



D E S I G N
R E V I E W
C O M M I T T E E
S T A F F R E P O R T

For Committee Discussion/
Advisory Comments
FEBRUARY 18, 2016

1900 FOURTH STREET PREVIEW

Design Review # [ZP2015-0068](#) / [LMSAP2015-0005](#) for a proposed mixed-use development, containing 135 dwelling units and approximately 33,000 square feet of retail located on designated City of Berkeley Landmark, West Berkeley Shellmound (Spenger's parking lot).

I. Introduction

This project site is located between University Avenue and Hearst Avenue. This parcel is located in the C-W, West Berkeley Commercial, zoning district.

The proposed project involves the construction of a 356,390 square-foot mixed use (residential over commercial) development, with 135 dwelling units, 33,080 square feet of commercial space, and 372 parking spaces. The proposed uses would be located within two separate buildings that would range from one to five stories (a maximum of 71 feet) in height.

The project is before the Design Review Committee (DRC) for a Preview in conjunction with the Use Permit (ZP2015-0068) and Structural Alteration Permit (LMSAP2015-0005) applications. Located on a landmarked site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) will have design review of the project per BMC Section 3.24 in order to ensure that the new development addresses potential impacts to historic resources. Design review for the new construction will be referred to the DRC for advisory comments and recommendations.

II. Background

The approximately 2.21-acre, generally-level project site consists of an approximately 350-space privately-owned surface parking lot that is open to the public for a fee and an approximately 900 square-foot one-story commercial building that is currently occupied by a private fitness facility. The site is currently surrounded by chain link and metal fencing and wooden bollards and vegetation on the site is limited to a few trees and scattered shrubs at the perimeter. Vehicular

access to the parking lot is provided by two separate one-way driveways located on Fourth Street.

The site is designated Avenue Commercial with a Development Node overlay in the Berkeley General Plan and is within the West Berkeley Commercial (C-W) zoning district. The project site is also part of a group of several properties designated by the City of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Commission as a Landmark site, for its location within the potential boundaries of the West Berkeley Shellmound. As such, the Landmark Preservation Committee will be reviewing this project as a Structural Alteration Permit, and specifically how the new construction will be designed to address any potential shellmound artifacts.

III. Project Setting

A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

The project site is located within the Fourth Street shopping area of West Berkeley and occupies the block surrounded by Hearst Avenue to the north, Fourth Street to the east, University Avenue to the south, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the west. The site is immediately bordered to the west by the Berkeley Amtrak Station platform and is accessible by several bus lines operated by Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit). Regional vehicular access is provided by the Eastshore freeway and entrance and exit ramps to Interstate 80 (I-80) and I-580 are located within two blocks of the site.

The project site is located within the Fourth Street commercial shopping district, which is characterized by high levels of pedestrian traffic and a mix of low- and mid-rise structures. Land uses along the Fourth Street corridor immediately north of the site primarily include commercial and retail uses. Immediately south of the site, land uses along Fourth Street consist of mixed-use residential and office developments with ground-floor retail uses or land planned for such uses.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



Figure 2 : Zoning Map

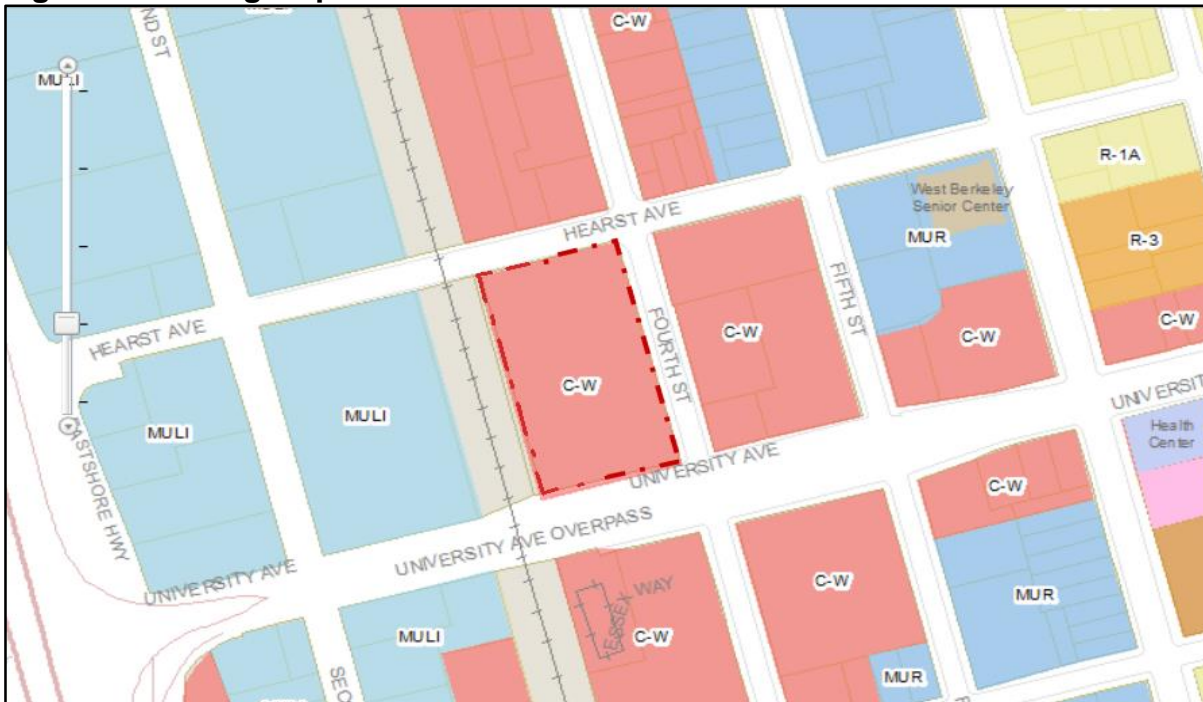


Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Parking lot	C-W	AC – Avenue Commercial
Surrounding Properties	North	Commercial space	C-W	AC – Avenue Commercial
	South	Mixed use – commercial and apartments	C-W	AC – Avenue Commercial
	East	Spenger’s Fresh Fish Grotto	C-W	AC – Avenue Commercial
	West	Truitt and White Lumber	MULI	AC – Avenue Commercial

IV. Project Description

A. Development Standards

Refer to the tabulation form in the attached applicant’s statement on page 8 for reference. This is still under review with our Use Permit planners and this information will be updated in subsequent reviews.

B. Requested Permits

- Structural Alteration Permit, per BMC Section 3.24.260 to allow construction activities at the site of a City of Berkeley Landmark, including demolition of the existing commercial building.
- Demolition Permit, per BMC Section 22.12.060 to allow demolition of the existing commercial building.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow new retail sales uses greater than 7,500 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow a quick or full service restaurant use.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow a mixed-use development over 20,000 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.050.B.1 to allow creation of floor area greater than 5,000 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.060.A to allow restaurant operation from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Administrative Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow alcoholic beverage service of beer and wine incidental to food service.

C. Density Bonus Information

The project applicant is also requesting a density bonus with related waivers and modifications to development standards pursuant to Government Code Section 65915(b)(1)(B) and (f)(2).

D. CEQA Determination

The City of Berkeley will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Project. An Initial Study checklist will also be prepared and will be released with the Draft EIR.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR was circulated on February 10, 2016; comments on the proposed scope of the Draft EIR must be received on or before March 14, 2016. During the NOP comment period, the City of Berkeley will conduct two public scoping sessions: the Landmarks Preservation Commission will conduct a public scoping session on March 3, 2016, and the Zoning Adjustments Board will conduct a public scoping session on March 10, 2016.

V. Design Review Guidelines

A. University Avenue Strategic Plan – Design Guidelines

The University Avenue Strategic Plan (UASP) was adopted by the City in 1997 to revitalize the University Avenue corridor and enhance it as a gateway to the City, neighborhoods, and the Downtown. Design guidelines are a key component of the Plan. Some key guidelines are summarized below for your reference. The complete set of Design Guidelines can be found under Section 12 on the University Avenue Strategic Plan page on the City's website, located here:

[http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_\(new_site_map_walk-through\)/Level_3_-_General/N.%20Design_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_(new_site_map_walk-through)/Level_3_-_General/N.%20Design_Guidelines.pdf).

Massing

- In general, buildings that meet the higher end of the density/intensity ranges are encouraged in order to create a more urban environment and provide as many residential units as possible within proximity to University Avenue and transit.
- Diverse and articulated massing is encouraged.

Facades

- Building facades should be articulated in a pattern that complements the historic façade patterns of the area.

Materials

- Building materials should convey a sense of durability and permanence.

Guidelines for Spenger's Parking Lot

- The building or series of buildings should not be more than 40 feet tall and should be articulated in a pattern that echoes the rhythm of surrounding smaller-scale buildings.
- Ground floor retail must be provided on both Fourth Street and Hearst Street. The upper stories should be occupied with office space or other entertainment uses, such as cinema.

- The site should provide a plaza and midblock passage to access the Amtrak Stop from Fourth Street. The plaza and Amtrak platform should be fronted with active uses, such as a café, and with windows and doors.
- The parking should be located at the interior of the site or adjacent to the University Avenue overpass.

VI. Issues and Analysis

A. Design Review Issues:

- **Setbacks** Project is setback from the parcel property lines on all sides at varying dimensions. See A1.1, ground floor plan for more specific information.
- **Massing** Lower buildings with smaller footprints are proposed at the corner of Hearst and along Fourth in response to the existing nearby fabric. The higher portions of the project are proposed along the western edge of the site and the University Overpass. See G2.2 for diagrams illustrating the urban design concepts for the project.
- **Parking** Access to and from the structured parking is on both Hearst and Fourth. The lower levels are designated for retail and guest parking while the upper levels are for the residential units.
- **Encroachments** Proposed projections over the Public Right-of-way are illustrated on A6.3. There are limited projections proposed on Hearst, University and Fourth. Both Staff and the applicant will work with Public Works for their recommendations and approvals on these encroachments.
- **Open Space / Landscape Concepts** Public paseo and streetscape improvements are proposed in conjunction with the commercial uses on the ground floor. Open space for the residential units are proposed in two courtyards adjacent to a fitness center and lounge area, as well as private balconies.
- **Street Trees** are proposed on both on 4th and University, as well as in the Public Paseo, but none on Hearst at this time. Staff and the applicant will continue to work with the City Forester for their recommendations.
- **Material and Colors** Elevations illustrate the proposed materials. See A2.0 – A2.3. The project proposes a variety of materials which include horizontal siding, metal panels, vertical metal siding, exterior plaster, and perforated metal screening.
- **Façade Design / Articulation** Design appears to be varied and well-articulated on all street edges of the project site. The site does back up to the railroad right-of-way and the parking structure is located on that edge. Although a large expanse of exterior plaster is proposed for that wall, two exit stairs located on that wall help add interest, and a potential art opportunity has also been indicated on that wall.
- **Storefront Design** Throughout the project is pedestrian-scaled and varied, consistent with the neighborhood.

B. Issues for Discussion:

- Site Plan
- Massing
- Urban Design Concepts
- Open Space / Landscape Concepts

VII. Recommendation

Staff recommends the Committee discuss the issues above and give feedback to the applicant on how this building can best fit into its context.

Attachments:

1. Project Plans (Parts A-B), received July 10, 2016
2. Applicant Statement, received April 1, 2015
3. GreenPoint Checklist, received April 1, 2015
4. Bay-Friendly Checklist, received April 1, 2015
5. Correspondence

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