

## Chapter 4

### THE BRICKYARD

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The Brickyard (see map, p. vi) has been recommended as a first priority for acquisition and recreational development by the State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The Brickyard is attractive because it is conveniently located near the Berkeley Marina with good access by public transportation, commands a view of San Francisco Bay, has 4,500 feet of bay frontage and is fairly flat and developable (DPR, 1982).

The land is currently owned by Santa Fe Land, Inc., a private concern. The State Coastal Conservancy (CC) has approached Santa Fe representatives to begin negotiations for purchase of the Brickyard (Brand, 1982, pers. comm.). CHNMB, a consulting firm hired by CC, has made a preliminary estimate of \$2,500,000 (approximately \$10,000 per acre) for acquisition and \$2,000,000 for recreational development of the parcel. This brings the estimated total for purchase and development of the Brickyard to \$4,500,000, the amount to be allocated for the shoreline park in DPR's fiscal year 1982 budget (Legarra, 1982, pers. comm.).

The public sector, as well as various agencies concerned with the development of an East Bay shoreline park, has varying priorities on specific sites and types of development. Most concerned groups are interested in the purchase of the Brickyard as a first step toward the park. However, there are conflicts and indecision over what the land should be used for, where the money for purchase and development will come from and which agency will make the final decisions on purchase, development and management of the parkland.

#### Site Description

The Brickyard is an interestingly-shaped, 27-acre parcel of land located at the southwest corner of the intersection of University Avenue and Frontage Road in Berkeley (FIGURE 1). A prevailing wind blows from the south, west and southwest. The wind is heaviest during the summer months (DPR, 1982). Strawberry Creek drains into a small cove which has a sandy beach. A peninsula running parallel to Interstate 80 creates an embayment at the north end. The western shore of this embayment is very steep, but the slope is more gradual along the north and east shores.

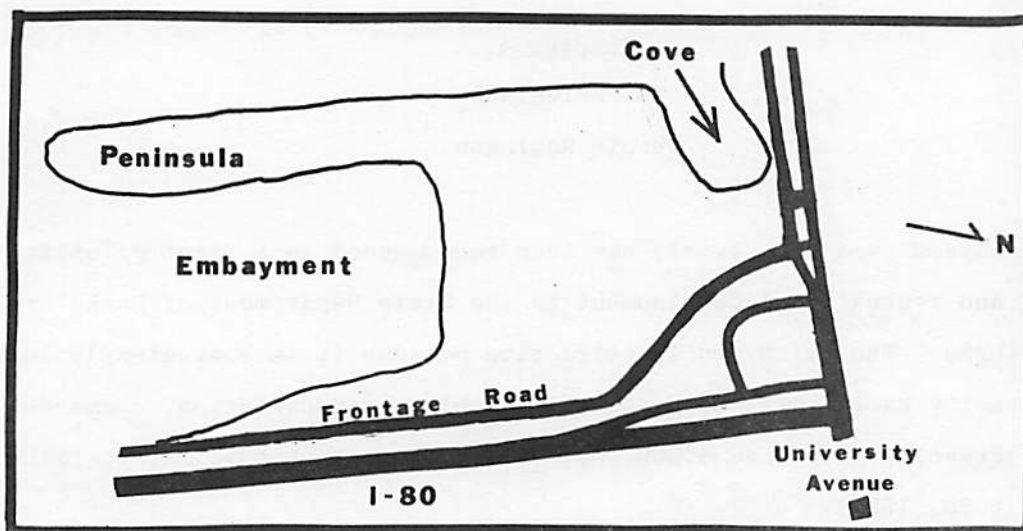


FIGURE 1. The Brickyard.

At low tide the Brickyard is bordered by an extensive mudflat. The embayment and cove empty, providing clam and mussel habitat, as well as an excellent feeding area for shorebirds.

The major portion of the Brickyard is flat and raised above the level of San Francisco Bay approximately 3 meters. The northeast corner and several roads running through the land remain unvegetated. Large freshwater puddles form here during the rainy season. The peninsula has been colonized mostly by weeds, grasses and broadleaved plants, including thistles, mustard, curly dock and fennel. Shrubs, such as coyote bush, make access to parts of the shore along the peninsula difficult. An endangered plant species, *Cordylanthus mollis*, has been found at the tip of the peninsula (Roberts, pers., comm., 1982). Some freshwater marsh plants such as cattails, as well as patches of iceplant, are present on the Brickyard.

Much of the Brickyard is covered by rubble consisting of old bricks, pieces of tile floors, broken sidewalks and curbs, old pieces of wood, wire and miscellaneous trash. Along the shoreline the pieces of cement are covered with algae. The rubble provides a home for many animals, including gophers, jackrabbits, rats and small birds.

People have left old furniture, trash, beer bottles and remains of picnic lunches at the Brickyard. The beach at the cove is particularly littered. The

University Avenue storm drain and Strawberry Creek empty into this cove, bringing polluted water and debris from city streets. The water here has a high coliform count resulting in contamination of clams and mussels in the area (see paper by Mirtha Ninayahuar). The beach usually has at least one dead rat or bird on it. It is unknown whether the deaths are attributable to pollution or some other cause. In either case, the carcasses are unsightly and unhealthful.

#### History and Current Uses

The Brickyard was formed from clean fill, that is, dirt was used to create the land rather than garbage (Manning, pers. comm., 1982). It subsequently became a dump for old building materials, torn up sidewalks, and discarded bricks until 1970, when the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) banned further landfill there (Urban Care, 1976). The land is currently leased by Santa Fe Land, Inc., to Napa Excavators (Manning, pers. comm., 1982). These companies use the land for temporary storage and cleaning of brick and engineering soil. The north-eastern corner of the Brickyard is leased by a produce vendor. A houseboat of sorts is in the embayment, apparently without a permit from the City of Berkeley or the landowners (Neasbitt, pers. comm., 1982). It appears that someone is currently living in the structure.

Although there are "No Trespassing" signs around the Brickyard, people are often seen using the area for unstructured recreation. Our class survey (see paper by Grant Edelstone) revealed the following uses: collection of Daphnia from freshwater ponds to be used as food for an exotic fish collection, fishing, dog walking, clamming, birdwatching, walking and general "hanging out" and drinking.

#### Development Issues

Although DPR is considering providing funds for the purchase of the Brickyard, it is not clear that the state will make the final decision on acquisition and development, or even manage the resulting park. City and state agencies, private citizens and interest groups will have input on recreational uses for the area. TABLE 1 summarizes the suggested uses for the Brickyard, indicating which organizations support the various possibilities. Those marked CHNMB represent suggestions brought forward by the public sector at Coastal Conservancy workshops. The ultimate decision on development will be affected by the City of Berkeley through its zoning powers (Brand, pers. comm., 1982). (See Mary Hagman's paper on zoning for a discussion of this issue). Peter Koos of East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD),

RECREATIONAL USES

Visitors'/Nature education center . . . . .	BOR, CHNMB, DPR
Birdwatching platforms . . . . .	CHNMB
Preservation of mudflats for wildlife . . . . .	CHNMB
Wade/swim area . . . . .	DPR, EBRPD
Clamming . . . . .	CHNMB
Fishing piers . . . . .	BCDC, CHNMB, CITY
Small boat launch . . . . .	CHNMB
Windsurfing facilities . . . . . (showers, dressing rooms)	CHNMB
Grassy area/playing field . . . . .	CHNMB, EBRPD
Kite flying . . . . .	CHNMB
Open space . . . . .	BOR, CDF&G, CHNMB, DPR
Unstructured recreation . . . . .	CHNMB
Children's playground . . . . .	ABAG
Restrooms . . . . .	CHNMB, DPR
"Basic" amenities . . . . . (trash cans, benches, fountains)	BCDC
Interim car/tent/RV camping . . . . .	CHNMB, DPR
Parking . . . . .	CHNMB, DPR
Par course . . . . .	CHNMB
Sunbathing area . . . . .	EBRPD
Community garden . . . . .	CHNMB
Berkeley Beach . . . . .	CHNMB
Unbroken stretch of shoreline park . . . . . from Albany to Emeryville	CHNMB, CITY, DPR, SSFBA
Access trail to shoreline for . . . . . jogging, biking, walking	ECDC, CHNMB, CITY, DPR

COMMERCIAL USES

Boat rental . . . . .	DPR
Concession stand . . . . .	ABAG, CHNMB, DPR
Restaurants . . . . .	CITY, DPR
Small shops . . . . .	CITY
Aquabusiness (commercial clamming) . . . . .	CHNMB
Commercial development as a trade-off . . . . . for recreational development elsewhere	CHNMB, CITY

REFERENCES

ABAG . . . . .	Association of Bay Area Governments, 1973
BCDC . . . . .	San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 1978
BOR . . . . .	Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, 1977
CDF&G . . . . .	California Department of Fish and Game, 1979
CHNMB . . . . .	CHNMB Associates, 1982
CITY . . . . .	City of Berkeley, 1982
DPR . . . . .	California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1982
EBRPD . . . . .	East Bay Regional Park District, 1976
SSFBA . . . . .	Save San Francisco Bay Association, 1981

TABLE 1. Suggested Recreational and Commercial Uses for the Brickyard by Public Agencies and the Private Sector.

which may ultimately have a hand in development and management of the park, has made it clear that long-range planning and economics play very important roles in the park proposal. Acquired land may sit undeveloped until more funds are found. In addition, initial park development may be unattractive and undermanaged until the public becomes aware of its existence and starts to use it.

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) is playing a passive role in initial development plans. The Commission's emphasis is on assuring public access to the shoreline, regardless of the type of development. BCDC's Public Access Plan for San Francisco Bay finds specifically that the shoreline from University Avenue to Emeryville should have an access trail as well as undisturbed fishing areas. Rights-of-way should be developed with basic public amenities such as trash cans, benches and drinking fountains. The power of BCDC is manifested in its permit process. In order to be issued a permit, a proposed project must demonstrate that public access to the shore is provided and even enhanced (Wakeman, pers. comm., 1982).

Decision-making by any public agency is strongly influenced by the opinions of the public sector, as represented by individuals, as well as citizens' organizations. Among those groups who have thus far contributed their opinions in public meetings and Coastal Conservancy (CC) workshops are Berkeley Beach Committee, Save San Francisco Bay Association, Cal Sailing Club and the California Native Plant Society.

DPR presented, in its preliminary feasibility study, a plan for development of the Brickyard which emphasizes immediate grading and landscaping to provide pathways, picnic areas, parking spaces and an orientation center. Water-related uses such as wading, swimming and clamming were also suggested. DPR reasons that the sooner the area is made attractive to the public, the sooner public interest can be raised in support of further development of a shoreline park from Albany to Emeryville.

Some of DPR's suggested uses for the parcel are inconsistent with the desires of other concerned organizations. For instance, in order to promote windsurfing at the Brickyard, the embayment would have to be dredged. This would create an added expense and destroy a valuable mudflat. The Cal Sailing Club expressed no interest in windsurfing in that area. Representatives of the club present at DPR's public meeting in Berkeley instead stressed the need for better access to the water in the North Basin, on the north side of the Berkeley landfill.

The City of Berkeley does not favor use of the Brickyard solely for open space (Neasbitt, pers. comm., 1982). The City feels that the Marina and proposed

North Waterfront Park will provide adequate open space, unstructured recreation area, windsurfing and boating opportunities and sheltered picnic areas. The Brickyard, according to the City, is not a suitable place for many recreational activities. It is too noisy, unsheltered from the wind, and the direction of the wind and extensive mudflats at low tide make it inconvenient for windsurfers and boaters. It would most useful and economically feasible to develop the Brickyard into a combination of recreation and light business to draw people to the waterfront. Restaurants and/or small shops along with a fishing pier would be appropriate. People attracted to the shops would subsequently discover the other recreational opportunities nearby.

The Berkeley Beach Committee would like to restore a beach to the stretch of waterfront between University and Ashby Avenues. This plan would have an effect on the Brickyard since it includes removing the Brickyard peninsula in order that the embayment may become part of the gently curving shoreline (Manning, pers. comm., 1982). This proposal requires further study and is addressed in the papers by Don Bachman, Peter Gee and Linda Goad.

Regardless of the specific type of recreational development, certain priorities must be considered for a successful park. Studies show that factors which prevent people from using parks in urban areas include poor access, insufficient parking, over-crowding, lack of variety of activities, general unsafety and high entrance fees (ABAG, 1973; Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, 1977; EBRPD, 1976). Other factors come in to play specifically in the Brickyard area. Constant noise from the freeway and 7-10 mile per hour winds can be disturbing. Water quality in the cove is poor (see studies by Bessie Lee and Mirtha Ninayahuar), a deterrent to water contact activities and clamming. All of these problems can and should be alleviated by careful planning prior to development of the park.

### Conclusion

I feel it is important for the Department of Parks and Recreation to purchase the Brickyard. Due to its bayside location, I see it as a prime spot for its current owner, Santa Fe Land, Inc., to propose commercial development. In light of the plan for a continuous East Bay shoreline park, and the need for more recreational open space in Berkeley (see paper by Grant Edelstone), it would be valuable for a public agency to prevent private commercial development by purchasing and reserving this land for public recreational use, with free access to the shore. Also, in light of the limited amount of funds currently available the

Brickyard is a realistically small and obtainable parcel of land with which to start. In order to raise more money for the park it will be necessary to rally public support. It seems feasible that the Brickyard could be used to attract people to the shoreline and educate them on the need for their active support.

The City of Berkeley and DPR need to work together on the proposed shoreline park. However, it appears that they are already working at cross purposes. DPR states in the feasibility study that the City welcomes cooperation and assistance from DPR in further development of its (the City's) planned park on the Berkeley landfill. But many suggestions submitted by DPR, such as development of camping facilities and preservation of open space at the Brickyard, haven't even been studied, much less approved, by the City. It will be necessary at some point for representatives of the two entities to define clearly their goals and create methods of working together on the parks.

DPR's proposed uses for the Brickyard are compatible with the Brickyard's size and location. Although the City of Berkeley is not enthusiastic about camping on the shoreline, I am. It was pointed out at DPR's public meeting that people already camp illegally at the Marina and in local parks. This could be prevented by making facilities available and having park employees police the camp area. Trails for biking and jogging, picnic areas, fishing areas and general open space are all suitable and there is a demonstrated need. Landscaping should not be too manicured. A representative of the California Native Plant Society present at DPR's public meeting stressed that native plants and shrubs should be used to promote a feeling of undeveloped open space.

I am not opposed to light commercial development on the Brickyard, especially if it makes the shoreline park economically more feasible. However, the projects chosen should relate directly to recreation; a snack stand and small boat rental are more attractive to me than a complex of small shops and a restaurant.

Prior to actual planning for a park on the Brickyard, a detailed study should be made of its history and the potential for meeting outstanding recreational demands such as those listed in TABLE 1. If any buildings will be constructed, the condition of the landfill must be determined. Since BCDC prohibited further fill after 1970, a fair amount of subsidence should already have occurred. In the event of an earthquake, however, the ground could settle even more, causing structural damage as well as human injury (see paper by Mary Dresser).

Certain improvements must be made before specific recreational uses for the area are implemented. Pedestrian access should be improved (see paper by Dexter Chan). A sound barrier should be constructed near the freeway, and protection from the wind should be provided for picnic areas. However, planners should be careful not to simply create a mound of dirt as a windbreak, as this would obstruct the view of the San Francisco Bay. Trees and bushes could be planted around the picnic area to slow the wind down. If water contact is anticipated, the water quality must be improved, especially in the cove. The University storm drain, which empties into the cove, must be screened and coliform levels kept under control. Planners should also maintain a sensitivity to wildlife habitat, bearing in mind the value of the Brickyard to an endangered plant species and shorebirds which feed on surrounding mudflats.

Overall, the Brickyard has enormous potential for recreational development and should be purchased as soon as possible as a first step toward a complete East Bay shoreline park.

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