

May 11, 2009

RE: Archeological Field School at Anna Head West Parking Lot

DEAR UC STAFF AND CAMPUS NEIGHBORS:

The University is considering construction of a student housing development on a portion of the Anna Head West Parking Lot, between Channing Way and Haste Street, west of the Anna Head School buildings. This project is currently going through campus review and, if approved and funded, construction is expected to start in mid or late 2010. The campus will distribute more detailed information as the project planning proceeds.

In concert with the proposed housing, and to further study the site, an archaeological Field School will be conducted on a portion of the Anna Head West Parking Lot starting May 26 and ending in late June, 2009.

The Field School is arranged through the UC Berkeley Archaeological Research Facility (ARF) and will be taught by Professor Laurie Wilkie. Sections of the parking lot will be temporarily fenced off, asphalt will be removed, and students will work on excavating and analyzing materials, learning proper techniques for archaeological field work. The remaining area of the parking lot will remain in normal operation during this time.

Professor Wilkie's Field School is modeled on two field schools she taught in 2004 and 2005 on the UC Berkeley campus, at the site of the old University Conservatory where the C.V. Starr East Asian Library now stands.

You can read about those projects at: http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/06/23_dig.shtml

The Field Schools are an important collaboration between the operations side of the campus and the academic side, providing students with an opportunity to learn archaeological techniques at a local site.

When the Field School is in progress, the students will be hard at work on their excavations. The public is welcome to come by, observe and ask questions. Please respect all safety procedures posted on the site. Near the end of the Field School it is likely the class will have an "open house" where they will display their findings and explain their work.

If you have questions about the Field School or the proposed Anna Head housing, you may contact

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For more history of the Anna Head property and the adjacent Hinkel property, you can see the Historic Structures Report at:

<http://www.cp.berkeley.edu/CP/PEP/History/planninghistory.html>

(Scroll down to "Off Campus Properties" and click on "Anna Head". The history of the Hinkel property--with the address of 2520 Channing Way--starts on page 17 of the report.)

More on the history of the property:

In the 1860s, the block on which the Anna Head property is located was one of the first areas of the future town of Berkeley subdivided for development. What is now the parking lot was one single property, that later came into the ownership of the John Hinkel family (which also donated the North Berkeley Park of the same name). The Hinkels had a large Victorian home facing Channing Way, and various other structures, including a greenhouse, elsewhere on the property. John Hinkel was an avid plant collector and gardener and some of the large trees on or around the parking lot survive from the era his family lived there.

After the Hinkels sold the property in the 1920s, it was used for various purposes, including a women's student boarding house, and eventually acquired by the University in the 1940s. The house was demolished in the 1950s and most of the lot was paved for parking. The University also acquired the old Anna Head School in the 1960s and combined the grounds of the two properties in one parking lot.

Often in such cases, remains of earlier uses survive beneath the asphalt, including building foundations, buried household garbage, and similar artifacts. Such materials, when properly excavated and analyzed, provide important insights into the early history of American-era settlement in California and Berkeley in particular, as well as the history of the University.