

# ***DRAFT***

April 9, 2007

Jack Schroll  
2576 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Schroll:

Thank you for bringing your Victory Sirens restoration proposal to the attention of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board during Open Forum at the June 12 and October 16, 2006 Board meetings.

At these meetings the Landmarks Board expressed interest in the restoration of the Victory Sirens, air raid sirens installed by most major U.S. cities during the Cold War, the period of conflict, tension and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies from the mid 1940's until the early 1990's. Oakland had a total of five. The Board understands from your presentation that there are two remaining Victory Sirens in Oakland, one at the Woodminster Amphitheater, and the other on the Lafayette School, and that your goal is to restore them at your own cost, including transportation and storage.

A few hundred of these sirens, invented by Bell Telephone Laboratories during World War II, were built by Chrysler Corporation at their plant in Detroit, Michigan, beginning some time in the mid to late 1940's. Many remained in service for twenty plus years, sounding only for routine tests. Most people who lived in major metropolitan areas during the 1950's and 60's will remember the siren tests. In the 1940's they warned communities of enemy aircraft. In the 1950's and 60's they stood ready to warn of incoming enemy missiles. Three different production models were made by Chrysler between 1942 and 1957.

Your proposal to restore these two remaining Oakland sirens, a complete restoration on one that would permit demonstration and a cosmetic restoration on the second, is supported by the City of Oakland General Plan, Historic Preservation Element Goal 2, as follows:

*To preserve, protect, enhance, perpetuate, use, and prevent the unnecessary destruction or impairment of properties or physical features of special character*

*or special historic, cultural, educational, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.*

*Such properties or physical features include buildings, building components, structures, objects, districts, sites, natural features related to human presence, and activities taking place on or within such properties or physical features.*

The Board supports the restoration of the Victory Sirens based on the following findings:

- that the sirens effectively illustrate patterns associated with cultural and political history;
- that these civil defense artifacts are associated with the Cold War, a historical period having significance at the national and international levels;
- that the restoration of the Victory Sirens would provide and encourage informational and educational opportunities for teaching; and
- that the sirens were designed and built by major United States corporations that have made significant contributions to the nation.

Because the Victory Sirens are currently located on property owned by the Oakland Unified School District or the City of Oakland, the Board's support of the restoration is subject to permission from and/or agreements with these two owners. Both of the owners have been notified by mail of the Board's consideration and deliberation in support this proposal to take place at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 9, 2007.

The Board unanimously supports your goal for restoration of the Victory Sirens as outlined in this letter and thanks you for your ongoing efforts to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

Neal Parish, Chair  
for the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

cc: Oakland Unified School District  
Facilities and Planning Management Office  
955 High Street  
Oakland, CA 94601

James Ryugo, Building Services Manager  
Public Works Agency  
City of Oakland  
7101 Edgewater Drive, Building #2  
Oakland, CA 94621

Ref: Correspondence/VictorySirens4-9-07