of the new second floor could be deleted, or replaced with a less conspicuous open railing, which, combined with the masking of the second floor's lower 3 feet, would reduce the visible height of the new second-floor wall surfaces from ca. 11 feet to ca. 6 feet, further minimizing the new

second floor's prominence and reducing the height difference with the adjacent Whales and Friends building to the west, making the proposed structure less dominant relative to the adjacent building.

We assume that the project team did not have access to the 1934 photograph or other historical photographs and therefore were not able to incorporate more of the historic design's architectural elements. Although, it is good that the proposed design seeks to use a traditional architectural idiom reflective of Alameda's turn of the 20th century commercial buildings, the following clarifications and recommended modifications are needed to achieve an effective result:

1. The expansive undifferentiated wall surfaces between the cornice and the upper floor windows causes the building to look top-heavy and poorly proportioned. One remedy would be to reduce the height of the 3 foot parapet as much as possible (which would also allow the proposed building to be more in scale with the adjacent Whales and Friends Building to the west) and/or to lower the cornice so it is perhaps approximately 2 feet below the top of the parapet (which was a common configuration in late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings and was the design approach shown in the 1934 photograph for this building).
2. The main cornice has an insubstantial, somewhat kitschy quality due in part to the relatively thin 2 x 14 board across the top providing only a ca. 1 1/2 inch exposure (a ca. 3 1/2 inch minimum exposure would be more effective) and the underscaled corbels that are spaced too far apart.
3. The belt course between the two floors has a similarly kitschy look. A flat 1 x or 2 x band with a simple molding along the top would be more successful. A vertical section detail is needed for this molding.
4. It is good that horizontal wood siding is proposed for the upper floor as stated in the staff report, but the wood material should be specifically called out in the plans, along with the type (e.g. clapboard, V-groove rustic, etc.) and exposure (4 inch, 5 inch, etc.). The elevations seem to suggest that the siding will consist of alternating bands of wide and narrow boards, which would have more design interest than uniform boards, but this needs to be indicated more clearly.
5. The upper floor fiberglass windows should have a wood-like appearance. To do this, they should have the dimensions shown in the Design Review Manual's wood window diagram, which for double or single hung windows (like the proposed), include the following:
  - a. Use sash that is at least 1 3/8" thick; and
  - b. Use glazing recessed ca. 3/8" from the surface of the stiles and rails.
6. 1 x 6 casings should be provided at the tops and sides of the upper floor windows.
7. The spacing between the upper floor windows is somewhat variable and should be adjusted to be uniform and in vertical alignment with the storefront configuration below.
8. The storefront entry doors appear to be solid. They should be instead be glazed, preferably as a wood door (or other material with the appearance of a wood door) with a large glazed panel. The storefront entries should have recessed exterior vestibules, preferably with slanted sides.
9. The storefront window material, including the transom windows, needs to be indicated. The transom windows should have a wood-like appearance as described above with the proposed

muntings projecting approximately 3/8 inches from the face of the glazing as indicated in the Design Review Manual's wood window diagram.

10. The historic transom window configuration shown in the 1934 photograph using vertically configured lites rather than the proposed small lite border would integrate better with the overall design.
11. The section detail through just the storefront windows needs to be expanded to include the entire storefront, including the transom windows. The horizontal division between the display and transom windows (traditionally in the form of an awning box) should be wood or metal rather than stucco, so the display windows and transom windows read as a unit.
12. Samples of the bulkhead tile and other materials need to be provided.

Restoration of the historic sign and historic facade would probably be eligible for a grant under the City's facade improvement program. Has an application for a grant been considered?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or [cbuckleyaicp@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyaicp@att.net) if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

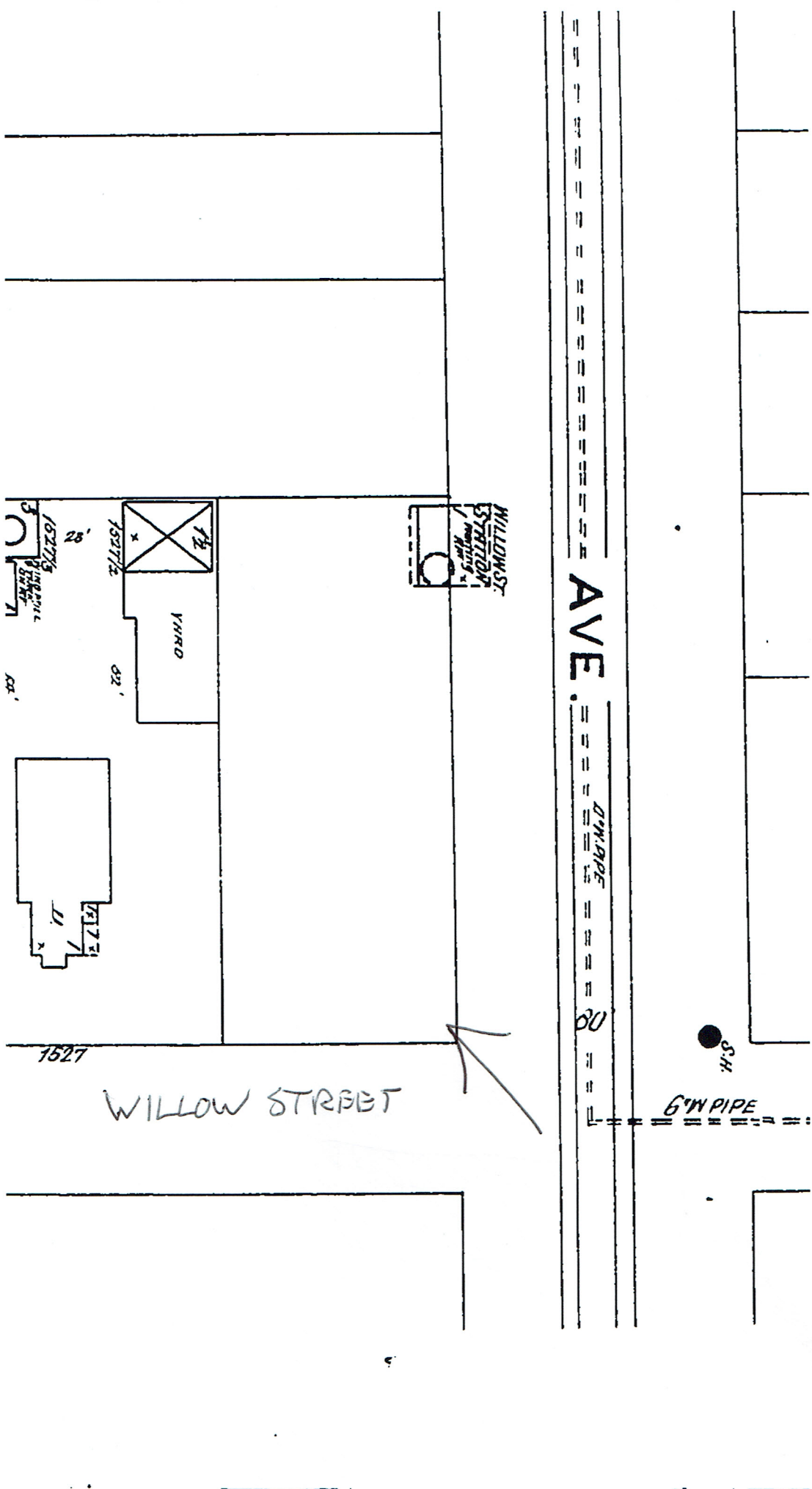
Christopher Buckley, Chair  
Preservation Action Committee  
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

Attachments:

1. 1934 Photograph
2. 1897 Sanborn Map
3. 1950 Sanborn Map

cc: David Sablan, Allen Tai and Andrew Thomas - - Planning, Building and Transportation Department  
(by electronic transmission)  
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)

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Willow Station, looking east on Lincoln Avenue, 1934. Charles Shaner's 1891 shelter adjoins the Boehn Building. (Courtesy Vernon J. Sappers.)