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Heinold's First and Last Chance

October 25, 2003

Ms. Claudia Cappio
Oakland Major Dev. Proj. Mgr.
City Hall
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza Ste 3330
Oakland, California, 94612

Dear Ms. Cappio,

Re: Case File No. ER 03-0004
EIR Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon
Oakland Landmark #3
National Literary Landmark No 29, 1998
National Register of Historic Places Sept 1, 20000

Carol Brookman and I have been the proprietor of Heinold's for 20 years. I am the first proprietor who is not a member of the Heinold Family.

This is the only intact historical site in Jack London Square that has been in continuous operation and open to the public since June 1, 1883. Along with the cabin which was used by London and where he met "Buck" the dog in "The Call of the Wild", the saloon remains a major worldwide tourist attraction. It is referred to 17 times in his book, "John Barleycorn". When the railroad put up fences to keep Oakland citizens away from the waterfront, Jack London and his friends hid in Heinold's saloon and in the middle of the night went out and tore some of them down. Shots were fired and this brought the problem to the attention of Oakland citizens who hired a young lawyer who won the case, otherwise all this property would have been owned by the railroads.

Tourists arrive from all over the world, not just the US and Canada, to soak up a little history and have a drink in Jack London's favorite rendezvous. A complete history of the saloon and Jack

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London's relationship with Heinold and Oakland, the Yukon cabin and Oakland can be read in "The First and Last Chance Saloon" by ex Senator from Iowa, Otha Donner Wearin, and "Jack London's Cabin" by Dick North. More complete information is available on our application for the National Register or directly from me. National Register Information can be found in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Staff Report dated October 6, 2003. It is often referred to as the historic showplace of Oakland.

The building is extremely fragile and is in need of constant maintenance. With completion of Phase I of the Estuary Plan, when our 2 mature shade trees were eliminated, the building is now exposed without protection to constant daily western sun, wind and rain. During construction of Phase I, tons of very toxic mud and dirt were removed over a period of 28 months which caused cracks in the floor. The restroom area was also affected by serious damage to both the porcelain toilet and considerable open cracks in the concrete floor making the restroom unusable. Contributing to this damage was the continuing excavation by Cal Trans in the adjacent parking lot. Therefore, we are very concerned with the impact of a multi-story construction in the immediate vicinity of the building.

It should not be shaved off, moved, removed or changed in any way except for a possible re-installation of the front overhang and water trough. To be enveloped within another building or moved to another spot would cause us to certainly lose our National Registration status. Should any part of it be destroyed, a very expensive, lengthy, careful, difficult and demanding project would be required to save the integrity of the building.

The building also contains historic memorabilia from all US war involvement since WWII when servicemen who left for the Pacific Theatre of War left dollars pinned to the back of the bar so that they would have ready cash for a beer when they returned. To this day we are still receiving war trophies and hats.

The saloon and cabin are listed in every tour book worldwide as a must-see in Oakland.

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Articles are published constantly in magazines and newspapers. After all, Jack's books are still translated into 40 languages.

I am not opposed to development if it suits the estuary type of waterfront we have in the Square. However, I do feel we have an obligation to cherish and protect this very historic site. Surely, a cultural, historic center could be designed around the saloon, the cabin, the fountain, the wolf, Jack's statue and/or bust etc, and incorporate in close proximity a museum somewhat like the very popular and complete museum that was in Jack London Village. In this center would be a courtyard between Heinold's and the cabin with beautiful landscaping, trees and plants, permanent umbrella tables and chairs where everyone could have lunch or snacks, take photos, and generally relax and learn something about Jack London and Oakland history.

If we want to attract more people to the Square, we need to offer something other than food and drink since shopping seems to be out of the question. A cultural center would provide a comfortable and appealing climate for tourists as well as families to have refreshment and to learn about Jack London and his life in Oakland and the world. It also presents perfect photo opportunities in a safe, contained area. I think we are missing a unique marketing plan – many cities would be delighted to have this kind of opportunity for their benefit and I hope we don't ignore it. We should showcase these aspects to our advantage.

Very sincerely,

Carol Brookman, Proprietor
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