



D E S I G N
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

**For Committee Discussion/
Majority Recommendation**
JUNE 18, 2020

1367 UNIVERSITY AVENUE

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW

Design Review #DRCP2019-0014 to construct an approximately 9,273-square-foot, four-story 40-unit Group Living Accommodation (GLA) operating as a Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Residential Hotel on a vacant parcel.

I. Introduction

The project is located in the C-1 Commercial District between Acton and West on University Avenue. The proposed four-story structure is located on a vacant lot between a two-story residential structure to the west and a commercial building to the east.

This project is applying under the Housing Crisis Act, SB 330, which seeks to boost homebuilding throughout the State with a focus on urbanized zones by expediting the approval process for and suspending or eliminating restrictions on housing development. Housing development is defined as a project that is: all residential; a mixed use project with at least two-thirds of the square-footage residential; or for transitional or supportive housing.

It is scheduled for the Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB) on July 9, 2020 and is before the Design Review Committee this month for Preliminary Design Review.

II. Background

The proposed project is the construction of a four-story Residential Hotel type of Group Living Accommodation (GLA) consisting of 40 units, an approximately 400-square-foot community room, and a manager's office. The building would be constructed out of modular units built in a "U" shape opening to University Avenue with an approximately 615-square-foot central courtyard. Rooms are accessed by exterior stairs and hallways. Each living unit is approximately 178 square feet (20'-4" x 8'-9") and consists of a toilet, bathing facilities, sink, bed, and built in cabinet. No parking would be provided.

Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Vacant Lot	C-1	Avenue Commercial (AC)
Surrounding Properties	North	Multi-Dwelling Unit Apartment Building	R-2	Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR)
	South	Multi-Dwelling Unit Apartment Building	C-1	Avenue Commercial (AC)
	East	Commercial Building (Copy World)	C-1	Avenue Commercial (AC)
	West	Multi-Dwelling Unit Apartment Building	C-1	Avenue Commercial (AC)

Table 2: Development Standards

C-1 Standards BMC Sections 23E.36.070-080		Existing	Proposed	Permitted/ Required
Lot Area (sq. ft.)		5,150	No change	n/a
Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)		0	9,273	11,330
GLA Units		0	40	n/a
Building Height	Average Height	n/a	40'	36' max.
	Stories	n/a	4	3 max. / 2 min.
Building Setbacks	Front	n/a	0'	2' avg. at 1 st story 0'
	Rear	n/a	4'	Solar setback ¹ : ≈ 0' @ 1 st story 16'-1" min. @ 2 nd story 34'-1" @ 3 rd story
	Left Side	n/a	4'	0' min.
	Right Side	n/a	4'	0' min.
Lot Coverage (%)		0	49%	n/a
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)		0	1.8	2.2
Usable Open Space (sq. ft.)		n/a	615	3,600 min. (90 sf/GLA resident)
Automobile Parking		0	0	11 min. (1 space/ 5 resident + 1 per manager + 1/500 sq. ft. commercial)

1. Buildings on the north side of University Avenue shall not cast a shadow at noon more than 20 feet onto any lot in a residential zone as calculated when the sun is at a 29 degree angle above the horizon (winter solstice):

Density Bonus Concessions (Govt. Code §65915(d))

- Eliminate the commercial use within the project
- Eliminate off-street vehicle parking
- Reduce the Useable Open Space from 3,600 to 615 square feet

D. SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act of 2019

The Housing Crisis Act, also known as Senate Bill 330, seeks to boost homebuilding throughout the State with a focus on urbanized zones by expediting the approval process for and suspending or eliminating restrictions on housing development. Housing development is defined as a project that is: all residential; a mixed use project with at least two-thirds of the square-footage residential; or for transitional or supportive housing.

V. Design Review Guidelines

University Avenue Strategic Plan – Design Guidelines:

The University Avenue Strategic Plan (UASP) was adopted by the City in 1997 to revitalize the University Avenue corridor and enhance it as a gateway to the City, neighborhoods, and the Downtown. Design guidelines are a key component of the Plan. Some key guidelines are summarized below for your reference.

Massing

- Large-scale projects often diminish the liveliness of the street by their sameness of detail and monotonous massing and this is undesirable. Instead, these projects could appear as a series of small buildings. Variations in floor level, roof shapes and materials, architectural details, and finishes help create the appearance of several smaller projects.
- Diverse and articulated massing is encouraged. Entries, bays, and other details should orient to streets and pedestrian-ways, creating an interesting and active public realm. Highlight building entries through the massing of the building.
- Greater height can be used to accentuate entries with central entry plazas or corner tower elements. Corners and key viewpoints should be emphasized with landmark towers and/or special entries.

Façades

- Porticos, arcades, bays, windows and balconies that overlook streets are strongly encouraged to provide indoor/outdoor connections.

Materials

- Building materials should convey a sense of durability and permanence. Tile and masonry should be used judiciously for accents. Glass curtain walls and reflective glass are prohibited.

Open Space (General)

- Wherever possible, buildings should provide some kind of outdoor open space. Retail buildings should provide plaza space with outdoor seating and cafes.
- At-grade plazas are encouraged where large amounts of pedestrian activity is expected to occur.

Signage

- Signs for buildings along University Avenue are only permitted at the ground-floor level.

The complete set of Design Guidelines can be found under Section 12 of the University Avenue Strategic Plan page on the City's website, located here:

[http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_\(new_site_map_walk-through\)/Level_3_-_General/N.%20Design_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_(new_site_map_walk-through)/Level_3_-_General/N.%20Design_Guidelines.pdf)

VI. Issues and Analysis

A. Design Review Issues:

- **Neighborhood Context** The project is located on the North side of University between Acton and West. The surrounding parcels are one- and two-story residential buildings to the north except for the three-story multi-unit residential structure directly to the north. There is a mix of commercial, residential, and mixed use buildings and surface parking lots to the south, east, and west along University Avenue ranging in height from one to five stories. The project site is also located approximately 0.3 miles southwest of the North Berkeley BART station.
- **Setbacks** The University Avenue façade meets the property line at the ground floor on University with a recess at the main entry gate. There is a 4' setback on the remaining three sides. There are before and after photo simulations in the drawings from both University Avenue and Berkeley Way.
- **Massing** The four story structure is designed with two masses oriented around a central courtyard. The massing is broken up on the University Avenue façade by an entry court on the ground floor that extends to the fourth floor. A corridor runs adjacent to the interior courtyard and connects the entry court to the rear yard setback, allowing for a vertical break on the North elevation from the ground floor to the fourth floor. Outdoor decks add relief on the South elevation at the second and third floors, and on the Southwest corner at the fourth floor with exterior walkways exposed along the University frontage.
- **Ground Floor Design** – The main entry is located towards the southeast corner of the project and connects to the central courtyard. A community room is proposed at the Southwest corner with a manager's room at the southeast

corner. The trash room and mechanical room are located directly behind the community room, each with doors out to the west side yard setback. Stairs are proposed at the Southwest and Northwest corners of the courtyard with accessible units making up the remainder of the ground floor.

- **Open Space** Long rectangular courtyard is proposed at the ground floor adjacent to the main entrance, the community room, and the manager's office. Additional deck space is provided at the second, third and fourth floors on the University Avenue facade.
- **Colors and Materials** Proposed materials include integral color stucco, corten metal siding, perforated metal railing and fence, steel canopy structure, and aluminum windows.

B. Issues for Discussion:

- Neighborhood Context
- Massing
- Open Space Design

VII. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee discuss the issues outlined above and forward a favorable recommendation on to ZAB with conditions as necessary to address any massing or design concerns and specific direction for Final Design Review.

Attachments:

1. Project Plans, received March 6, 2020

Staff Planner: Anne Burns, aburns@ci.berkeley.ca.us, (510) 981-7410