



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

**For Committee Discussion/
Majority Recommendation**
MAY 19, 2011

ACHESON COMMONS

PREVIEW

Landmark Referral: 1987 Shattuck Avenue, 2111-2113 University Avenue, 2125-2145 University

Design Review: 1922 Walnut Street, 1930 Walnut Street

Design Review #10-3000069 to rehabilitate and construct new buildings within the existing footprint of the McFarlane Building (1979-87 Shattuck), and the Ace Hardware Building (2145 University Avenue); to rehabilitate the facades of the Acheson Physicians Building (2125 University Avenue); and the relocation or demolition of the buildings at 1922 & 1930 Walnut Street to allow the construction of a new mixed use building.

I. Introduction

This project is located on the north side of University Avenue, between Walnut Street and Shattuck Avenue, and is in the General Commercial (C-1) zoning district. It is before the Design Review Committee (DRC) for a Preview. The DRC is reviewing the proposed new building on the northeast corner of the block (Building C), as well as forwarding advisory comments to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) in conjunction with a Structural Alteration Permit to rehabilitate and/or expand City of Berkeley Landmark buildings (Buildings A, B & D).

The project was before the LPC as an Informational Preview at their May 05, 2011 meeting. Summary recommendations from that meeting are attached in this Staff Report for your reference. It was also previewed at the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) at their May 12, 2011 meeting. The correspondence given to ZAB for this meeting is linked here:

http://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Planning_and_Development/Level_3_-_ZAB/2011-05-12_ZAB_ATT6_2133%20University_Correspondence%20Received.pdf

II. Background

The project proposes to redevelop the historic Acheson Block and make alterations to three landmarked buildings: 1) MacFarlane Building, 2) Acheson Physicians Building, and 3) Sills Grocery & Hardware (currently occupied by Berkeley Ace Hardware). The

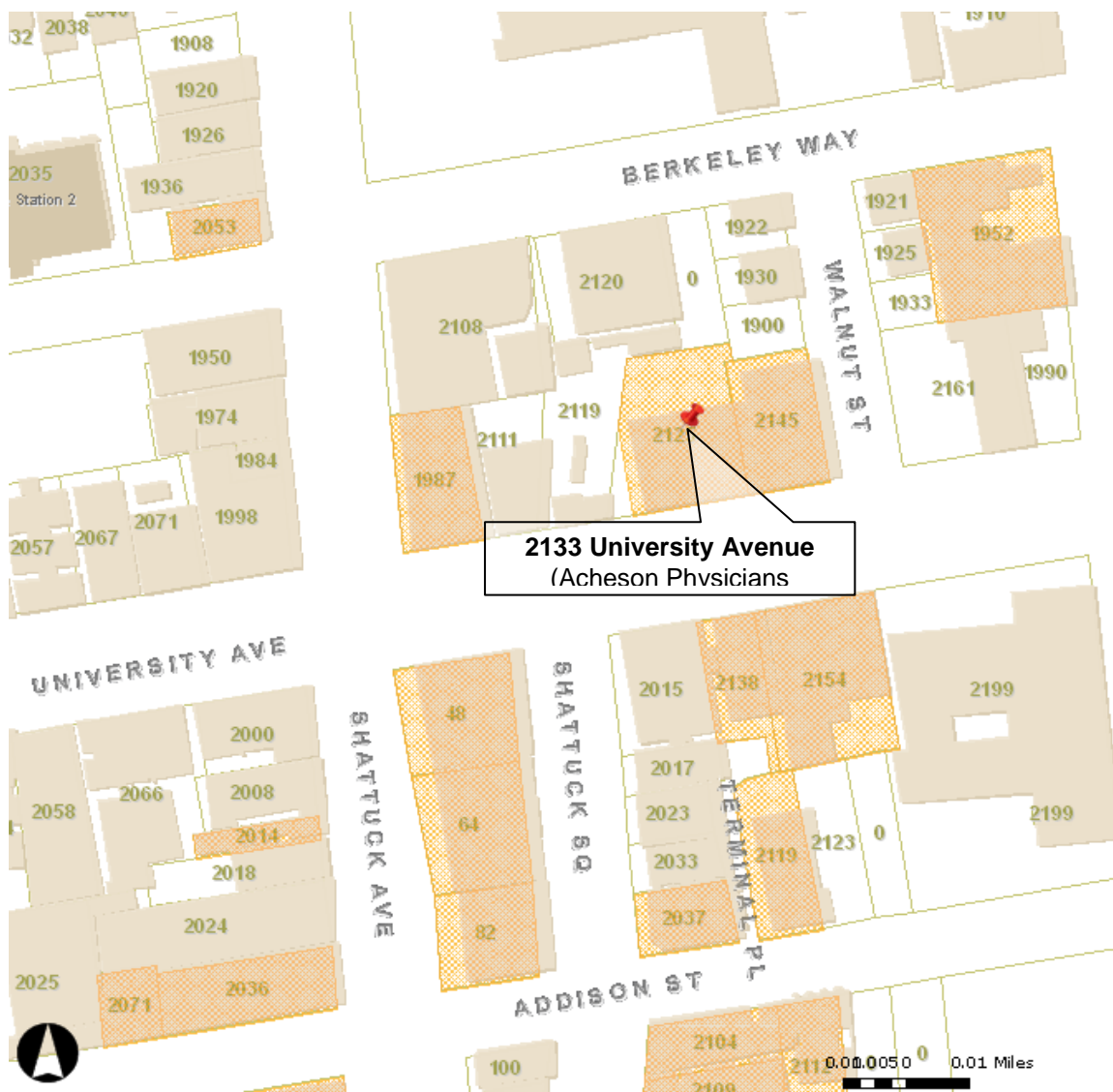
two brown shingle multi-unit residential buildings on Walnut Street are listed in the State Historic Resources Inventory (SHRI) and are to be either relocated or demolished. No work will be done to the existing Bachenheimer Building (also owned by the development entity) and the Crepes A-Go-Go building located in the middle of the site.

III. Project Setting

A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

This parcel is in the General Commercial (C-1) district, consistent with the parcels to the north, east and west. The Central Commercial (C-2) district is located just to the south of the parcel. See Land Use table further below for more information.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



Note: Double-hatched shading indicates landmarked properties.

Figure 2: Site Plan

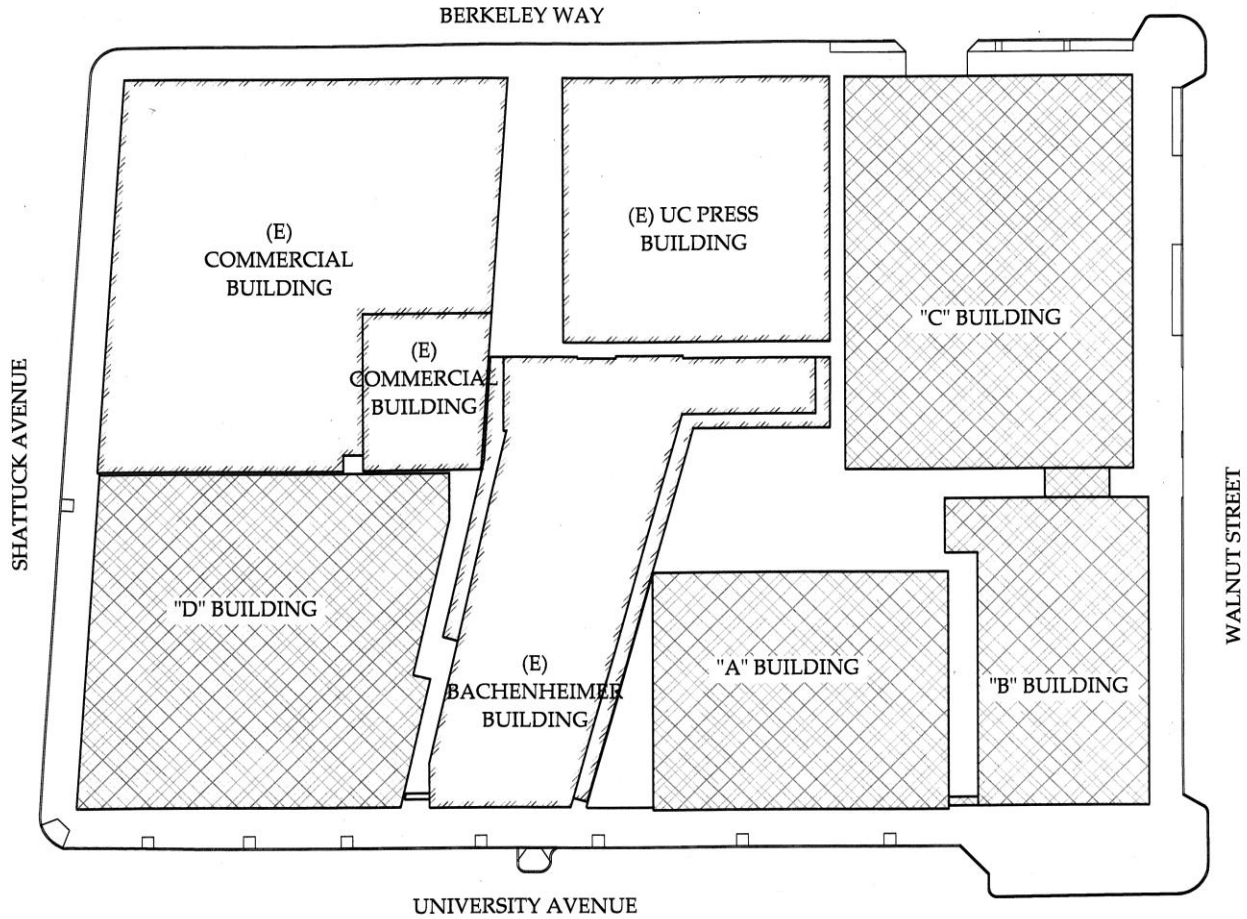


Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Ground floor restaurant/retail; offices above	General Commercial (C-1)	Downtown (DT)
Surrounding Properties	North	UC Press/ Apartments (Bachenheimer)/ parking lot/ UC Helios (future)	General Commercial (C-1)	Downtown (DT)
	South	Restaurant/retail/office	Central Commercial (C-2)	Downtown (DT)
	East	Retail (Berkeley Ace Hardware)/ residential/ office	General Commercial (C-1)	Downtown (DT)
	West	Restaurant (Crepes A-Go-Go)/ Apartments (Bachenheimer)	General Commercial (C-1)	Downtown (DT)

Table 2: Development Standards

Standard		Existing	Proposed Total	Permitted/ Required
BMC Sections 23E.36.070 & 23E.36.080				
Lot Area (sq. ft.)		52,110	52,110	N/A
Floor Area, Parking (sq. ft.)		0	8,494	No Limit
Floor Area,	Residential (sq. ft.)	6,590	155,681	
	Commercial (sq. ft.)	0	32,295	
	Office, per assessor (sq. ft.)	33,360	0	
	Retail (sq. ft.)	24,022	TBD	
	Live Work (sq. ft.)	0	3,064	
	Food Service (sq. ft.)	15,832	TBD	
Floor Area total (sq. ft.) <i>excludes parking</i>		79,804	197,040	156,330
Floor Area Ratio (<i>excludes parking</i>)		1.53	3.66	3
Dwelling Units	1-Bedroom	Not available	128	
	2-Bedroom	Not available	74	
	Below Market Rate	Not available	0	0
	Total	8	202	No Limit
Building Height, Max	Acheson (ft) Stories	54'-6" 4	No change	
	Ace (ft) Stories	28' 1	86'-6" 6	50'
	McFarlane (ft) Stories	26' 1	78'-8" 6	4
	Walnut (ft) Stories	Not available 3	78'-0" 6	
Usable Open Space	- at grade	0	6,187	
	- Podium level	N/A	1,600	
	- Roof	N/A	11,510	
	Total (sq. ft.)	0	19,297	40,400
	- Landscaped	0	8,583	16,160
Parking Required - Food Service		Not available		TBD
Parking Required - Retail		Not available		TBD
Parking Required - Live Work		N/A		6
Parking Required - Office		64	TBD	0
Parking Required - Residential		7		156
Total Required				199
Parking Provided - Garage		N/A	50	
Parking Provided - Surface		37	0	N/A
Parking Provided - Total		37	50	
Bicycles		N/A	Not available	TBD

IV. Project Description

A. Requested Use Permits

1. **Construction of a mixed-use development (23E.36.030)**
2. **Move vacant residential structures off site—demolition (23C.08.020):** Applicant will attempt to move the structures of two vacant residential buildings (on the corner of Walnut Street and Berkeley Way).
3. **Allow a fourth floor in a mixed-use project (23.36.070)**
4. **Reduction of open space (23E.36.070):** 40,500 sq. ft. of open space is required; 15,982 sq. ft. is proposed.

B. Density Bonus Information

1. **Variance to exceed floor/area ratio:** A FAR of 3 is allowed; 3.66 is proposed to accommodate density bonus floor area, including concession/incentive.
2. **Variance to exceed height limit/stories:** Three floors are allowed for base project; a fourth floor is allowed with UPPH for mixed use; a fifth floor with density bonus; portion of fifth floor and all of sixth floor proposed as a concession/incentive.

V. Issues and Analysis

A. 2011 Downtown Plan:

The Downtown Plan subareas are shown in the following figure (color version can be found online on P.5 of this PDF:

http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_and_Development/DAP/3-LandUse_110504.pdf):

**FIGURE LU-1:
 Land Use &
 Building Heights**

See Table LU-1 for height restrictions.



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The project is located in the outer Core, and per Table LU-1 of the 2011 Plan, the minimum building height is 40', the generally allowed maximum is 60' and with a Use Permit, the Plan calls for a 75' overall maximum height limit. As show in Table 2, the new buildings would exceed the 75' limit. Thus, while the Downtown Plan will allow

greater heights than allowed under current zoning, the project would still not comply with the Plan.

Later this year we expect that zoning language will be drafted to implement the 2011 Downtown Plan.

B. Design Review Issues:

The 1994 Downtown Design Guidelines are linked below for your reference. Although these guidelines are currently being reviewed to see what modifications should be made consistent with the 2011 Downtown Plan, in DRC's March 2011 meeting there was consensus that these current guidelines (linked below) should be retained where possible.

Link to Guidelines: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/contentdisplay.aspx?id=14260>

C. Issues for Discussion:

- Setbacks
- Building Massing
- Relationship to Surroundings/Neighborhood Pattern
- Public Open Space/Landscape Comments

VI. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the DRC discuss the above mentioned issues and give advisory comments to the applicant. LPC recommended a joint subcommittee to work on more specific design issues. Staff recommends that DRC appoint two Committee members in addition to Carrie Olson (already appointed at 5/5/2011 LPC Meeting) to be on that subcommittee.

Attachments:

1. Project Drawings, received February 16, 2010
2. Notes from May 5, 2011 LPC Preview
3. Use Permit Applicant Statement, received November 22, 2010

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