

From: Kate Warren <kate@brightconsultancy.com>

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 2:40 PM

To: "eircomment@ucsc.edu" <eircomment@ucsc.edu>

Subject: Comments on revised draft EIR for Student Housing West

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the revised draft EIR for the Student Housing West project.

I am very glad that the university has revised the original EIR and allowed for further comment. I am disappointed that the numerous comments received on the original draft EIR have not been fully reproduced in the new draft EIR. While I know that there may be many reasons for this, given the vociferous opposition to the development of the East Meadow, it seems disingenuous to conveniently disregard the comments received in the last round of consultation.

With that in mind, I would like my original statement to be included in the comments on the current draft EIR, so I am reproducing it in its entirety as part of this submission, as follows (and see further comments below):

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Student Housing West.

I am strongly opposed to both the location and the appearance of the proposed housing – and I am deeply distressed by the proposed development of the East Meadow.

The administration knows that there is considerable concern amongst the Emeriti and alumni about the project and I would urge the administration to allow more time for consultation and evaluation of suitable alternatives.

The Alumni Council emailed alums today about the controversy surrounding the Student Housing West proposal. Since the administration has not communicated with alumni about the proposed housing, for the majority of alums, the Council's email will be the first time they hear of the proposed development - yet it is the final day of the consultation process. I urge delay to give more alums the opportunity to comment.

I am writing from an unusual perspective. I am an alum (Cowell 93) and the daughter of an Emeritus Professor. My father gave his working life to UCSC and I grew up spending every day on campus. When it was time to go to college, there was nowhere else I wanted to be. I am a daughter of the campus and I have deeply loved both the institution and the place – and they are two different things – all my life.

In addition, I bring professional experience to this matter. My first career was in heritage conservation, which included built landscapes – so I feel professionally qualified to comment on the preservation of the landscape and the aesthetics of the proposed development.

Today I work in leadership development, where part of my role includes holding senior executives to account for the ethical and moral dimensions of their decisions. In this respect, I believe I am professionally qualified to comment on the administration's consultation process and the way in which it has not adequately engaged with key stakeholders.

The proposed development is not in line with the spirit of the place and the traditions and design principles that make the beauty of the UCSC campus universally admired. In fact, the university's own Design Advisory Committee is unanimously opposed to the development. This alone is reason not to proceed.

The need for housing is acute, and I strongly support the provision of housing for students – but not this housing, and not at any cost.

I want every student attending UCSC to have the best possible experience and all the resources they need to fulfil their potential. Housing is intrinsic to this, but so is the landscape. Every student attending the campus benefits from a deep intimacy with the landscape. Indeed, this is what draws many students to the place. The East Meadow in particular is the university's 'shop window' for prospective students. To irreversibly mar the beautiful approach to campus for the sake of less than 200 beds is vandalism.

To develop the East Meadow (and to build such high rise, ugly housing anywhere on campus) is to damage the university's brand. Environmentally conscious planning that nestles within the landscape is a defining feature of UCSC. Protecting those aspects of the campus that are iconic – such as the East Meadow – and are deeply loved by alumni and emeriti faculty – is another. Diminishing the university's brand in the eyes of the university's most faithful supporters is an irreversible mistake. It diminishes confidence in the leadership of the university. It will lead to a loss of alumni support – as an example, if the east meadow is developed I will be altering my estate planning to remove the substantial gift I plan to leave the university for the benefit of students.

Finally, I would like to state my deep objection to the administration's lack of transparency and poor communication about the proposed housing. The consultation process has been disingenuous (Student Housing West? When the meadow is in the east?) and there has been little to no attempt to communicate with alumni, emeriti, and faculty.

I recently attended Alumni Weekend, where the administration conspicuously made no attempt at all to inform alumni about the proposed housing nor to engage or elicit alumni views. This is not only a missed opportunity. It is shameful. The only way any attending alumni knew of the proposed housing was because of the dedication of a small group of emeriti, current faculty and alumni self-organizing to protest and provide information. I confess to being part of this group, and having driven 500 miles round trip to spend my weekend informing alumni, I would like to make you aware that not a single alum was in favor of building on the meadow.

The alumni and emeriti are not only loyal supporters of the institution, they are the conscience of the place. They deserve respect. To not elicit their views and invite their involvement is a failure of institutional leadership. The administration can and should do better.

A petition to stop this calamitous housing development has gained thousands of signatures in a few short weeks. A legal fund to oppose the university is receiving contributions daily. The public meetings last week were full of objections to both the proposed housing and the consultation process. Every alum at Alumni Weekend was opposed to the development of the meadow. The university's own Design Advisory

Committee opposes it. My understanding is that the proposed housing is not congruent with the university's own Long Range Development Plan. For the first time in the 25 years since I graduated, I have received an email from the Alumni Council making all alumni aware of the degree of controversy around the project. Need I go on?

I invite the administration to redirect the energy it is currently expending on defending this appalling proposal and resisting being held accountable for poor decision making. Instead, investigate and develop suitable alternative housing proposals. I challenge the administration to win hearts and minds as it does so, by transparently and respectfully engaging with its stakeholders.

As you can see, my previous statement contained two principal arguments:

1 – the University administration has missed a vital opportunity to consult appropriately with alumni and emeriti, to the detriment of both the process and the administration's reputation

2 – the proposed development of the East Meadow is badly conceived and a calamitous error – especially when suitable alternatives exist – that will cause irreversible damage to both the aesthetic character of the campus and the bond between the University and its stakeholders.

I would like to provide updated comments on both of these arguments. Sadly my original position on both points still stands.

After I submitted my original comments, I had the opportunity to speak with Vice Chancellor Keith Brant. I appreciated his time and attention during our call, and afterwards I did see some improvement in the administration's attempts to engage alumni. Sadly, it has become apparent – including at the recent public meetings – that this is the appearance of listening rather than actually listening. The administration is not required to agree with the opposition view about the development of the East Meadow. But it could do so much more to acknowledge that opposition exists and to demonstrate serious consideration of alternatives. I am sure that those who oppose the development of the East Meadow are viewed by the administration as missing the point and resistant to change. I would argue that it is in fact the administration that is missing the point and demonstrating resistance to change. Those who oppose the development of the East Meadow are aiming to avert a calamity on behalf of all that they love about UCSC. One can ignore a smoke alarm, but that won't stop the house being on fire. I am deeply disappointed by the administration's conduct in this regard.

2 – Absolutely nothing has changed in terms of the brand and reputational damage the development of the East Meadow presages. In no way has the administration demonstrated that it understands these risks. I would like to reiterate my personal commitment to withdrawing my support for the university by rewriting my estate planning to exclude the university, should the East Meadow be developed.

Actions speak louder than words. By refusing to seriously consider alternative sites for housing, paying lip service to those who oppose, and by creating the thinnest veneer of paperwork to justify this unjustifiable development, the administration shows its hand. It is clear to me that the administration intends to develop the East Meadow come what may, in spite of opposition, reason, and inadequate investigation of the site. This is a failure of moral leadership by the administration. Shame on you all.

Kate Warren
Cowell 93.