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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

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**For Committee Discussion/  
Majority Recommendation**  
MAY 19, 2016

# 2067 UNIVERSITY AVENUE

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW

**Design Review #DRCP2015-0023 to demolish an existing one-story commercial building and allow construction of a new seven-story mixed use building with 50 apartments and 15,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space.**

### **I. Introduction**

This project is located on the north side of University Avenue, between Milvia Street and Shattuck Avenue. This parcel is located in the C-DMU, Commercial Downtown Mixed Use, zoning district, in the Outer Core area.

The application includes a request to demolish the existing non-residential building on the parcel and it is over 40 years old. The project and a Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) was referred to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) on May 5, 2016. The LPC took no action.

This project is before the Design Review Committee (DRC) for Preliminary Design Review.

### **II. Background**

This project proposes to construct a seven-story mixed-use building with 50 apartments, including 38 one-bedroom apartments (two that include one bedroom and one office), and 12 two-bedroom apartments. The proposal also includes 15,000 square feet for a commercial restaurant space, and 48 secure interior bicycle parking spaces on the ground floor.

### III. Project Setting

#### A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

This site is located within, and is surrounded by, the C-DMU – Downtown Mixed Use Commercial – zoning district. The parcel itself is in the Outer Core Area, and the parking lot, north of the parcel, is in the Buffer Area. The C-DMU Core area is located on the south side of University Avenue, across the street from the proposed project. The project is adjacent to commercial buildings on the east and west, as well as across University Avenue. The project site is adjacent to a parking lot on the north. See Table 1 below for more detailed Land Use Information.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



**Table 1: Land Use Information**

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Restaurant	C-DMU Outer Core	Downtown
Surrounding Properties	North	Parking Lot	C-DMU Buffer	Downtown
	South	Commercial, Mixed Use	C-DMU Core	Downtown
	East	Commercial, Mixed Use	C-DMU Outer Core	Downtown
	West	Commercial	C-DMU Outer Core	Downtown

**Table 4: Development Standards**

Standard BMC Sections 23E.68.070-080		Existing	Addition/ (Reduction)	Proposed Total	Permitted/ Required
Lot Area (sq. ft.)		5520			n/a
Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)		4,862		31,977	n/a
Floor Area Ratio		0.9		5.8	n/a
Dwelling Units	Total	0		50	n/a
	Affordable	0		4	n/a
Building Height	Maximum (ft.)	23'		73' 2"	75' w/ UP
	Stories	1		7	-
Building Setbacks (ft.)	Front	0		0	0-5
	Rear	0		8	0-5
	Left Side	0		0-7	0-5
	Right Side	0		0-7	0-5
Lot Coverage (%)		88		92	100
Usable Open Space (sq. ft.)		0		4,000	80/Unit 4,000
Parking	Automobile	0		0	1/unit 19
	Bicycle	0		48	1/2000 sq ft commercial

## IV. Project Description

### A. Requested Use Permits

- Use Permit for demolition of building
- Use Permit for Mixed Use building
- Use Permit for parking waiver

### B. Density Bonus Information

- 37 base units, 4 VLI units , 13 density bonus units, total 50 units
- Waivers requested: The applicant requests to accommodate the 13 density bonus units with a combination of a height waiver and side yard setback modification.

## V. Design Review Guidelines

Following are several key guidelines in the Downtown Design Guidelines which relate closely to this project.

### ***Frontages, Setbacks, and Heights***

- Maintain a continuous zero-setback “build-to-line” at the ground floor at the edge of all Downtown streets where commercial and higher levels of activity is anticipated.
- Consider massing alternatives that would reduce shadow impacts on streets and relate new construction to the scale of nearby buildings, such as use of upper-story setbacks.
- Maintain and reinforce Downtown’s historic street-wall at the property line. Upper floor setbacks are desirable above 60 feet.
- Consider how the building’s form and orientation can take advantage of sun and shade to appropriately heat and cool the building.
- Respect the height of neighboring buildings, and provide a sense of continuity and enclosure which avoids abrupt changes in height.

### ***Open Spaces***

- Provide new open spaces which are deliberately planned, designed, and located to be usable.
- Configure new buildings so they enframe and define open spaces, and so building inhabitants face and observe the open spaces.
- Use drought-tolerant plants that require little or no irrigation, and avoid plants that require pesticides or high levels of maintenance, such as is recommended in the “Bay-Friendly Basics Landscape Checklist.” Consider using landscaping to cool open spaces and building air intake manifolds.
- Consider ways to re-use rainwater for landscape irrigation, or cooling fountains or “water walls.” Retain rainwater to promote infiltration and slow site run-off.
- Encourage green roofs, especially green roofs that can also be used as outdoor amenities by building residents.

## ***BUILDING DESIGN***

### ***Facades***

- Reflect and reinforce the scale, massing, proportions, rhythm and attention to detailing which are established by the facades of Landmark and Significant buildings.
- Except for recessed entries, a majority of the storefront should be at the property line, and other recessed portions should not detract from streetwall continuity.
- Incorporate elements which break up façade planes and create a visual play of light and shadow. Avoid long, uninterrupted horizontal surfaces. Consider the use of bay windows, balconies and architectural projections.
- Vertical divisions of ground and upper floors should be consistent. Generally maintain a cornice that projects horizontally between the ground floor (and its mezzanines) and upper stories.
- Architecturally distinguish the ground floor from the upper façade, to form a visual base for the building. Create an intimate scale for the pedestrian environment.
- Architecturally distinguish the upper façade from the top of the façade to provide a visual termination for the building. Generally maintain a cornice that projects horizontally at the top of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, or near the top of the buildings that are less tall.
- Maintain the typical rhythm of structural bays and enframed storefronts of 15-30 feet spacing at ground level, in order to enhance visual continuity with existing buildings and pedestrian scale. Curtain walls, if used, should be designed with rhythm, patterns and modulation to be visually interesting.
- Articulate side and rear facades in the manner compatible with the design of the front façade. Avoid large blank wall surfaces on side and rear facades which are visible from public areas.
- Include architectural features such as awnings, canopies, and recessed entries that can protect pedestrians from inclement weather.
- Window should comprise 25-50% of upper facades visible from public areas, and should reflect the rhythm, scale, proportion, and detailing of upper windows of Landmark and Significant buildings.
- Generally accompany windows with light shelves, overhangs or deep recesses to shade the window during the summer which providing solar access into the building during the winter.
- Photovoltaic panels should either be integrated within the overall composition of facades, such as by serving as awnings or light shelves, or they should be screened from view.
- Frame windows and use light shelves and other articulation to emulate the rhythm, scale, and reveal (shadow) or traditional buildings.
- Consider the design of rooftops that may be viewed from above. Reduce glare and make rooftop equipment more attractive.

### **Roof Forms**

- Provide a termination to the top of the building in a way that complements and enhances the character of the building and the Downtown.

### **Materials**

- Use high quality, durable materials which enhance the building and convey a sense of permanence.
- Materials should be compatible with those used on nearby Landmark and Significant buildings, and should have a similar level of detailing
- Use high-quality detailing for new and replacement materials.
- Use materials which are easily cleaned, and will not be permanently damaged by graffiti.

A complete set of the downtown design guidelines can be found online at:

<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=14260>

## **VI. Issues and Analysis**

### **A. Design Review Issues:**

**Neighborhood Context / Building Height** Proposed building is seven stories.

This project site is within the Downtown Plan Area and in a vibrant active area with varied building heights, including the landmark Koerber Building across University Avenue mid-block.

**Setbacks / Massing** Proposed massing has a strong street wall presence at the property line on University Avenue with recessed entrances for the main residential lobby and an adjacent café tenant space. The rear elevation is set back 8' from the north property line and allows for two garden units on the ground level. The massing is set in on both sides in the middle, allowing for light and air to the units in the center of the plan.

**Encroachments/ Bay Design** Four vertical bays are proposed on the University Avenue elevation. They extend from the second level to the seventh, starting at the approximately 14' above the sidewalk and out 1'9" into the Public Right-of-way. An encroachment permit from Public Works is required for the proposed encroachment.

**Storefront Design** Ground floor storefront design uses the larger floor area for additional glazing and transom elements, and extends similar proportions as the storefront openings adjacent to the east.

**Materials** Exterior materials proposed include a rain screen cladding, painted exterior cement plaster, Aluminum storefront windows, aluminum residential windows with corresponding spandrel panels, and frameless glass railings at the roof deck and a frameless glass cornice below.

**Open Space Design** Main open space for the residents is located on the roof with some smaller individual open space on the podium level in the side step backs and in the rear on the ground level.

**Bike Parking** is located on the ground floor and accessed from an exterior door on the University Avenue frontage.

**B. Issues for Discussion:**

- Massing
- Bay Design
- Façade Design
- Materials
- Open Space

**VII. Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Committee discuss the issues outlined above and give the applicant feedback on the building details and material palette for the next review.

**Attachments:**

1. Project Plans, received May 9, 2016.
2. Correspondence Received

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