

Revised and Updated - May 22, 2017

3031 ADELINE ST. - BERKELEY, CA - PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND NARRATIVE

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION:

The site is located along Adeline Street between Emerson St. to the North and Essex St. to the South and comprises 12,257 SF. The East rear portion of the site is bound by a residential district with single family homes, duplexes, and multi-unit apartment buildings. To the West is the Ashby Bart Station, a major transportation hub in the area. The recently constructed Ed Roberts Campus lies to the South and is connected to Bart below grade.

Adjacent to the property are two existing buildings; 3051 Adeline, built in 1922; and 3049 Adeline built in 1928, as The Chapel of the Flowers, which functioned as a mortuary in the 30's 40's and 50'. The buildings were later converted to commercial and partial residential use. In 1976 Marmot Mountain Works, a retailer of mountain climbing and hiking equipment leased and operated the space until it closed in 2012. Currently, the 3049 Adeline previous chapel space is occupied by Trackers Earth, a popular outdoor education program and retail store for hiking equipment. Zing, a new café with outdoor seating at the corner of Adeline and Essex, has joined the tenant list. Improvement applications are under review for a new 1,200 SF restaurant at 1909 Essex, and a Conditional Use application to convert the offices on the second floor of 3051 Adeline to residential studio apartments is scheduled for Zoning Adjustment Board review.

Recently approved and landmarked, the structures at 3049-3051 Adeline have been recognized for their significant historical value to the neighborhood and City of Berkeley. The project sponsor, Maxaco LLC, has been diligently working for the past three years to preserve and rehabilitate these structures through adaptive reuse, completion of extensive deferred maintenance, and abatement of existing code violations. These repairs and upgrades are being done concurrently with the proposal for a new building at 3031 Adeline, which is the subject of this application, design documents, and narrative.

1.1 TOPOGRAPHY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The site slopes gently East to West towards Adeline St, and is currently used as a parking lot, with the exception of "Flaco's", a small freestanding café-lunch restaurant, occupying the corner of Adeline and Emerson Streets. A narrow driveway providing access to 3049 Adeline, adjoins the site to the South.

A few small, poorly maintained trees line Adeline St. and two larger trees are along Emerson St. (See Site Plan and Survey Sheets C-1 A-1.0) The majority of the 12,257 SF lot is covered with asphalt paving draining West.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK AND PROGRAM:

This submission proposes a new five story mixed use commercial and residential building to replace the parking lot on the corner of Adeline and Emerson. The East (rear) part of the site is designed for 38 mostly stacked parking spaces intended for the residents of the building. The ground level fronting Adeline and Emerson includes retail and commercial spaces intended for shops, restaurants, and general pedestrian oriented activities. Sidewalks are designed to include planters and outdoor seating areas covered by a continuous canopy surrounding the building.

The upper 4 levels comprise 42 residential units descending from 5 stories at the corner to to 3 stories at the end of each wing to respect the height of the existing buildings on both Adeline and Emerson. As the floors step down, landscaped terraces and private balconies are created to allow for abundant light and air for the residents and neighbors.

The central portion of the site features a large landscaped common space that parallels a small court at the rear of 3049/3051 Adeline, thereby creating a larger visual open space for the entire inner block. The residential lobby in proximity to the corner, can be readily and safely accessed from Emerson St. or the parking area.

2.1 PROPOSED PROJECT: The current proposed project includes Density Bonus and Use Permit under the C-SA District to modify Development Standards as follows:

- **Permitted under current zoning (Base Plan)16 Units**
- **Proposed Density Bonus..... 2 Units**
- **Use Permit under C-SA District..... 24 Units**
- **Total Units Proposed..... 42 Units**

2.2 PROJECT SUMMARY:

- **Lot Area12,257 SF**
- **First Floor Parking..... 6,170 SF**
- **First Floor Commercial..... 4,324 SF (Excluding Lobby)**
- **Subtotal First Floor..... 11,322 SF**

- **Second Floor Residential..... 8,687 SF**
- **Third Floor Residential..... 8,687 SF**
- **Fourth Floor Residential..... 7,102 SF**
- **Fifth Floor Residential..... 6,550 SF**

- **Total Building Floor Area39,260 SF (Excluding Parking)**
- **Total Number of Units42 Units**
- **Total Parking Spaces.....38 Spaces**

- **Permitted Lot Coverage..... 45%**
- **Proposed Lot Coverage.....92%**
- **Proposed FAR.....2.96 (4.0 Max)**
- **Permitted Height Limit3 stories – 36 ft.**
- **Proposed Height.....5 stories - 55 ft.**

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN CONSIDERATION

The proposed building is designed in a contextual contemporary style and is articulated both vertically and horizontally to reflect the uses inherent in the project. Living room volumes are projected forward, while bedroom areas are recessed and painted a dark blue color. Balconies are expressed as accent elements with glass, wood or metal finishes. Throughout the building, various areas are accented with color or other materials to provide richness and variety.

The massing starts with a 5 story glazed corner and progressively steps down to 3 stories at the end of each wing to respect the scale of the former Chapel of the Flowers at 3049 Adeline and the residential buildings on Emerson St. The fifth floor is set back from the floors below and is protected by a continuous horizontal trellis to allow for planting and shade for the upper level units. All construction systems and materials are carefully selected to meet green building standards. Ceiling heights are 9 ft. rather than the usual 8ft., allowing for more natural light and ventilation.

A continuous metal canopy projects out over the street level sidewalk and includes lighting and signage for the commercial tenants and the residential entry lobby. The project sponsor intends to lease the ground level commercial spaces to cafes restaurants, shops and other pedestrian oriented uses. The intent here is to create a series of community activities linking Bart, The Ed Roberts Campus, and the renovated historic structures at 3049-3051 Adeline with the retail and theater district beyond.

4.0 NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

The architect and the project sponsor presented a preliminary scheme at a well-attended neighborhood meeting held at the chapel space (3049 Adeline) on April 24, 2014. The original design included a 6 story building with a total of 50 units as submitted to Mr. Greg Powell for initial review. Based on neighborhood and Planning Department comments, the project sponsor decided to reduce the height of the building from 6 to 5 stories and the density from 50 down to 42 units. The current submission includes this revised and reduced design as a significant mitigation effort to bring the project into a better contextual relationship with the neighborhood.

Furthermore, and in response to additional comments from Mr. Greg Powell, the building mass was stepped down to 3 stories to respect adjoining buildings along Adeline and Emerson Streets. At early meetings in 2012 and 2013 with Economic Development and Planning Departments, the project received positive comments and important advice for linking its uses to existing commercial, community, and theater functions.

In September 2014, the architect and project sponsor met with Berkeley Design Associates, a highly respected group of architects, planners and developers providing important advice and feedback on architecture and urban design projects in the City. Following a comprehensive presentation, the proposed design received wide support and very positive comments. Additional neighborhood and community organization meetings are being scheduled as the project proceeds through the planning process.

5.0 HEIGHT AND DENSITY AND ZONING CONSIDERATIONS:

Although the project has been reduced in height from 6 to 5 stories and from 50 to 42 units, additional permits are required to allow for increased lot coverage, height (number of stories) and reduced setback. There are several important reasons why the Use Permit should be granted based on the following findings:

- 5.1 In our meetings with Economic Development and Planning representatives, the project sponsor outlined the need to build a new structure with enough units to provide a source of revenue to restore, upgrade and enhance the historically landmarked adjoining buildings. Based on expenditures to date, the projected budget for renovating 3049 / 3051 Adeline and 1915 Essex is in excess of \$2,000,000. This figure is likely to rise with new tenant improvements, ADA, and life safety upgrades. The permitted lot coverage, 3 story height limit, and low density in the current zoning for the property, do not provide the necessary number of units and income required to construct the new building and renovate the existing historic structures
- 5.2 It is critical to view both new construction and renovation work as part of an overall urban improvement strategy for the block and the neighborhood. The recommended 3 story height limit would provide 16 units or less, rendering the overall project financially unfeasible and impacting the scope of the renovation. The current 45% lot coverage and low height limit would result in a suburban massing prototype characterized by a single 3 story building surrounded by a large setbacks; clearly inconsistent with the design and character of the neighborhood .
- 5.3 Adeline is a very wide street and the 5 story massing is primarily located along the corner. The upper floor is set back does not impact the lower buildings in the vicinity. It is important to note that both Adeline and Shattuck are wide streets characterized by many 5 story buildings and even taller. The current design fits well in the neighborhood and is contextually sensitive to its surroundings.
- 5.4 Although lot coverage is exceeded, a substantial portion of the floor area is devoted to open space; including a large central court, terraced areas at the ends of the stepped wings, and ample decks set back from the residential buildings to the rear. The current design proposal features a significant percentage of public and private open space exceeding zoning requirement.
- 5.5 Regarding the rear yard setback, the ground level parking extends up to the property line, but above podium level residential units step progressively from 10 ft. to 20 ft., thereby exceeding required setbacks and respecting neighborhood scale.

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6.0 REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR USE PERMIT APPROVAL (Sect. 23E.52.090)

6.1 Be compatible with the purposes of the building:

The proposed residential and commercial uses, the design of the building, the provision of both private and common open space are compatible with the purposes of the District. The project replaces an incompatible asphalt parking lot with a new structure that links various pedestrian oriented uses in the District.

6.2 Be compatible in design and character with the district and residential neighborhoods:

The proposed building is designed in a contemporary contextual style. The ends of each wing step down from 5 to 3 stories to acknowledge and respect the scale of the existing historic structures and residential buildings. Various architectural elements and materials are scaled to the proportions of adjoining buildings. Ground level retail areas are articulated with continuous canopy and outdoor seating areas, enhancing pedestrian scale and urban experience.

6.3 Not result in the domination of one type of commercial/residential use:

The unit mix includes a variety of unit types and sizes appropriate for families, couples, and single individuals. The commercial space along Adeline and Emerson can be subdivided into a number of sizes to attract a variety of retail, restaurant, and commercial tenants. None of the proposed uses will dominate the area.

7.0 REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR RESIDENTIAL USE (Sect. 23E.52.070)

7.1 To encourage utilization of public transportation:

Given the proximity of the site to Adeline St. and Ashby Bart Station, public transportation is readily available for residents and visitors, including bus, rail, shuttle, and bicycle. The entire area functions as a transit village where reduced parking requirements are justified, especially for the smaller Studio and Junior One-Bedroom units. The project sponsor has expressed willingness to abide by a TDM plan, including provision of additional bicycle spaces, bus passes for residents, zip car parking, and other such mitigations.

7.2 To permit consistency of building setbacks: The reduced setbacks would further the purpose of allowing additional housing to be built, which in turn will allow more revenue for the City's Housing Trust Fund, without impacting existing buildings in the vicinity.

7.3 To facilitate construction of affordable housing:

The project sponsor will comply with required percentage of affordable units as per guidelines of Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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7.4 Lot Coverage: The project sponsor believes that the proposed lot coverage of 45% is very limiting and would render the project financially unfeasible. By increasing the lot coverage as shown in the attached documents, additional housing units can be provided, thereby increasing revenue for the City's Housing Trust Fund. Under the existing lot coverage, the resulting project would have 26 less units and would reduce the project's contribution towards the City's fair share housing goal established by ABAG.

8.0 CONCLUSION:

For over four years now, the project sponsor has been striving to provide new life to the existing historically valuable structures by renovating tenant spaces, improving accessibility, abating existing code violations, and establishing a maintenance program for both interior and exterior. A new group of tenants has joined the building, including; Zing Café at the corner of Adeline and Essex; Trackers Earth, a very popular children's educational organization; and Terra's Temple, a successful wellness center. The neighbors have welcomed the new arrivals and are excited about future prospects for the building.

This renovation and adaptive reuse work are integrally linked to the feasibility of the new building at 3031 Adeline. If we view the Ashby Bart area as a transit village with public spaces and transit oriented development, the proposed project delivers an ideal mix of uses, properly articulated architecture, and a financial base that allows the existing buildings to receive the improvements they deserve and the new building to provide much needed housing within walking distance to public transportation.

The project sponsor is committed to reach out to neighbors and all concerned citizen groups. As a result of the first neighborhood meeting, the height and density of the building were reduced from 6 to 5 stories and from 50 to 42 units; a significant mitigation measure. Further outreach events are planned as this application proceeds through planning review. The project sponsor is hereby requesting approval of the permits to increase height and lot coverage, and in so doing, allow this very special project and the area surrounding the Ashby Bart Station to succeed and realize its full potential.

