

Re: Your Letters dated 9/13/21 and 9/21/21

CC: Chadrick Smalley, City of Emeryville

Dear Ms. Sowell,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us on Monday. We share your passion for art and Emeryville and your desire to make an excellent arts center. We appreciate your input, which we plan to take into consideration as we go forward with the next iteration of the design. We believe the Emeryville Arts Center can be both exceptional and financially sustainable and I hope we made inroads in your confidence in us.

As per our conversation, here are the letters (which formed the agenda for our call) and our viewpoint on the matters discussed.

9/13 Email (with responses in *italics*).

Dear City Council Members and City Manager,

If there is ever a to be an Emeryville Art Center, it is going to need the support of the Community. The Center will need our participation for fundraising, membership, and volunteering.

We agree.

The latest design proposed for the Art Center gives us no reason to attend any events there, even a simple Art reception.

We designed an Arts Center that we believe will support a variety of arts-related events, including the Celebration. We hope our conversation helped change your mind.

The so-called performance area provides no lighting or acoustics. Who are we expecting to perform there? *Lighting and acoustical systems are included.*

- The Gallery space is too small with jutting sidewalls that will have to be torn out to install exhibitions, because they are so limiting of the size of the artwork displayed there. *Per your suggestion, we are going to look into removing the shear wall that just west from the east wall of the gallery lobby. We agree with you that this will make the space easier to secure and manage operationally while also allowing for larger pieces to be displayed.*
- There is no storage or workroom for the people that would install shows in the gallery. These would include lighting equipment, stands for artworks, paint, ladders and tools. And we need a sink. *There is significantly more back-of-house in this design than the previous ones. Every unit is plumbed with a water line and sewer connect.*
- There would be no office for Art center staff? *Per your suggestion, we will explore adding an office for the arts center manager immediately adjacent to the gallery lobby.*
- The studios planned are monastery ceils , no 220v electrical, no sinks, and small doors. How will people get the artwork in and out or clean-up? At the Compound Gallery an artist can rent a studio for \$300/mo with access to welding, wood, ceramic and fiber workrooms. Who,

realistically, would want to rent these studios? *The studios are amply sized. Every unit is skylit, windowed, or both, with northern light. All units are equipped with 50 amps of 3 phase electrical that supports 220. Every unit is plumbed and has space for an industrial sink. Loading for the gallery and studios can be done through an industrial door on the north side of the building. Per your suggestion, we will explore providing studios with larger doors.*

We agree that access to welding tools and fiber workrooms is paramount. Per our discussions with you and Sharon, we plan on working with the City and community to find suitable locations for a work area and paint room. There are interior studios and co-working areas that depend on skylights, which can be blacked out for users that need darkness for film, photography, or animation. Our studios are priced similarly to art studios in Berkeley and Oakland with similar amenities and we are in a better location. We are confident they'll appeal to real working artists.

- *The proposed common work area will be a large windowless interior room with a polished concrete floor and a view of the doorways of the rental studio cells. Who will want to work here? The coworking area will be beautifully skylit – exactly as it was in the previous design. It will appeal to Emeryville residents who are artists that do not require a full studio, by people in the art business, and other creatives who want to be surrounded by art and artists. All studio tenants will have full access to all of the co-working resources.*
- *What is the thinking around the "Jewel Box"? It seems to me it will be a Hot Box with way too much exposure to the sun for most artworks.*
- *Who is going to gallery-sit this space? It is so separated from the Main Gallery. How will visitors even get in. Maybe the people working in the common area can escape to get some light. We agree. The jewel box will generate a lot of heat. We are going to well-insulate the wall on the art center side and employ a ventilation design that keeps the temperature at that of the ambient air. Due to the heat gain issues, it would not be occupiable space but rather viewed from the outside. Per our conversation, we continue to examine this area.*
- *The front of the Art Center is now located at the rear side of City Hall while what the community and the world will see will be the same old flat brick building. With some sort of mural project painted on the side wall at the back of parking lot. The decision to relocate the front of the Arts Center was made because the City made the decision that cars cannot stop along Hollis St. Leaving the entrance along Hollis created a liability and reputational issue. Arts Center attendees will not see the same old brick building. Each façade will be different from the building's current state and the north entrance will be mostly green wall, with the existing sculpture being brought back to life. The urban canvas on the east wall intentionally reaches out to street artists typically excluded from such projects. The relocation of the main entrance creates lovely indoor/outdoor space and connects the building to City Hall.*
- *Lastly I'd like to point at the lack of environmental concern in this plan. Where are the solar panels? Where is awareness? Where is the innovation? We are designing to LEED gold and our roof will be solar ready for future installation of solar panels.*

This design is not self-supporting. Instead it is a waste of money. We should wait until we can build something worth building. Like the Center for Community Living or our new City Hall. We want something that will be a source of pride. We want a Art Center that plans for the future. We should be on the

cutting edge and trend-setting. That is the sort of an Art Center people will want to be part of. *We share your desire to build a transformative Art Center that all of Emeryville can be proud of. We are glad we were able to connect and find some common ground. We believe our new design is defter and easier to build and operate than the prior design. Our design evokes the intersection of industry and art. It is not corporate, but historical and gritty. It can be the center for art that the Bay Area lacks right now that will cement Emeryville's art legacy. We hope that you'll join us in being a part of its future.*

Sincerely,
Vickie Jo Sowell

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What's the idea with this "jewel box"? How will people get in, who gallery sits it? *See above.*

What kind of Artists would be allowed in the studios. Jewelers with bottled gas flames?
Artists present all kinds of problems as neighbors. Oil painters with linseed oil and turpentine, power drills, framing saws, sewing machines, etc. Are there some ideas about noise control? What does the studio management? Have you looked at a studio to rent business plan? *Our plan would accommodate a wide range of artists and craftspeople. Each studio has a fresh air feed and unit-based exhaust. Every unit has its own exhaust fan as well as a roof penetration suitable for a jeweler hood or paint booth. Unfortunately, there are typically noise problems when you have high walls in converted factories. We will do our best to minimize. We will use the same management we used for Vulcan, Ford Street Studios, Gall Furniture Factory, East Lake Studios, and Linden Street studios, inter alia, that we have already built and operated. We understand one or more studios may need to be converted into a paint booth or ceramic center that would be made available for rent on an hourly or daily basis. Once we better know our tenant mix, we will better be able to define our needs.*

Where is a performance area suitable for video artists, or lecturers, dancers? There should be at least ways to accommodate sound systems, video projectors, lighting. *Per the above, the gallery and forum spaces include a sound system, projectors, lighting, and all necessary FF&E which will be made available to gallery/forum users on a turnkey basis.*

Something that really concerns me is whether there is any clear vision for the gallery space and performance area in terms of both facilities and management. I keep thinking about the people who will be in these spaces, whether they be staff, volunteer gallery sitters or docents. The director office should be by the Gallery, I feel. *We are envisioning a lean staff that does rely on producers of events to attend. Based on our experiences operating venues such as the Craneway Pavilion in Richmond, we believe a lean staff can still run an extraordinary event space. We do envision many of the events will be programmed by the tenants, plus, of course, the Celebration.*

Just providing a large empty space is a long way from a really useful cooperative work area. Have you looked at examples of artist co-working facilities? *Yes.*

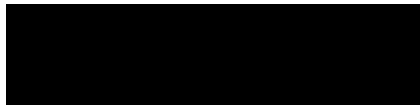
What are all the extra offices for? Is this really just an annex for city hall?. *The rooms are multipurpose: they can be used as classrooms, offices, or conference rooms. They can be booked by studio tenants, co-working tenants, or outside vendors. Our expectation is they are used for a wide variety of different purposes throughout the day and week by a variety of people.*

And while I do think that the legacy brick frontage along Hollis at 40th has character, it doesn't represent the arts center mission very well. It looks more like the elementary school I went to in Great Falls, Montana, with less windows. *The Hollis St. façade is the one building façade that will retain most of its original look and character. Lined with art, we believe it will leave no doubt as to the purpose of the building.*

Unfortunately this plan has been going on for seven years. And it is going getting more disappointing. With hundreds of days of community input. *In fact, the plan has been going on much longer than seven years. We thank you for taking the time to review our portfolio at ortondevelopment.com/portfolio. We have many references in the community. We appreciate your passion for the City and project and your understanding that we feel the same passion. We look forward to allying with you to build something great for Emeryville.*

We look forward to the meeting next Tuesday.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Nick Orton.

Nick Orton

Eddie Orton