



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 Advisory Comments
FEBRUARY 17, 2022

2213 Fourth Street PREVIEW

Design Review #DRCP2021-0005 to demolish three existing non-residential buildings and one existing duplex and construct a new 124,667 square-foot, five-story parking garage containing 415 off-street automobile parking spaces and one loading space to serve uses in the vicinity of the project site.

I. Introduction

This project is located on the east side of Fourth Street and the west side of Fifth Street mid-block between Allston and Bancroft Ways. The proposed site would merge lots in the MU-LI district on Fourth Street, and lots in the MU-R district on Fifth Street, into a single parcel for the construction of a five-story parking structure.

The demolition of the three existing non-residential buildings on the East Block (2216 Fifth and 2221 Fourth, and 2213 Fourth) were referred to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) on July 1, 2021. The LPC took no action to initiate a Landmark or Structure of Merit designation on any of the structures. On October 7, 2021, the LPC heard a request to grant designation status to the existing duplex at 2212 Fifth Street. The LPC voted No (2-5-0-1) to designate the property, and on November 4, 2021, the LPC took final action to deny the application.

The project is scheduled for a future ZAB hearing pending the conclusion of any Use Permit and CEQA review. The project is before the Design Review Committee this month as a Preview.

II. Background

The project proposes the construction of a five-story parking structure fronting both Fourth and Fifth Streets, with an average height of 35 feet on the Fifth Street frontage and 45 feet on the Fourth Street frontage; an elevator and trellis would project 14 feet, 3 inches above the roof level on the Fifth Street frontage. The

garage would total approximately 124,667 gross square feet.¹ The parking structure would contain 415 parking spaces and one loading bay to serve surrounding uses. The building would be set back approximately 1 foot, 6 inches from the northern and southern edges of the Project site and built to the lot line along the eastern and western edges. The project includes:

- A Photovoltaic (PV) solar array on a canopy above the structure.
- 3,550 square-foot landscaped parklet on the north portion of the site for stormwater treatment and secure outdoor area for adjacent uses.
- Vehicular access would be provided through aisles on both Fourth and Fifth Streets.
- 8 new trees would be located in the landscaped parklet, and 3 new street trees on Fourth Street.

III. Project Setting

A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

The 3.02-acre project site is located in West Berkeley directly east of the City of Berkeley Aquatic Park across the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks. Specifically, the site is bisected by Fourth Street and generally bordered by Allston Way to the north, Fifth Street to the east, Bancroft Way to the south, and the UPRR corridor to the west. The Project site is located south of the Fourth Street commercial and is surrounded by various industrial and commercial uses. Building heights in West Berkeley consist of one- and two-story residential uses, generally east of Fifth Street, and up to six-story mixed-use residential buildings adjacent to the University Avenue overpass.

B. Site Conditions:

The overall project site comprises seven parcels and nine existing buildings across two contiguous blocks, referred to as the “East Block” and the “West Block”. The project proposed in this application is located in the “East Block”, which consists of three parcels containing four existing vacant one-to two-story buildings totaling 10,763 square feet with addresses at 2212 Fifth Street (residential duplex), 2216 Fifth Street and 2221 Fourth Street (light manufacturing, building contractor) and 2213 Fourth (storage shed), as well as a surface parking lot containing 38 spaces.

¹ Per BMC Section 23.502 (Glossary), covered or uncovered areas used for off-street parking spaces or loading spaces and driveways, ramps between floors or a multi-level parking garage and maneuvering isles relating thereto are excluded from the calculation of gross floor area.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Manufacturing, office (vacant), duplex (vacant)	MU-LI and MU-R	M - Manufacturing and MU – Mixed-Use Residential
Surrounding Properties	North	Various commercial uses		
	South	Light manufacturing		
	East	Commercial uses and parking lot	MU-R	MU
	West	Light manufacturing and warehouse-based non-store retail (vacant)	MU-LI	M

Table 2: Development Standards

			Existing	Proposed Total	Permitted/ Required
Phase II (East Block): 2213 Fourth Street					
BMC Sections 23E.80.070-080 and 23E.84.070-080					
Number of Parcels			3	1	N/A
Lot Area (sq. ft.)			35,196	No Change	N/A
Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.) ²			10,763	124,667	N/A
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)			0.25	3.54 ¹	2.0 (MU-LI) 1.0 (MU-R)
Dwelling Units			2	0	N/A
Building Height	Average	MU-LI	Varies – 12' - 36'	45'	45' max
		MU-R		35'	35' max
	Maximum	MU-LI	Varies – 12' - 36'	45'	N/A
		MU-R		35'	
	Stories	MU-LI	1	4	N/A
		MU-R	2	3	3 max
Building Setbacks	Front (Fourth)		18'	0'	N/A
	Front (Fifth)		Varies, 15'-18'	0'	5 min
	Left Side (North)		3'	1'-6"	N/A
	Right Side (South)		0'	1'-6"	N/A
Parking	Automobile		38	415	N/A ¹
	Bicycle		0	0	N/A
	Loading		0	4	N/A

² Per BMC Section 23F.04, Covered or uncovered areas used for off-street parking or loading spaces, driveway ramps between floors and aisles of a multi-level parking garage are excluded from the calculation of gross floor area.

IV. Project Description

A. Requested Use Permits

- Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23C.08.050.A to demolish main buildings used for non-residential purposes.
- Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23C.08.020, to demolish a duplex.
- Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23E.80.045.B, to remove protected floor area used for manufacturing, wholesale trade, warehousing or Material Recovery Enterprise.
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC Sections 23E.80.030.B and 23E.84.030.B to construct a parking structure on a split-zoned parcel in the MU-LI and MU-R districts.
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23E.04.020.C to allow architectural elements to exceed the height limit in a mixed-use district.

B. CEQA Determination

An Initial Study (IS) is being prepared to evaluate any environmental impacts of the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA.

V. Design Review Guidelines

The City's Design Guidelines are applicable for this project. Excerpts from the City-wide Design Review Guidelines are included below for your reference.

- **Setbacks:** The street façade of commercial streets should be respected, in order to create or maintain the sense of urban space.
- **Parking and Driveways:** Conflict with pedestrian circulation should be prevented by the proper location and design of auto entrances; whenever possible, parking should be behind buildings, underground, or in a central court.
- **Harmony with Surroundings:** The proposed design should be in harmony with its surroundings through the coordination of such design elements as cornice lines, eaves, and setbacks with those of existing neighborhood buildings.
- **Articulation:** Street facades in general and the ground floor level in particular should include elements of pedestrian scale and three-dimensional interest.
- **Lighting:** Lighting for circulation, security, building/sign identification should be non-obtrusive, except for lighting fixtures which are themselves decorative additions to the streetscape.
- **Walls and Fences:** Large, unarticulated expanses of any particular wall material that deaden the pedestrian environment should be avoided. The use of clear windows for ground floor retail projects is encouraged. Walls designed to allow sitting areas for pedestrian or space for landscaping and artwork are encouraged, especially in areas of heavy pedestrian use. Landscaping and/or art work should be maximized if large expanses of wall must be left devoid of openings.

- **Landscape and Open Space:** Sidewalk areas should include landscaping that is coordinated with the neighborhood design.
- **Public Open Space Areas:** the inclusion of public open spaces is encouraged as a means of providing places for people to come together for community interaction and enlivening the pedestrian environment.
- **Pedestrian Paths:** Pedestrian paths and arcades interior to the block which joins different parts of buildings as well as different streets are encouraged.
- **Building Entrances:** Entrance points should be clearly defined and easily identifiable by pedestrians by appropriate locations and by elements such as awnings, signage, artwork or changes in paving material to define the entry point.

The West Berkeley Plan is also applicable to this project. Below are several relevant goals from that plan:

- Physical Form Goal 5: Development on major sites of 1 acre or more should be both internally cohesive and sensitively designed on the site's publicly used edges.
- Open Space Goal 9: Provide an accessible, aesthetically-pleasing network of green spaces and corridors - that is functional for varied types of users--to visually and physically link parks, creeks, and shoreline to residential and commercial, and light industrial areas.

The West Berkeley Plan can be found on the City's website at the link below:

[https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Planning_and_Development/Redevelopment_Agency/West_Berkeley_Plan_\(The\).aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Planning_and_Development/Redevelopment_Agency/West_Berkeley_Plan_(The).aspx)

VI. Issues and Analysis

A. Design Review Issues:

Neighborhood Context This 5-story structure is located mid-block between Allston and Bancroft, south of the Fourth Street shopping area and is surrounded by various industrial and commercial uses. There is a surface parking lot to the North and a two-story structure directly to the South.

Massing/ Building Design The building's main frontage is on Fourth Street with its secondary frontage on Fifth Street. Vertical stair towers are located on both frontages and a single passenger elevator also located on Fourth. The orientation of the parking structure allows for adequate areas of the garage walls to be open with architectural facade elements provided as art form on the West and East facing facades. Solar PV panels are located above the roof level and appear to extend near all exterior parapet edges.

Staff would like the Committee to discuss any recommendations for reducing the apparent height of the proposed structure.

Setbacks The project is set back 1'2" from the West property line at Fourth Street and 1'10" from the East property line at Fifth Street. There is a 2' setback from the South property line and a 1'3" setback from the North property line. The Northeast corner pulls back to allow for motorcycle parking.

Vehicular Access The project allows for vehicular access with new curb cuts on both Fourth and Fifth Streets. Positioning of vehicular access at the north end of the structure on Fourth Street allows for landscaped buffers and an uninterrupted pedestrian access to the office and lab buildings for which the garage serves. In addition to passenger vehicles, the project provides a single bay loading facility which will be accessed off of Fourth Street.

Open Space/Landscape Open space is proposed along the North end of the project with three benches, bike parking, a decomposed granite path, new trees, stormwater treatment plantings and a raised stormwater treatment planter. Raised concrete planters are proposed along the East façade. Three new street trees are proposed at the West side of the project. The design also features building mounted concrete planters along the West façade at Fourth Street.

Colors and Materials The project proposes a perforated metal panel system and fiber cement panels, CMU wall system, a metal trellis at the Fourth street entry and at the roof. The project includes PV panels at the roof, and since located near all exterior parapet edges, are visible from most views.

B. Issues for Discussion:

- Neighborhood Context
- Building Design
- Landscape/ Open space
- Colors and Materials

VII. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee discuss the issues outlined above and provide advisory comments regarding the proposed building design, its relationship with its neighborhood, and any other design-related issues for the next review.

Attachments:

1. Project Plans, received December 22, 2021

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