

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

**D1. Historic Name:** Downtown Berkeley **D2. Common Name:** Shattuck Avenue Downtown Commercial Corridor

**\*D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

Within the city of Berkeley, the commercial corridor along Shattuck Avenue is well known as a visually identifiable place of community importance and activity. Combined with the adjacent landmark Civic Center Historic District to the west, the larger area of commercial and institutional buildings is culturally recognized as the city center of Berkeley—its downtown core.

The Shattuck Avenue commercial area extends beyond this core area to the north and south along both sides of this major thoroughfare. The larger commercial zone extends as well along University Avenue, beginning from the western edge of the University of California campus at Oxford Street, to the terminus of University Avenue at the Eastshore Freeway (Interstate 80) and the San Francisco Bay.

The Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor, the subject of this study, is defined dramatically by the open, wedge-shaped fork in Shattuck Avenue where the street splits into two segments north of Center Street, with the eastern leg terminating at University Avenue.

The Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor is recognizable today as a historic district that represents its architectural and historical significance from the period 1895-1958. The commercial corridor is populated by a concentration of historic buildings that have been recognized as such under registration programs at the local, state and/or national level. The area is clearly understood as a place, and some boundaries are easily defined; however, some of the boundaries of the historic commercial area are visually less precise, and blend into other areas such as the greater University neighborhoods and the Civic Center, and what are called the downtown buffer areas.

The pair of high-rise buildings at Center Street—the 1927 building now known as the Wells Fargo Bank building at 2140 Shattuck Avenue, and the more recent 1969 First Savings Building at 2150 Shattuck Avenue—anchors the center of this commercial district at what is today the city's primary transit hub, the Downtown Berkeley BART Station. Their imposing presence helps to establish the district, as they serve as "markers" of the commercial core. The properties surrounding these prominent buildings continue to be populated by retail stores, restaurants, theaters, hotels, offices buildings, and mixed-use buildings that line the streets. This commercial setting has defined the Berkeley's city center for over a century, and speaks today literally as Downtown Berkeley.

There are few breaks in the streetscape of this commercial district; the suburban-designed Bank of America building at Center Street serving as the sole exception along Shattuck Avenue to an otherwise unified setting. The concentration of historic commercial buildings and the continued pattern of renovations and replacement buildings with their walkable pedestrian orientation provide a distinctive character to the downtown core. The preservation of historic materials and details, such as brick walls in a variety of colors, stucco walls with a variety of textures, tile accents, wood windows with paneled spandrels, decorative cornices, and unique historic signage, contribute to Downtown Berkeley's unique sense of historic place.

This design continuity, a dense grouping of mostly historic structures built before World War II that line the streets with active commercial storefront uses are what constitute Berkeley's primary downtown commercial core area. The commercial properties that contribute to this historic setting are integral to the continued sense of place that marks Berkeley's city center.

**\*D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):

*See page 2, DPR523L*

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

*See page 5, DPR523L*

**\*D10. Significance: Theme** Commerce and Architecture **Area** Downtown Berkeley

**Period of Significance** 1895-1958 **Property Type** Commercial **Applicable Criteria** A (1), C (3)

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope.)

Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

*See page 6, DPR523L*

**\*B12. References:**

*See page 9, DPR523L*

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Franklin Maggi

**\*Date:** September 15, 2015

**Affiliation and Address:** Archives & Architecture, LLC, PO Box 1332, San Jose, CA 95109

*(Continued from page 1, DPR523D, Boundary Description)*

**Western Boundary**

The western boundary of the Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District splits the blocks between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street. Milvia Street has a distinctively different visual character and historic pattern of development than does Shattuck Avenue. The density of the building placements is different, and the buildings' uses are not as commercially oriented. There are a proportionately higher number of office buildings, surface parking areas and multi-family residential complexes. The majority of these buildings are of late twentieth-century design and very few provide display windows at the sidewalks or other pedestrian-scale commercial interface. Also facing Milvia Street is a group of historic buildings that are Contributors of the Civic Center Historic District. This historic district has an established boundary that splits the blocks between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street between Center and Kittredge Streets. The district, however, has a similar period of significance in the story of Berkeley's downtown history.

**Southern Boundary**

The southern boundary of the Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District is Durant Avenue. This boundary is historically quite clear, although the introduction of angled parking in the 1970s from Allston Way southward has visually somewhat blurred the boundary. Durant Avenue is a dividing line between the older urban core and the later automobile-oriented uses that spread out from the core along Shattuck Avenue and other commercial corridors such as University Avenue. On Durant Avenue, and south of Durant along Shattuck Avenue, many of the structures are modern in style; they include one-story automobile showrooms and repair shops, sometimes with on-site parking available. Within this area to the south are many very distinctive historic resources, including the 1911 Morrill Apartments at 2429 Shattuck Avenue, and the 1905 Barker Block at 2484 Shattuck Avenue, both City of Berkeley landmarks. However, this area is less dense, and the resources are considerably less tied to the area farther north along Shattuck Avenue within the historic district. The Husted's Tow building at 2037 Durant Avenue and what is now the Toyota building, at 2110-12 Durant Avenue, illustrate this later change in design and focus. The Jodo Shinshu Center (to the east of the Toyota dealership at 2140 Durant Avenue) was built in 1930 as Howard Automotive Company, and is now a City of Berkeley landmark; it is also thematically associated with the automobile-oriented development south of Durant Avenue.

**Eastern Boundary**

The eastern boundary of the district is less clearly defined in terms of specific boundaries; there is a distinction between the commercial properties related to the Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor, and the University-oriented properties along Oxford/Fulton Street. The interface is not a straight north-south line, as there is a mix of historic properties that meld with recent modern developments and University owned buildings along this side of the downtown core. Commercial activities on Center Street are like a tail to the Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor, where they serve and link pedestrian traffic to and from the University campus to the BART station. The properties on the south side of Center Street between Shattuck Avenue and Oxford Street have responded to the pedestrian traffic with a mix of intense commercial uses over time. The same pattern has existed historically along University Avenue near the northerly entry to the University's formal horseshoe double entrance off Oxford Street. These commercial side streets linking Shattuck Avenue to the campus have played important roles in the vibrancy of the downtown commercial area, and are directly a result of the historic transit hub in the downtown.

Bancroft Way has played a lesser but persistent role as a pedestrian corridor linking the south University neighborhoods to the downtown core area. The ground floor of the Odd Fellows Temple building at 2288 Fulton Street has responded to this connection with ground floor commercial uses, but other properties along this link near Shattuck Avenue have less of a connection to the street, and their lack of pedestrian-oriented uses has resulted in this block being transitional rather than contributing to the core commercial area, not unlike Durant Avenue, Kittredge Street and Allston Way. Addison Street east of Berkeley Square has been characterized by more intense commercial activity in the past due to a more robust pedestrian connection to the campus, but this activity has been limited by expansion of University owned buildings to the west of Oxford Street on both sides of this block.

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Page 3 of 9 \* Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Sarah Winder \*Date 9/15/2015  Continuation  Update

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Because of the overlapping nature of uses in the eastern part of the downtown, the boundary of a potential historic district along the Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor, although distinct in terms of changing use, is not clear-cut in terms of an easily understood edge. The inclusion of areas east of Shattuck Avenue along Center Street and University Avenue is important to maintaining the larger commercial district as a unified place, and the south side of Center Street and both sides of University Avenue east of Shattuck Avenue therefore both have a direct relationship to the historic district.

#### **Northern Boundary**

Consensus has not established a clear northern limit to the community's vision of the historic downtown. It was suggested in the Downtown Area Plan (DAP) that University Avenue was the northerly edge of the possible historic district, inclusive of the historic properties along the south side of that street, but excluding the facing streetscape by omitting the continuation of the commercial buildings north of University Avenue.

The presence of large multi-story historic buildings like the 1908 Acheson Physicians' Building at 2135 University Avenue, the 1909 University Apartments at 2059 University Avenue, and the 1923 Nash Hotel at 2041 University Avenue on the north side of this thoroughfare, and an understanding of the framework of the early downtown that was centered on the transit yard, lends support to the argument that the blocks on the north side of University Avenue are thematically connected to the historic commercial core area. University Avenue itself does not appear to have historically created a boundary; instead, it crosses the "T" of the main downtown corridor. Many of the buildings along the north side of University Avenue have a physical dialogue with the buildings along the south side.

Along the block west of Shattuck Avenue along University Avenue, although containing two large historic hotel buildings, the contribution of properties to the district is less coherent, and many of these buildings have been modified at their storefronts and stripped of the original architectural features of their façades. The DAP identified the block on the north side of University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street as an "Outer Core" subarea. Although this block includes a number of older buildings, they do not appear to be bound to the historic fabric of the main core area in a primary way. The contemporary intrusion of McDonald's has disrupted this connection.

The south side of University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street, although separated from the early train yard at Berkeley Square, remains a cohesive grouping of substantial storefront buildings and helps anticipate the edge of the district when approaching from the west along University Avenue. Storefront and façade changes in recent times along this block disrupt the sense of historic place somewhat. In particular, the large 1912 brick Campanile Hotel at 2070 University Avenue, like the 1909 University Apartments across the street, has been stripped of its original façade and storefronts as a part of multiple remodeling projects, including one as late as 1998. Contemporary modifications along this block from Citibank to the building that now contains a Goodwill store at 2058 University Ave. cause discontinuity between the more unified historic character of the Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor and the University Avenue streetscape. However, the three buildings to the west, including the landmark Koerber Building and UC Theater, as well as the historically important Joseph Davis Building known as the Victoria in between, provide a strong argument for including this grouping within the proposed district boundaries.

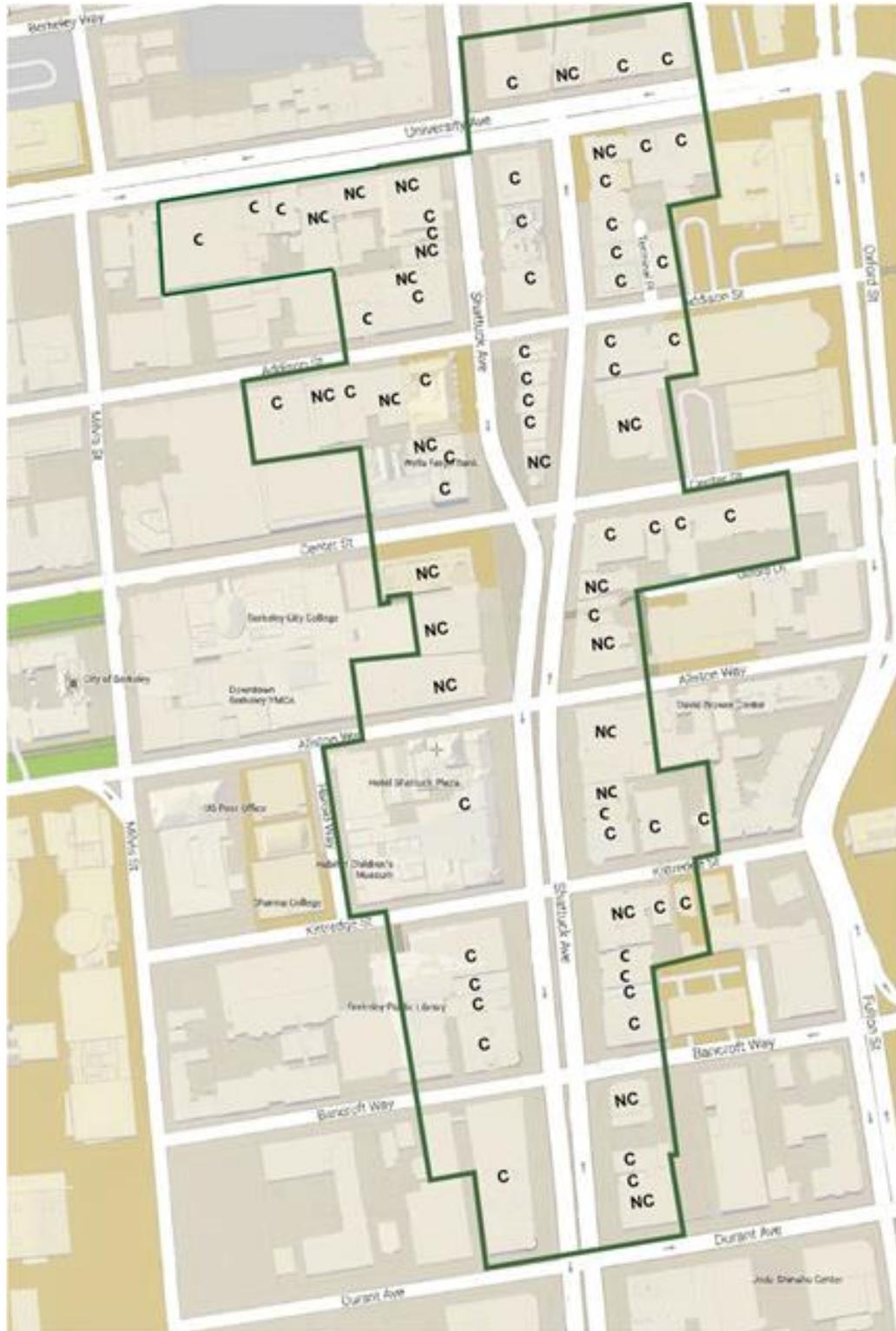
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Page 4 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Sarah Winder \*Date 9/15/2015  Continuation  Update

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The map below identifies individual properties as either Contributors (C) or Non-Contributors (NC).



Page 5 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Sarah Winder \*Date 9/15/2015  Continuation  Update

*(Continued from page 1, DPR523D, Section D5 Boundary Justification)*

The proposed Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District boundaries are delineated on the map on the previous page. The map shows both the study area generally defined as the shaded area and the proposed district boundaries in green. The proposed boundaries establish a district that is mostly within the original study area. Properties that had been included within the study area on Durant Avenue, Bancroft Way, Center Street, and Allston Way east and west of Shattuck Avenue were not included as they did not maintain a primary relationship with the commercial center during their historical development, or do not adequately represent the period of significance (1895-1958).

Properties on the north side of University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Walnut Street were included as they have a primary connection to the properties across University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Oxford Street. These properties include those that are a part of the Acheson Commons Project.

The area on the north side of University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street is outlined in blue, as this strip of buildings has the potential to contribute to the historic district, but needs further investigation, as this area has a lower level of integrity than the historic properties within the district boundaries. They were not included within the original study area, but were identified as a part of this investigation as having some historical significance to the greater commercial downtown area, not unlike those properties that are located further north along Shattuck Avenue beyond University Avenue. Five of the University Avenue properties on the south side of University Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street have a relationship to the larger context of University Avenue beyond, and are therefore also representative of the gateway corridor to the University Campus and Downtown Berkeley from the west. The five historic properties on the south side of University Avenue, given their close proximity to the Shattuck Avenue corridor, have been included within the district boundaries.

*(Continued from page 1, DPR523D, D10, Significance)*

The historic development that established the setting of Berkeley's downtown commercial core is directly related to the historic railroad yard at Berkeley Square that once extended from University Avenue to Allston Way. The commercial center of Berkeley grew around this early transit hub, a grouping of mostly commercial buildings that served, and continues to serve, as a destination for commerce-related activities for the larger community of Berkeley. This pattern of development has existed from the early years of the twentieth century to the present, and today's urban setting remains a visual and functional link to Berkeley's history and its story of community evolution.

Berkeley was officially incorporated as a town in 1878. Several patterns of development remain evident in the downtown, however, that reflect how Berkeley was settled.

The important role that rail transportation played in the development of the East Bay as a whole remains only vaguely understandable to most residents and visitors to Berkeley. Unique not to just Berkeley, trains directly influenced the growth of the communities within the counties of Alameda and Contra Costa in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Early land promoters and developers knew that in order for the town surrounding the university to flourish, there would need to be a dependable railway link south to Oakland, and reliable ferry service across the bay to San Francisco.

When the new campus opened in 1873, the majority of students commuted to Berkeley from nearby Oakland via the Telegraph Avenue horsecar line, which dropped students off at the southern end of campus. Within a few years, access to Berkeley from neighboring cities like Oakland was provided by steam dummy train (a steam engine enclosed in a wooden box structure that resembled a railroad coach and popular in the United States between the 1830s and the 1860s).

Initially, the idea to provide a direct route from Berkeley to San Francisco can be credited to Hiram Graves and Henry Durant. In 1874, Durant and Graves formed the Berkeley Railroad and Ferry Company, with the idea to run a rail line down University Avenue to a pier in the small waterfront community of Ocean View, where a ferry service would shuttle passengers across the bay. The duo raised enough capital for the ferry services, but fell short of their goal to construct the rail line. Leland Stanford then offered to construct a line into Berkeley as a part of the Central Pacific East Bay network expansion.

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By the time of the incorporation of the Town of Berkeley in 1878, Shattuck's Road had become Shattuck Avenue and it had been extended northward to Rose Street. Shattuck, along with his neighbor James Barker, provided the Central Pacific with a free right-of-way through their lands along Shattuck Avenue. They also donated land for a station and rail yard to be located between what is now Center Street and University Avenue, where Shattuck Avenue forks into two branches around an island intersected by Addison Street. Today, the northern rectangular portion of this island is known as Shattuck Square, and the southernmost wedge-shaped portion is known as Berkeley Square. Shattuck also provided the Central Pacific with an award of \$20,000 in cash to entice the railroad to build a branch line from Oakland to central Berkeley.

Restaurants, boarding houses, groceries, laundries, and other commercial enterprises with amenities a student could need began to locate along the route connecting Oakland with Berkeley. Professors and other employees of the University began to purchase and build upon the lots immediately surrounding the campus. This residential influx led to more small businesses being located in the immediate area surrounding the campus, to provide residents with easy access to everyday necessities and amenities.

Shattuck Avenue, with the railroad station quickly became both the commercial and public center of Berkeley, so that by the time of the city's incorporation in 1878 Shattuck Avenue was already considered to be the "downtown." The unusual width of Shattuck Avenue is a direct reflection of its history, as it needed to be wide enough to accommodate the train station, freight yards, and tracks, as well as pedestrian and horse traffic. Shattuck Avenue has always been associated with Berkeley's central core, as its transit and commercial business district.

By 1894, Berkeley's downtown commercial area had grown significantly. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map from that year shows that commercial uses were concentrated along Shattuck Avenue, with dense development between University Avenue and Center Street. The businesses stretched south to Allston Way. Additional businesses wrapped the corner of Shattuck Avenue and extended eastward on Center Street. The second commercial district at Shattuck Avenue and Dwight Way remained small however, and was separated from the downtown core by small scale residential development.

Commercial buildings were generally one and two stories of wood frame construction with small rectangular footprints, but by 1895 more substantial multi-story structures began to appear that were of brick construction. The majority of buildings directly abutted neighboring structures.

The businesses met Berkeley residents' general needs and sold merchandise such as harnesses, carpets, paint, stationary, produce, groceries, fruit, meat, baked goods, drugs, and cigars. In addition, barbers, cobblers, and blacksmiths offered their services. South of Downtown in the still separate Dwight Way commercial area, the types of shops and businesses were similar: barbers, bakeries, drugs, dry goods, and a billiards hall.

An electric line had been completed, linking West Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland in 1901; another was installed on University Avenue in 1902. However, the Key Route established in 1903 and the Southern Pacific established in 1911 were the two most important developments in the electric trolley lines connecting Berkeley to the greater Bay Area.

In 1903, the Key System, a line of electric trains connecting Bay Area cities, extended its line to Downtown Berkeley via Shattuck Avenue, reinforcing the street's position as the city's commercial center. The Key System Railway and Ferry (Key Route) was a linking of railway travel to the trestle and ferry slips, and resembled a key extending into the Bay connecting Berkeley and Oakland to San Francisco.

The San Francisco Earthquake in the early hours of April 18, 1906 shook the entire Bay Area, although the subsequent devastating fire was limited to San Francisco. As a result of the earthquake, many people and businesses moved—some temporarily and others permanently—to communities such as Berkeley and Oakland. On April 17, 1906, Berkeley's population was around 26,000 residents. One year later, the population of Berkeley had ballooned to nearly 38,000, largely due to the San Franciscans who had relocated after the earthquake.

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Page 7 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Sarah Winder \*Date 9/15/2015  Continuation  Update

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The Southern Pacific Railroad constructed a new station for Berkeley in 1908. When it was constructed on what is now Berkeley Square, Center Street was still the main thoroughfare between the station and the University. Both the train station and the park that occupied the Shattuck Square block to the north were a gift to the City of Berkeley from Southern Pacific Railroad President Edward Harriman. Harriman gave them to the City after UC Berkeley President Benjamin Ide Wheeler and local poet Charles Keeler stated at a dinner that the previous extant station was unworthy of Berkeley, the "Athens of the West." The park adjacent to the Southern Pacific station was closed in 1926 when Shattuck Square was developed, and the Southern Pacific station was demolished in 1938 when the Mason-McDuffie Company developed Berkeley Square.

The success of the Key System spurred competition. The Southern Pacific Railroad began modernization efforts to move toward electric railways. Between the years 1909 and 1915, the company constructed a system of street railway lines throughout the city. The Southern Pacific announced that it would cut commute times and implement a "flyer" with only a few stops between the Oakland pier and central Berkeley. In 1911, Southern Pacific spent one million dollars converting all steam trains to the electric "Red Car" line. Steam trains were abandoned and the new Red Cars began to run along Shattuck Avenue, with new lines on Ellsworth and in North Berkeley, including the Ninth Street Loop.

On the 1911 Sanborn map, many commercial spaces were listed only as shops, without specifying the types of goods sold; however, identified businesses included: restaurants, creameries, meat shops, banks, drugstores, hardware stores, and laundries. Berkeley's downtown entrepreneurs offered residents and visitors a variety of services and products including: drugs, restaurants, baked goods, photography shops/studios, hardware, billiards, banks, paints and wallpaper, laundries, electrical shops, bicycle repair, and pool halls. The growing popularity of the automobile was also evident in repair shops, auto sales, vulcanizing shops, and garages. Additional types of commercial enterprises in Downtown Berkeley included hotels, department stores and furniture stores. The corner of Shattuck Avenue and Allston Way was selected as the site of the Shattuck Hotel in 1907. The hotel opened on December 15th, 1910, and was immediately recognized as the finest hotel in Berkeley.

On September 17, 1923, a major fire swept down the hills toward the university campus and the downtown section. Around 640 structures (584 of them residential) burned before a late afternoon sea breeze halted the fire's progress, allowing firefighters to put it out. The exact cause of the fire was never determined, although it began in Wildcat Canyon, east of the ridgeline of the Berkeley Hills. It was spurred on by the wind, and swept through the La Loma Park and Northside residential neighborhoods of Berkeley.

Reconstruction following the fire ensued immediately, with the City issuing building permits at a rapid pace. Reconstruction of the burned-out areas occurred alongside new commercial construction in the downtown core. The 1927-built Chamber of Commerce Building (now Wells Fargo) was the City's first skyscraper, and remains an icon along Shattuck Avenue today.

During the Depression, the Key Route system was reorganized under a holding company and renamed the Railway Equipment & Realty Co. In 1938, the official name finally became the Key System. The opening of the Bay Bridge in 1936, the last hurdle for personal automobile ownership and commuting in the East Bay, directly resulted in abandonment of ferry service by the Southern Pacific Company in 1939. The Key System would continue to offer ferry services between the shores of the San Francisco Bay until 1958.

The Southern Pacific station was demolished in 1938, when the Mason-McDuffie Company developed Berkeley Square in an attempt to recreate the success of a similar endeavor in 1926 with the Shattuck Square Island. Southern Pacific established their new station in one of the newly constructed buildings on the island in 1939, as a companion to their office located in on the adjacent buildings. Berkeley Square Island, known as the "new transportation center of the community" was comprised of four buildings which divide Shattuck Avenue into two branches at University Avenue.

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Berkeley's next big growth after the Depression occurred with the entrance of the United States into World War II. Large numbers of people moved to the Bay Area to work in the many war industries such as the Kaiser Shipyards in nearby Richmond. A relatively stagnant population of the 1930s gave way to an explosion in the population in the early 1940s, as Berkeley increased in population by 40 percent. The Bay Area had entered its second "Gold Rush," only this time the rush was for government and military contracts and technological advancements.

The immediate post-World War II years brought moderate growth to Berkeley, as events on the University of California campus began to build up to the recognizable activism of the 1960s and 1970s. Today, Berkeley is strongly identified with the rapid social changes, civic unrest, and political upheaval that characterized this time period. By comparison, the 1950s were fairly calm.

In the late 1950s, Downtown Berkeley began to stagnate with the decline of its focus as a major mass transit hub. The Greyhound station and the local bus lines provided transit options, but the automobile continued to lead Berkeley to a more suburban commercial environment. After World War II a steady rise in population continued, as people returned or relocated to Berkeley from war-time duties.

The evolution of transportation in Downtown Berkeley responded to the increase in population and expanded use of the automobile. Shattuck Avenue, as the commercial center of Berkeley, remained the main thoroughfare. The discontinued use of local streetcars in 1948, followed by commuter trains in 1958, indicated that the nature of transportation had shifted again and now focused on individual, rather than mass transit. 1958 signals the end of downtown Berkeley's historic era, as new forms of transportation and the eventual positioning of Shattuck Avenue's downtown leg as a primary transit hub of BART began Downtown Berkeley's modern era.

### **Integrity**

Often in a commercial historic district, there is a strong visual presence of historic materials and design at the upper façades, and major alterations at the ground floor storefronts. The ground floor alterations can cause a building to lose its ability to convey its history on its own. However, if the tenant improvements are framed by the historic fabric, and the historic design of the upper façades remains readable, the altered building façade might retain adequate integrity to bridge the streetscape in the larger context.

In certain instances, the upper façade may be completely covered with stucco, brick or wood cladding, but the basic framework of the historic building may continue to exist. During the late 1930s and into the 1940s much of this type of renovation was under an FHA loan program that was intended to "modernize" main street downtowns by hiding or removing historicist detailing in favor of simple clean lines and surfaces in keeping with modern trends in architectural design. Some of these mid-century remodeled buildings have established architectural significance in their own right, while others lack distinction and are vernacular in implementation. These buildings are problematic when assessing their integrity individually and as a part of the district as a whole. If the remodeled façade was built during the period of significance for the district, and has a distinctive sense of quality to the design, then the new façade would be considered a character-defining feature of the building that would enable eligibility as a Contributor to the potential historic district. For situations where the cladding hides the original façade, further investigation is necessary to determine the degree of design integrity. In some cases, if the building itself is integral to the fabric of the historic district, and the details of the early façade can be recovered or replicated from detailed historic photographs, then the property might be considered a Contributor at a later point in time.

Critical elements that convey the continuity of historic design include the proportion of walls to windows, the rhythm and placement of windows within the larger configuration, the wall materials, and the detailing of cornices, trim, and other decoration. If the scale and materials of the ground-floor storefronts maintain the scale and palette of the overall historic composition, or are easily reversible or can be replicated from adequate historic documentation, the building can be considered to have adequate integrity to serve as a Contributor to a district.

Page 9 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned recorder) Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District

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(Continued from page 1, DPR523D, B12 References)

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