

# Memorandum

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**To:** City of Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission/Design Review Committee  
**From:** Rhoades Planning Group  
**Date:** February 11, 2015  
**Re:** Residences at Berkeley Plaza Project  
Description of Potential Design Responses to 12/18/14 DRC Comments

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The purpose of this memo is to describe in detail the potential design options for the Residences at Berkeley Plaza project prepared in response to comments from the Design Review Committee (DRC) at its meeting on December 18, 2014, and from the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) on January 8, 2015. This memo describes the design implications of some of those DRC and ZAB recommended modifications.

This memo is broken up to first address more significant elements of this set of potential design options. Following this discussion is a set of responses to detail, material, and other comments made by the DRC at its December meeting.

## Significant Elements of Potential Design Options

1. **Massing:** Show a design that moves the massing to decrease visibility of the building as viewed from Campanile Way. Specifically, try taking off the top three or four floors of the northern corner of the north shoulder, two units back per floor. The Committee was mixed on whether the building should step back, but agreed that more massing studies should be shown to better understand the impact on the design.

*Response:* In response to this request from the Design Review Committee, the project team has prepared a design option that removes the two northernmost units from the entire north 'shoulder' for its full height above the base. In addition, the east facing tower bump out was eliminated to create a more simplified tower feature. The suggestion by the Committee to remove the two units from just the top three floors of the north shoulder resulted in a notched massing that reduced the usability of the open space on both the sixth and thirteenth floors. More significantly, the resultant "notched" form created an overall architectural inconsistency with respect to the design of the glass covered portions of the building. For this reason, the project team prepared an option removing these two units from all floors above the base, creating a usable sixth floor common open space, and maintaining a reduced thirteenth floor terrace on the north shoulder.

In this option, these units were replaced on the south shoulder, as suggested by the Committee, on floors thirteen through sixteen. Therefore, the open space previously provided on the thirteenth floor of the south shoulder is now on the seventeenth floor. This massing option leaves a two-floor reveal between the tower and south shoulder portions of the building.

The team has also prepared a visual simulation of this massing option that shows how the portions of the building visible when looking west from the Campanile are reduced.

2. Shoulders: Add creativity and interest to the glass 'shoulders' to make them stunning.

*Response:* The guiding creative principle driving the glass shoulders has been superior environmentally sustainable functionality. Windows are all operable to allow fresh air for residents, further reducing energy consumption by reducing or eliminating the need for indoor cooling systems. For additional creativity and interest, and to further the project's environmental performance, the shoulders include integrated and interesting sun shades for western solar orientation, and horizontal metal sun shades for southern solar orientation.

3. East Elevation: Tower should remain brick. Consider wrapping the glass around from the Harold side to the east elevation. This elevation needs to be simplified, stunning.

*Response:* The project team has prepared two options to show a simplified East elevation. Revised Option A wraps the curtain wall system to the east side of the shoulders, allowing the tower form enhanced presence set off against the simplified curtain wall shoulders. Revised Option B maintains the brick wrapping to the east side, but with removal of spandrel panels to simplify the elevation, and with the plinth datum following the building elevations to create a strong base for the northern and southern shoulders.

4. Plaza and Street Improvements: Do more with plaza and street improvements – consider removing street parking on the east side of Harold, implement sidewalk widening techniques, add more space for bio-retention areas, add outdoor dining areas, think about adding pedestrian crosswalk paving across Kittredge, and do more at Allston/Harold to create a gateway expression.

*Response:* We agree with the DRC's desire for a rich treatment of the public plaza and the Harold Way streetscape and the project has proposed a streetscape option that is consistent with the DAP/SOSIPs requirement for street improvements. This option expands the retail and restaurant area into the space previously occupied by the public plaza, leaving a setback between the Harold and Kittredge frontages in the corner to allow the required public open space as well as a dining patio associated with the adjacent restaurant. In this proposed option, the residential lobby and entry are moved to face Harold Way. This option would include basic DAP streetscape treatments for Harold Way rather than the slow-street treatment and improvements on both sides of Harold Way that were previously proposed.

5. Corner: Mixed opinions on issue of balconies at the corner of the tower – understanding that balconies are residential amenity, while also recognizing the façade may be more successful without them.

*Response:* The project team has prepared multiple options for the tower corner element for feedback from the Committee. The primary change at the corner is that, if the removal of the public plaza is included, the tower corner element now stretches all the way to the ground, rather than ending with a column at the public plaza. Revised Option A shows the tower corner grounded with a three-story base, maintaining balconies for residential units. Revised Option B shows the tower corner with the same three-story base without balconies for residential units.

Revised Option C shows a reduced-height base with balconies for residential units. We look forward to the Committee's guidance on the preferred treatment of this corner.

### Smaller/Detail Design Modifications

1. Maintain strength of base by removing additional spandrels on the base and the metal sunshade at the 5<sup>th</sup> story.

*Response:* Spandrel panels between windows have been removed to simplify and strengthen the wall fenestration. The metal sunshade is an important sustainability feature to further the project's environmental performance, but has been simplified and refined.

2. Pilasters in storefronts should be closer to each other to create smaller spans of glass.

*Response:* The retail plaster modules are proposed to be moved closer together, and coordinate with the residential module above.

3. Show operable window walls for the commercial spaces at the north edge of the plaza and around the corner onto Harold Way, and maximize restaurant frontage.

*Response:* Large operable windows will articulate the façade and add interest from the sidewalk. The restaurant space on the corner at Harold and Kittredge will open onto public open space, and will feature adjacent outdoor dining areas to enhance the transparency and engagement of the pedestrian retail experience.

4. Make the 'hat' that crowns the tower lighter, lacier to increase the elegance of the tower.

*Response:* Photovoltaic trellises on all parapets are proposed to be simplified and refined to be thinner and articulate the roof line.

5. Enliven the green wall on Kittredge.

*Response:* The green wall on Kittredge is proposed to include a successful green wall set off with signage referencing the Shattuck Cinemas. This signage will horizontally tie to the cornice lines of the adjacent Shattuck Hotel building. The team is also proposing using posters for films to enliven the green wall and tie the exterior appearance of the wall to the interior use of the space. The green wall should be left in its simplified form. The purpose of it is to provide a visual "hyphen" between the historic Hotel Shattuck Plaza and the new Berkeley Plaza. The subtle association with the cinema or movie space provide visual interest and identity while the green feature accentuates the building change.

6. Add trellis forms on roof decks that will reduce the wind.

*Response:* The team is looking into options for wind reduction on roof terraces. It is most likely that the existing PV/hot water trellis will remain and that clear glass panels will be installed on the westerly edges to deflect wind.