



# Landmarks Preservation Commission Staff Report

**APP #ZP2025-0056**

**June 4, 2026**

## Demolition Referral for 841 Folger Avenue



<b>Quick Facts</b>	<b>Project Description:</b>
<b>Applicant:</b> Joe Regoli & Crista Meckler (Siteworks Construction Inc.)	The applicant is seeking approval to demolish a commercial building constructed in 1956 (APN: 053 163500301).
<b>Project Owner:</b> Ashby Lumber Co.	<b>Permits Requested:</b>
<b>Project Address:</b> 841 Folger Avenue	A Public Hearing is required for the following:
<b>Site Size:</b> 16,625 square feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Demolition Referral.</b> BMC Section 23.326.070(A) “<b>Main Non-Residential Building</b>” to demolish a non-residential building 40 years or older.</li> </ul>
<b>GP Land Use:</b> Manufacturing	<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>
<b>Zoning:</b> MU-LI (Mixed Use-Light Industrial)	Staff recommend that the Commission consider the extent to which the building meets (or does not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit and then <b>Take No Action</b> to initiate this property.
<b>CEQA:</b> Section 15301 for “Existing Facilities”	
<b>Date Submitted:</b> June 10, 2025	
<b>Date Deemed Complete:</b> June 26, 2025	
<b>Project Planner:</b> Boshi Fu	



**AERIAL**



**STREET ELEVATION**



*Figure 2: Primary Front Facade (South). Source: Historic Resource Evaluation*



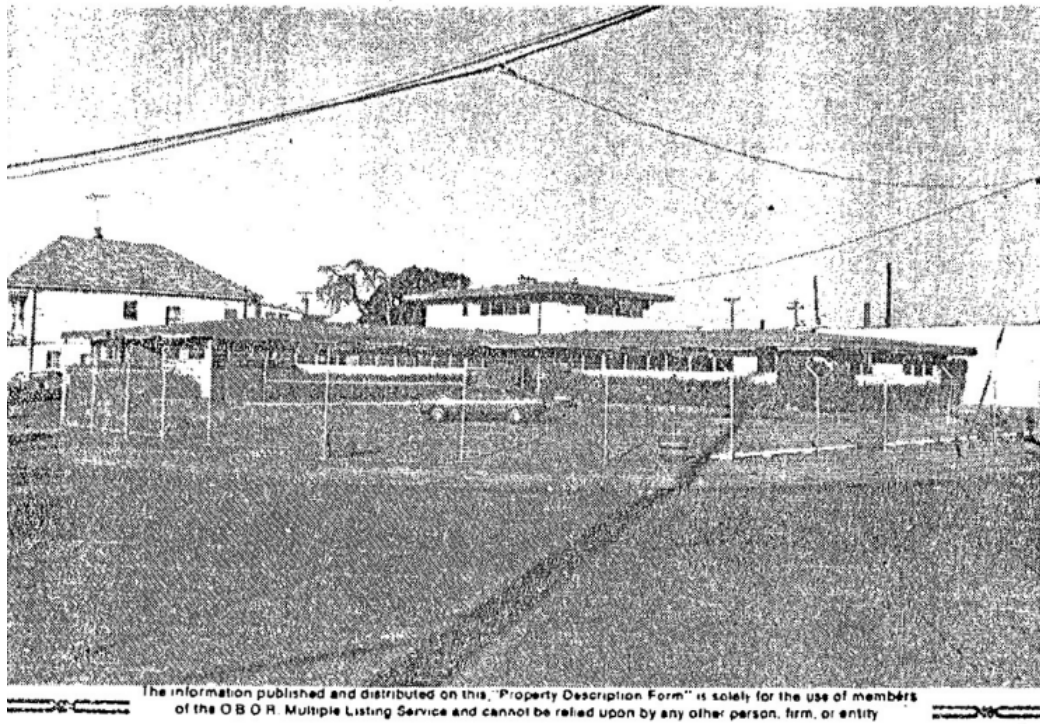
*Figure 3: Second entrance along the south facade of the north-south wing. Source: Historic Resource Evaluation*



*Figure 4: Rear Facade (North). Source: Historic Resource Evaluation*



*Figure 5: Aerial View of subject property in 1958, prior to the east-west wing addition. Source: U.C. Santa Barbara Library*



*Figure 6: Historic Photo (1980). Source: City of Berkeley Planning Department Records*



*Figure 7: Aerial view of the buildings prior to the construction of the existing office building (1949).*

*Source: Berkeley Historical Society*

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Subject Site**

The following information comes from the historic resource evaluation (HRE), as well as the City's land use archives, and building permit records. The HRE was prepared by Architectural Historian, Caitlin Hibma (Left Coast Architectural History) on March 25, 2026; please see Attachment 2 for reference.

**Parcel Description:** The Use Permit project site is located in the Mixed Use-Light Industrial District, or MU-LI. The location of the property is situated in the West Berkeley neighborhood, which has historically had a heavy industrial character for manufacturing and related uses.

The parcel is a corner lot at the northwestern intersection of Folger Avenue (primary) and Seventh Street, with a lot area of approximately 16,625 square feet. The property includes a commercial building and 18 uncovered automobile parking spaces. The immediate neighborhood consists of primarily light industrial and commercial uses, with warehouses, manufacturing, and other mixed-use commercial buildings.

**Building Description:** The property features a commercial building located at the northwestern corner of the lot. The building has an L shaped configuration and is set back from both street frontages. The rest of the site features a surface level parking area that is uncovered. The building is primarily one-story, with a small second story at the junction of the two wings.

The building is mainly clad in stucco with sections of stack bond brick veneer. The roof is also flat and has broad overhanging eaves with wood fascia boards as trims. The primary façade consists of the entrance at the intersection of the two wings, which is on an angled wall that has aluminum frame double doors with a sidelight and transom. Additionally, brick veneer surrounds the

entrance and is continued by the planters that run along the south and eastern facades. The building mainly features horizontal ribbon windows and has a secondary entrance to the west, which is the southern end of the north-south wing. This entrance is recessed and is partially screened by a decorative concrete block screen.

The northern elevation features a first story entrance that is flush along the exterior wall and also includes a metal stairway that leads to a second story entrance. The existing building largely reflects the original 1956 construction and the addition in 1960 which created the current L shaped configuration.

### **Site History**

The subject property was previously developed with a single-family dwelling, a detached garage and an accessory structure (shed). City records indicate that the previous buildings were demolished in 1956 and replaced with the existing L-shaped commercial building. This is concurrent with the zoning changes of the time to begin shifting industrial uses near the Berkeley Waterfront. The commercial building was constructed for the California Trucking Association (CTA) as its Northern California headquarters. The estimated cost of the building was around \$100,000 with nearly half of the funding donated by member companies of CTA.

The building was designed by Oakland-based structural engineer Hugh M. O'Neil and constructed by Christensen & Lyons, a contracting firm also based in Oakland. The original construction of the building featured a smaller footprint and mainly consisted of the north and southern portion of the current building. The building was then expanded in 1960 to add the eastern wing, resulting in the L-shaped configuration today.

The building has been occupied by a variety of office and service uses:

- In 1967, the Berkeley Board of Education rented parts of the space for its Curriculum Center, used for teacher training. Simultaneously, the building was first reportedly used as a two-unit building, occupied by two commercial tenants at the same time.
- In 1971 the building became the headquarters of Associated Freight Lines, a trucking company that primarily used 841 Folger as their administrative office.
- In 1976, the building was occupied by Pacific Basin Resources, a Japanese food import/export business, as their sales office. The business owners, Samuel and Hannah Fong also owned the property during this time.
- In 1978, Pacific Basin Resources shared the building with a wholesale gym equipment company, the Slim Gym.
- In 1980, the Veterans Administration established a Drug & Alcohol Treatment Center in the building. They occupied the building until at least 1994.
- In 2009, the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) began operating their Traffic Bureau Office at this space. BPD remained in the space until 2022 when it was purchased by the current owners, Ashby Lumber Company.

### **Architectural Style**

The building can be stylistically categorized as Midcentury Modern. This style became common after World War II and was influenced by the International Style as well as the Second Bay Tradition at the local level. Common features of the Midcentury Modern style include cantilevered overhangs, projecting eaves, angled wall planes and windows, box-like framing that defines portions of a structure. The style also includes stucco cladding and stacked-bond brick veneer. Other commonly identifiable features include the large expanses of windows, ribbon windows, and a flat or shed roof. At the subject building, features associated with this style include broad overhanging eaves, angled entry walls, stucco and stack-bond brick cladding, ribbon windows, and integrated planters.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Project Scope**

The project proposes demolishing the one-story commercial building that was last used as office space by the BPD Traffic Bureau. On June 10, 2025, the applicants submitted a Zoning Permit application to allow this demolition. There is no new construction proposed under the scope of this project; the applicants intend to demolish the building down to its concrete foundation slabs and maintain the site at the same grade as the surrounding parking area. By keeping the foundation slab at the same level as the surroundings, the previous location of the building can be used as parking aisles for vehicular paths. The applicant intends to use the site primarily for customer and employee parking for Ashby Lumber (830 and 840 Ashby Avenue), on the adjacent lot. No additional parking spaces will be proposed under this project. Since no housing units are proposed, the project is not subject to State housing streamlining laws.

The Use Permit application #ZP2025-0056 is currently under review. The project is tentatively scheduled for the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) on July 9, 2026. Application materials for the use permit application can be viewed at <https://aca-prod.accela.com/BERKELEY/Default.aspx>.

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) 23.326.070(C), any application for a Use Permit to demolish a non-residential building which is 40 or more years old shall be forwarded to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review, prior to consideration of the Use Permit for demolition. Given the lack of a current, City-wide comprehensive historic resource survey, the referral requirement is understood to address the potential for the loss of unidentified significant resources.

When evaluating a proposed demolition, the Commission considers whether the structure may meet the significance criteria for a City of Berkeley Landmark under the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (BMC Chapter 3.24). These criteria are fairly specific and generally align with the criteria under the California Register. The Commission will also consider whether the structure qualifies as a Structure of Merit, which presents a broader criterion and can apply even where a building is not individually distinctive or directly associated with a significant person or event, but may still contribute to a recognized district, area, or grouping. Based on that evaluation, the LPC may choose to initiate designation or take no action. Even if no designation is initiated, the

Commission may still forward comments to the Zoning Adjustments Board on possible project conditions, such as relocation, material salvage, or photographic documentation, for consideration as part of the demolition application.

### **Historical Resources**

The subject building does not appear on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the State Historic Resources Inventory.

The subject development site does not feature a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit, with the closest City Landmark being the H.J. Heinz Co. Plant at 1099 Ashby Avenue.

### **EVALUATION OF SIGNIFIANCE CRITERIA**

#### **Historic Context<sup>1</sup>**

For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion on potential historical significance, staff conclude that since the building is not identified as significant, no period of significance applies.

The subject property generally fits within the context of postwar commercial and light industrial development in the West Berkeley area. The building was constructed in 1956, during a period when the area was transitioning from earlier residential development toward manufacturing and related commercial support businesses. The current building was originally constructed for the California Trucking Association and was later occupied by other office-based uses. Within this context, the building reflects a general pattern of mid twentieth century commercial development in West Berkeley.

#### **Significance Criteria**

The subject property is evaluated based on the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC 3.24). The existing building is over 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. Because it is more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23.326.070(C) requires that the building be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

To determine the potential significance of this building, the evaluator has analyzed the property's features and any associated parties against the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources (CR) and the LPO/BMC Chapter 3.24. The evaluation concentrates on possible associations with events (CR-1, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(2) and (B)(2)), persons (CR-2, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(4)), architectural design (CR-3, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(1)(a-c) and (B)(2)(a and c)), and information/education (CR-4, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(3)). The results of the consultant and staff's evaluations are discussed below.

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<sup>1</sup> National Register Bulletin #15, Item V: How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context (2002); National Register Bulletin #16A. Section III: How to Complete the National Register Registration – Period of Significance (1997).

## California Register and Landmarks Preservation Ordinance Criteria

### Events – CR Criterion 1/BMC Criterion 4 for *Historic Value*

The subject property was developed for the California Trucking Association in 1956 and was later occupied by a range of commercial, municipal, and office uses. These included the Berkeley Board of Education Curriculum Center, Associated Freight Lines, Pacific Basin Resources, a Veterans Administration Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center, and BPD's Traffic Bureau. Although these uses are identified as commercial and public activity in Berkeley, the HRE did not identify any events associated with the subject property that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, state, or national history. While the California Trucking Association occupied the building at one point, it mainly served as a regional office rather than their primary headquarters. The other tenants have also used the building primarily for office or service-related activities that had no connection to important events. Therefore, the subject property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

### Persons – CR Criterion 2/BMC Criterion 2 for *Cultural Value*

There were no reports or identifications of people that appeared to display historical significance associated with this property. The property and occupants did not showcase any association with the movements of religious, cultural, governmental, social, and economic development of the City. Therefore, the subject property does not meet this criterion.

### Design – CR Criterion 3/BMC Criterion 1 for *Architectural Merit*

The subject building is an example of Midcentury modern commercial architecture, that showcases many distinctive features of the style. These include broad overhanging eaves, ribbon windows, stucco cladding, and sections of stack bond brick veneer. However, it does not stand out as an exceptional example and is comparable to many commercial office buildings of the same period. The building was not designed by an architect, but a structural engineer (Hugh M. O'Neil) instead. The subject building is also not the first, last, only, or most significant architectural property of its type within the City and does not present as a strong architectural example worth preserving for exceptional value to the neighborhood fabric. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion for architectural merit.

### Information – CR Criterion 4/BMC Criterion 3 *Educational Value*

There have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigations for this parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it is not likely to yield archeological information. The HRE also suggests the property is not worth preserving for its usefulness as an educational force, as a typical wood-frame, stucco and brick clad building. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion for informational or education value.

### National Register – BMC Criterion 5 *National Register*

The subject property is not listed on the National Register and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

### **LPO Structure of Merit Criteria**

As a potential Structure of Merit (BMC Section 3.24.110(B)), the subject property may be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, block, or street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks. Each of the four criteria for Structure of Merit (SOM) are considered below.

#### **BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)(a) - Contemporaneous with City Landmarks**

The subject building is not within close proximity to any nearby City Landmarks. The closest City Landmark, H.J. Heinz Company Plant, is 0.17 miles away and is a large industrial building. Additionally, the H.J. Heinz Company Plant was constructed in 1927 and predates the construction of this property by almost 30 years. Therefore, the subject building is not contemporary with nearby city landmarks or with a historic period or event of significance to the city.

#### **BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)(b) – Compatibility with City Landmarks**

As mentioned above, the closest City Landmark is the H.J. Heinz Company Plant, which was constructed as a large industrial factory. The subject building does not share compatible characteristics to this nearby landmark in terms of size, style, scale, or materials. Therefore, the building does not meet this criterion.

#### **BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)(c) – Good Design**

The subject building is a typical Midcentury Modern commercial office building and possesses common features found in similar structures throughout Berkeley and the larger Bay Area. Therefore, the building does not appear to be an exceptional or distinguished example of the style.

#### **BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)(d) – Historical Significance**

The subject property does not appear to have been associated with significant historical events or patterns, or to have historical significance to the block, neighborhood, or city.

### **Environmental Review**

The review of the demolition is part of the Use Permit application, and the Use Permit appears eligible for a categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15301 (“Existing Facilities”) of the CEQA Guidelines. The CEQA determination will be discussed in the Use Permit staff report and findings.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Take No Action.** Staff recommend that the Commission consider the extent to which the building meets (or does not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit and then take no action to initiate this property.

**Attachments**

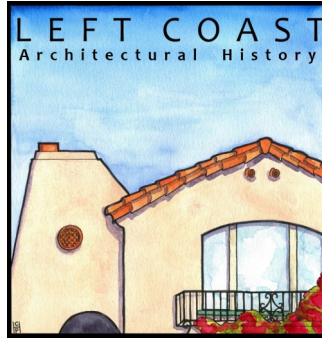
1. Project Chronology
2. California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Forms, prepared by Left Coast Architectural History, dated March 2026.
3. Owner Correspondence, dated May 21, 2026.

**Attachment 1**

**Table 1: Project Chronology**

Date	Action
June 10, 2025	Use Permit Application submitted
June 26, 2025	Application deemed complete
June 11, 2025	CEQA Recommendation by Staff
June 11, 2025	Application processing 1 <sup>st</sup> a
March 2, 2026	Application processing 2 <sup>nd</sup>
April 8, 2026	Application processing 3 <sup>rd</sup>
June 4, 2026	Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing (demo referral)
Notes: a. Application processing reflects the project compliance review after the application is deemed complete. Submittals are reviewed within 30 days of receipt, pursuant to the Permit Streamlining Act.	





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25 March 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Left Coast Architectural History has completed a Historic Resource Evaluation of the property at 841 Folger Avenue, Berkeley. The attached California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms present a physical description of the property, documentation of its history, and evaluation according to California Register of Historical Resources significance and integrity criteria, and City of Berkeley Landmark and Structure of Merit criteria.

The study finds that the Midcentury Modern style commercial building on the property dates to 1956 and was designed by structural engineer, Hugh M. O'Neil, and constructed by contractors Christensen & Lyons, for the California Trucking Association. The property does not appear to have any significant associations with historically important events or noteworthy historical figures. The property does not exhibit high architectural merit and its designer/builders do not appear to rank as important creative individuals. It also exhibits some early alterations. These points are elaborated upon in detail on the attached forms.

The evaluation concludes that the property is not historically significant at either the local or State level and, therefore, does not appear to qualify as a historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Left Coast Architectural History is happy to answer questions or provide additional assistance, as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caitlin Paige Hibma". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Caitlin Hibma  
Principal/Architectural Historian  
Left Coast Architectural History

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION <b>PRIMARY RECORD</b>	Primary # HRI # Trinomial NRHP Status Code
Other Listings Review Code	Reviewer
Date	

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\*Resource Name or #: 841 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, CA

P1. Other Identifier: n/a

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County: Alameda

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Oakland West Date: 2015 T ; R ; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; M.D. B.M.

c. Address: 841 Folger Avenue City: Berkeley Zip: 94710

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

APN: 053-1635-3-1

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The commercial building at 841 Folger Avenue is situated on a 16,625 square foot parcel on the northwest corner of Folger Avenue and Seventh Street. The immediate neighborhood is mixed-use, but primarily light industrial and commercial, characterized by medium to large-scale warehouse, manufacturing, commercial, and mixed light-industrial/office/retail buildings.

The building has an L-shaped plan, consisting of north-south and east-west ells extending from a northwest juncture. The building is situated near the northwest corner of the lot, so that it is set back from the street and a surface parking lot lies primarily in the interior angle created by the L-shaped plan as well as along the north side of the building.

The building is primarily one-story with a small rectangular-plan second story that is set atop the junction of the L-shaped plan. The building is clad with stucco with accent sections of stack-bond brick veneer. The roof is essentially flat and typical fenestration is single-lite metal sash, with fixed and awning operations, arranged in horizontal ribbons. (Continued, pg 3)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP6 – 1-3 story commercial building

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)  
 Primary facade, looking north;  
 March 2026.

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:  Historic  
 Prehistoric  Both  
 1956; B&E News, Berkeley Gazette

\*P7. Owner and Address:  
 Ashby Lumber Co.  
 824 Ashby Ave  
 Berkeley, CA. 94710

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)  
 Left Coast Architectural History  
 PO Box 70415  
 Richmond, CA. 94807

\*P9. Date Recorded: March 2026

P10. Survey Type: Intensive

\*P11. Report Citation: None

\*Attachments:  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

DPR 523A (1/95)

\*Required information

State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI#

Page 2 of 16

\*NRHP Status Code 6Z

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 841 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, CA

- B1. Historic Name: 841 Folger Avenue  
B2. Common Name: 841 Folger Avenue  
B3. Original Use: Commercial  
B4. Present Use: Vacant

\*B5. **Architectural Style:** Midcentury Modern  
\*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)  
Built 1956 (north-south ell and second story). East-west ell added in 1960.  
(See "Alterations" section on Continuation Sheets for full list of alterations and dates.)

\*B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** n/a **Original Location:** n/a

\*B8. **Related Features:** None

B9a. Architect: None (Structural Engineer: Hugh M. O'Neil) b. Builder: Christensen & Lyons  
\*B10. **Significance: Theme:** None **Area:** West Berkeley  
**Period of Significance:** None **Property Type:** Commercial **Applicable Criteria:** None  
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Neighborhood History: West Berkeley

The property at 841 Folger Avenue is located in the West Berkeley neighborhood. As early as 1855, with the establishment of a grist mill, the area took on an industrial character. Water and, slightly later, rail connections to San Francisco and markets around the Bay and beyond made it an advantageous location for manufacturing and shipping. Factories, lumber yards, industrial materials plants and supply companies came to dominate the area. Meanwhile, residences were also common as factory workers needed places to live and the blue collar enclave became attractive to working-class people employed in households and retail businesses in east Berkeley. (Charles Wollenberg, *Berkeley: A City in History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.)

In 1916, with the enactment of municipal zoning codes, much of the housing in West Berkeley was eliminated, making way for even more industrial growth. By 1930, the area boasted 173 manufacturing businesses. Larger national companies, like Colgate, Heinz, and Durkee Foods, moved in and established west coast branches in Berkeley. (City of Berkeley, "West Berkeley Plan," 1993; 119) The Great Depression brought a downturn to West Berkeley's productivity, but it soon rebounded with World War II. West Berkeley factories, particularly existing steel mills and foundries, secured government contracts to produce parts that were then transported to nearby shipyards.

Post-war, a return to normal manufacturing levels resulted in West Berkeley's decline. Local factories cut back their workforce and slowed production. The physical plants themselves fell into disrepair and many were vacated, causing neighborhood deterioration. In 1956, additional re-zoning attempted to concentrate heavy industry toward the waterfront. (Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili and Stephanie Manning, *Victorian Berkeley: The Community of Oceanview*, 1982.) (Continued, pg 3)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

\*B12. **References:**  
(See parenthetical citations within text)

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. **Evaluator:** Left Coast Architectural History

\***Date of Evaluation:** March 2026

(This space reserved for official comments.)



<b>State of California — The Resources Agency</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION</b> <b>CONTINUATION SHEET</b>	<b>Primary #</b> <b>HRI#</b> <b>Trinomial</b>
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\*Recorded by: Left Coast Architectural History

\*Date: March 2026

Continuation

Update

**P3a. Description: (continued from pg.1)**

The primary facade is made up of the east-facing side of the north-south ell and the south-facing side of the east-west ell. The primary entrance sits near the juncture, slightly angled, but facing south. It consists of a fully-glazed, aluminum-frame double-door assembly with a sidelight and transom sash. The facade immediately around the entry is clad with stack-bond brick veneer, which continues as low integral planters on either side of the entrance and along the facade to wrap the south and east corners of the building's ells. The rest of the facade is clad with stucco. Nearly continuous ribbons of windows span the upper walls of the facade, which is topped by the broad overhanging eaves of the roof, which are trimmed with wide flat wood fascia boards. Steel exterior seismic bracing sits away from the plane of the facade, but under the eaves, at regular intervals along the facade.

The south end of the north-south ell is clad with stack-bond brick veneer and features a secondary entrance consisting of a flush wood or metal door with a sidelight and transom. This entrance is set on a section of facade that is recessed slightly, with an angled section of wall to the left. The recessed section is concealed behind with a decorative concrete breeze block screen. Windows of the primary type are located to the right of the entrance and on the left side of the facade, which is not recessed. The entire facade is overhung by broad eaves, which the breeze block screen supports on the right side.

The west and north facades and the eastern end of the east-west ell are clad with stucco and feature windows of the primary type arranged in near-continuous ribbons along the upper walls. The broad eaves of the roof overhang these facades and have wide flat wood fascia boards. Steel exterior seismic bracing is visible in one location on the west facade.

The north facade features two secondary entrances with flush metal or wood doors. The rightmost door is flanked by two small aluminum-sash sliding windows, while near-continuous ribbons of primary-type windows span much of the rest of the facade. There is an exterior metal stair with metal pipe railings that parallels the facade and rises to the second story.

The second story is clad with stucco, has a flush metal door (corresponding to the stair landing) on the north side, and is otherwise fenestrated with horizontal ribbons of windows set on the upper walls. It has a flat roof with broad eaves, finished with wide wood fascia boards.

**B10. Significance: (continued from pg. 2)**

In 1970, Redevelopment attempted to revitalize the area and demolished many properties that were perceived to be blighted. (BAHA, "41 Berkeley Walking Tours," Berkeley: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 2009). However, with ongoing influence from Berkeley citizens, the area ultimately experienced less new development and more change in use, tending toward lighter industrial activities and the renewed creation of housing.

Property History: 841 Folger Avenue

The commercial building at 841 Folger Avenue was built in 1956, the same year that rezoning took effect with an aim of concentrating industrial uses near Berkeley's waterfront. While it is not an industrial building, 841 Folger Avenue is loosely suggestive of the shift that occurred in the immediate neighborhood, as it replaced a residence with a commercial building.

A single-family dwelling, detached garage/carriage house, and a small shed were located on the property previously (1949 aerial view, Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1950). The residence had been one in a row of multiple small houses along the north side of Folger Street between 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the railroad tracks to the west. It was one of the first residential properties on the northern block face to be redeveloped, although a number of properties in close proximity had already been developed with industrial buildings by 1950 (Sanborn map). According to building permits, the existing house and outbuildings were permitted for demolition in April 1956 and the new commercial building was permitted for construction in August of the same year. Its cost was estimated at \$40,000 (or \$50,750 by other sources), but ultimately came to \$100,000 with almost half the amount donated by member companies of the organization that owned the property; the California Trucking Association. The building was designed by Oakland-based structural engineer Hugh M. O'Neil and built by Oakland-based contracting firm Christensen & Lyons. (*Berkeley Gazette* (BG), 3 Sept. 1956, 28 Dec. 1956, 1 Jan. 1957) The building officially opened on 3 April 1957. (BG 3 April 1957) Further details of construction included the building's [wood] frame and stucco construction, brick veneer, aluminum sash [windows], acoustical ceilings, plasterboard walls, and asphalt tile floors. (*Building & Engineering News*, Sept. 1956, pg.44)

The California Trucking Association used the building as its Northern California headquarters. The headquarters had been located on Market Street in San Francisco previously, but relocated to Berkeley for the central but more accessible location. The organization's main headquarters and leadership were in Los Angeles. Richard H. Zeller was the regional manager in Berkeley. The organization, established in Southern California in 1935, represented the trucking industry in labor relations matters, rate hearings, and other negotiations. In the late 1950s, it represented about 1,300 member companies and ranked as one of the largest trade organizations in the nation, as well as being the only industry-wide organization of truckers in California. (BG 22 Jan. 1957, 3 April 1957)

<b>State of California — The Resources Agency</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION</b> <b>CONTINUATION SHEET</b>	<b>Primary #</b> <b>HRI#</b> <b>Trinomial</b>
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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 841 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, CA

\*Recorded by: Left Coast Architectural History

\*Date: March 2026

Continuation

Update

**B10. Significance: (continued)**

The building was originally about 5,000 square feet, comprising only the north-south ell of the current L-shaped plan, and a second story conference room. In 1960, the east-west ell was constructed to accommodate a total of 6,408 square feet.

In 1967, the Berkeley Board of Education entered into a contract with the California Trucking Association to rent space at 841 Folger Avenue for use as a Curriculum Center, where it appears that teacher training sessions were held. (BG 20 April 1967) This appears to be the first instance of the building becoming a two-unit commercial building, but the reasons for the subdivision and sharing of space are unknown.

By 1971 the building was being used as the headquarters of Associated Freight Lines. (BG 28 Oct 1971) Associated Freight Lines was a trucking company, operating between Los Angeles and San Francisco as early as 1941. (Oakland Tribune 17 June 1941) It eventually had truck terminals in numerous places throughout California and Nevada, and the Folger Avenue location is assumed to have served as the company's administrative offices. It occupied the building until at least 1974. (BG 23 Jan 1974)

By 1976, the two-unit building was occupied by Pacific Basin Resources, Inc. which was a Japanese food import/export business owned by Samuel and Hannah Fong, who owned the property as well. The company is also noted to have been a wholesale fish business, which coincides with the food importing/exporting activities. The building served as the company's sales office, while the food products were actually handled in Emeryville. In 1978, the company shared the building with a company called Slim Gym Center, which was a wholesale dealer of gym equipment. (City of Berkeley records)

The property continued to be owned by the Fongs until at least 1994 with Pacific Basin Resources located in the building for all or most of that time. In 1980, the Veterans Administration established a Drug & Alcohol Treatment Center in the building, relocating from Emeryville. (BG 16 April 1981) It remained in the building until at least 1994.

In 2009, the Berkeley Police Department appears to have taken over all space in the building for use as their Traffic Bureau office. (City of Berkeley records) It remained in that use until 2022 when the property was purchased by the Ashby Lumber Company, which had been established on adjacent parcels as early as 1968.

Engineer & Builders

Structural Engineer: Hugh M. O'Neil, Oakland

Little biographical information was found about structural engineer Hugh M. O'Neil. Review of issues of *Building & Engineering News* from the late 1950s indicate that, around the time he designed 841 Folger Avenue, O'Neil also engineered a number of primarily industrial buildings, often warehouses or factories with offices, throughout the East Bay, and as far afield as Santa Maria, California. One exception was the Laborers Union Hall in Richmond (101 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street) although it was of a similar vaguely Modernist character. Most were of tilt-up or concrete block construction and were typically simple one-story structures of utilitarian design.

Builder: Christensen & Lyons

Christensen & Lyons appears to have been a partnership of H.J. Christensen (who is also associated with the H.J. Christensen Construction Co.) and N.E. Lyons (also associated with the N.E. Lyons Construction Co.). Little additional information was found about Christensen & Lyons as a partnership. The Pacific Coast Architecture Database indicates that they were active circa 1946, and obviously as late as 1956, in regard to the subject property. They are known to have built the Connell Motor Company Oldsmobile Dealership in Oakland (1946-1947), as well as at least three buildings for Pacific Steel Casting and the Chemical Packaging Co. along Second and Third Street near Gilman Avenue in Berkeley. Indeed, other projects by H.J. Christensen found in *Building & Engineering News* indicate that he primarily built buildings with industrial and utilitarian uses.

Architectural Style

The building at 841 Folger Avenue can be stylistically categorized as Midcentury Modern. The style was popular following World War II, influenced by the International Style and, locally, the Second Bay Tradition style. The Midcentury Modern style was popular for a wide range of building types and was very often used for small-scale commercial buildings, such as 841 Folger Avenue.

The style exhibits character defining features such as cantilevered overhangs, projecting eaves, canted windows and wall planes, projecting box-like frames that define stories or sections of a structure, stucco or occasionally vertical wood siding, stacked-bond brick veneer, large expanses of windows and ribbon windows, spandrel or clerestory windows, flat or shed roof forms, asymmetry of forms, and the use of bright colors. In commercial buildings, especially, vertical blade signage, flat canopies or awnings, integrated planters, and angled entry vestibules were common.

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**B10. Significance: (continued)**

Many of these characteristics are evident at 841 Folger Avenue, including its essentially flat roof with broad cantilevered eaves that act almost as awnings, angled walls at the primary and secondary entrances, stucco and stacked-bond brick cladding, ribbon windows, and integral planters.

Alterations

The following building permits and other records are on file with the City of Berkeley Department of Planning and Development and provide documentation of exterior alterations that the building has undergone throughout its history:

Date	Description of Work
04/24/56	Wreck building. [Refers to house previously located on the property.]
08/21/56	New building.
05/25/60	Addition [likely refers to the east-west ell of the current building.]
12/16/80	Install mobile office on property at north end of parking lot, behind present building, to facilitate addition of second floor office to existing building. [Second story existed originally, in current dimensions. This either referred to expansion of the second story that was not executed, or was for interior work only in order to create an office space.]
02/20/09	Seismic bracing and shear walls. [Bracing is external and visible]

In addition to permitted work recorded in Department of Planning and Development files, the following alterations were observed during a site visit to the property:

- Reorientation of the primary entrance, likely in conjunction with the addition of the east-west ell of the building in 1960. A 1957 newspaper photograph shows the original primary entrance, which appears to have been located at the southern end of the north-south ell, where a secondary entrance is located today. This location is evidenced by a distinctive angled wall to the left of the doors in the photo, and the ghost marks of the "California Trucking Association" sign that are still visible on the bricks in that location. Based on the newspaper photo, the door assembly was replaced/reconfigured, signage removed, adjacent windows altered, and the current breeze block screen added (possibly after 1980). The relocated primary entrance had similar, but different doors than exist currently, indicating their more recent replacement.
- Two small aluminum-sash sliding windows on the first story of the north facade are not original, possibly inserted (rather than installed in existing openings) based on their dimensions and placement, which is out of keeping with other fenestration patterns.
- The exterior stair to the second story does not appear to be original.

California Register Evaluation

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more criteria relating to historically significant events, people, architects or architectural merit, or information potential. The following provides an evaluation of the historic significance of 841 Folger Avenue:

*Criterion 1 (Events): Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.*

Research revealed no specific events of historical importance that occurred at 841 Folger Avenue. The building originally served as the regional headquarters for a statewide trade organization. Although the California Trucking Association (CTA) was one of the largest trade organizations in the nation and the only industry-wide organization of truckers in California in the late 1950s, the organization's main headquarters were in Los Angeles while the subject property served as a regional auxiliary headquarters. It was not newly established as such, but simply a relocation of regional headquarters already located in San Francisco. It served as an office where organization business was conducted, but had no direct ties to trucking activities. Although the CTA lobbied for and against legislation and regulatory measures related to trucking and initiated and supported some trucking strikes and labor disputes, it is not known to have been instrumentally involved or specifically influential in any events that directly influenced labor relations or the vocation of trucking in California. The building housed the CTA for 15 years (the CTA is still active, now headquartered in Sacramento), but after the first 11 years, the building was subdivided to share space with the Berkeley Board of Education Curriculum Center. The Curriculum Center was also an auxiliary facility, in this case to the Berkeley Unified School District main offices.

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**B10. Significance: (continued)**

The building later housed the offices of private companies; a trucking company, a food import/export business, and a gym equipment dealer. In the case of the trucking and food companies, their actual business activities took place elsewhere and the subject building served only as administrative offices. None of these businesses' activities appear to have been significant to broad historical trends or had connections to important events. In later years, the building housed a Veterans' Administration Drug & Alcohol Treatment Center, but this was one of many such facilities nationwide run by a federal agency. The final tenant in the building was the Berkeley Police Department's Traffic Bureau. Like the Board of Education Curriculum Center, this was an auxiliary municipal facility to the main Police Department facilities. Ultimately, the building housed a number of private business/organizations and federal/municipal service facilities, but they tended to be secondary and auxiliary to main offices and facilities elsewhere and/or have no connection to important events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage. Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events).

*Criterion 2 (Persons): Resources associated with the lives of persons important in our past.*

The property at 841 Folger Ave was owned and occupied by commercial entities throughout much of its history and was sometimes leased to municipal or federal agencies; therefore, very few names of specific people associated with those entities or the building were identified in research. One was Richard H. Zeller, the regional manager of the California Trucking Association; others were Samuel and Hannah Fong, owners of Pacific Basin Resources, wholesale food company. None of those people whose names are known appear to have been influential or historically significant figures. Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons).

*Criterion 3: Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.*

The building at 841 Folger Avenue is an example of Midcentury Modern commercial architecture. While it exhibits many typical characteristics of the popular aesthetic, it does not stand out as an exceptional example of the style. Instead, it is comparable to many commercial office buildings of its time period. It does not stand out as having distinctive features, high artistic values, or otherwise noteworthy character.

No architect was involved in the design of the building. Instead it was designed by a structural engineer, Hugh M. O'Neil, and built by contractors Christensen & Lyons. Both O'Neil's and Christensen & Lyons' typical project types were industrial and commercial buildings, usually of simple, utilitarian design and construction. While fairly prolific, neither claim projects that are architecturally or artistically noteworthy. Other examples of their work exist locally and are comparable in character to the building found at 841 Folger Avenue. Therefore, neither the engineer nor contractors rise to the level of important creative individuals.

Based on the above, the property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Architecture).

*Criterion 4 (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

Criterion 4 (Information Potential) is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, it typically relates to rare construction types, of which 841 Folger Avenue – a typical wood-frame, stucco and brick clad building with common components and features – is not an example.

Berkeley Landmark Evaluation

Berkeley Landmarks are designated historical resources within the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Landmarks if they meet one or more of five criteria similar to those used for the California Register, but which elaborate on areas of significance. The following provides an evaluation of the historic significance of 841 Folger Avenue according to local significance criteria:

1. Architectural Merit:

*a-c. Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region; Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or examples of the more notable works of the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder; Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional value they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.*

The building at 841 Folger Avenue is not the first, last, only, or most significant Midcentury Modern commercial building in Berkeley or the Bay Area. It demonstrates a common form and style of Midcentury Modern architecture that is not prototypical nor outstanding among other examples in the city or region.

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**B10. Significance: (continued)**

The building was designed by structural engineer, Hugh M. O'Neil, and built by contractors Christensen & Lyons, both of which typically worked on commercial and industrial projects that were generally utilitarian and not identified as noteworthy.

The building does not stand out as an exemplary piece of architecture in its neighborhood.

*2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the City*

The property at 841 Folger Avenue housed commercial and municipal/federal service uses throughout its history. Although very generally related to economic, governmental, and social themes, none of the uses related to the trucking industry, food sales and distribution, recreational equipment sales, and federal and municipal services pertaining to education, policing, and social services have strong cultural implications. Therefore, the property does not qualify as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

*3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force*

The property presents a common example of Berkeley's mid-twentieth century commercial development. Uses that the building housed throughout its history were common commercial/office functions, none of which were particularly noteworthy nor represented in the physical fabric of the building. Thus, the building presents little opportunity for conveying a specific or unique lesson that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

*4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military.*

Although generally related to economic, governmental, and social themes, none of the uses that the building served related to the trucking industry, food sales and distribution, recreational equipment sales, and federal and municipal services pertaining to education, policing, and social services have strong historical implications. Therefore, the property does not qualify as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

*5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.*

The property at 841 Folger Avenue is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore does not qualify for local listing under Criterion 5.

Berkeley Structure of Merit Evaluation

Berkeley Structures of Merit are designated historical resources within the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Structures of Merit if they meet general and/or specific criteria. An evaluation follows:

*1. General criteria shall be architectural merit and/or cultural, educational, or historic interest or value. If upon assessment of a structure, the commission finds that the structure does not currently meet the criteria as set out for a landmark, but it is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings which includes landmarks, that structure may be designated a structure of merit.*

As assessed under Berkeley Landmark criteria, 841 Folger Avenue does not appear to be of great architectural merit or cultural, educational, or historic value. It also does not exhibit strong connections or contextual relationships with any other structures in the vicinity, most of which are larger light-industrial properties or of widely differing ages and aesthetics. The property does not appear to contribute to any cohesive grouping of buildings that is historically significant, nor which includes designated Landmark properties.

Specific Criteria

*a. The age of the structure is contemporary with (1) a designated landmark within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings, or (2) an historic period or event of significance to the City, or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.*

No designated Landmarks are located in close proximity to 841 Folger Avenue. The nearest, the H.J. Heinz Company Plant (1927) at 2900 San Pablo Avenue, is about one-third of a mile away. It is a massive industrial factory building constructed nearly 30 years before the subject building and markedly out of keeping in terms of period, use, style, etc. The subject building is not contemporary with any major event or historic period in Berkeley's history and is only contextually related to the mid-century rezoning and shift in uses that occurred in West Berkeley at that time.

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**B10. Significance: (continued)**

*b. The structure is compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with a designated landmark structure within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.*

No designated Landmarks are located in close proximity to 841 Folger Avenue. The nearest, the H.J. Heinz Company Plant at 2900 San Pablo Avenue, is about one-third of a mile away, and is a massive industrial factory building constructed nearly 30 years before the subject building and markedly out of keeping in terms of period, use, size, style, materials, etc.

*c. The structure is a good example of architectural design.*

The building at 841 Folger Avenue is a typical Midcentury Modern commercial office building. This type and style of building is common throughout Berkeley, the Bay Area, and beyond and the subject building does not stand out as exemplary within its architectural context.

*d. The structure has historical significance to the City and/or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.*

The building demonstrates no particular historical significance within the context of Berkeley's history or the neighborhood that surrounds it, which is mixed-use, but largely light-industrial.

Integrity Evaluation

In order to qualify for historic designation, a property must possess significance under the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity. The property at 841 Folger Avenue does not appear to possess the historic significance necessary to qualify for designation; therefore, an analysis of its integrity is not required. It is noted, however, that the building was dramatically altered with the addition of the east-west ell that essentially doubled the building's size in 1960, four years after initial construction. As a result of this addition the primary entrance was relocated and reconfigured and some features were added or altered. These alterations were in keeping with the aesthetics of the original portion of the building and may be considered to have gained significance in their own right because the building continues to read as a Midcentury Modern commercial building; however, it is notable that the building's construction chronology is not straightforward.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, the building at 841 Folger Avenue does not appear to be eligible for listing the California Register of Historical Resources or as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit. Therefore, it does not appear to qualify as a historical resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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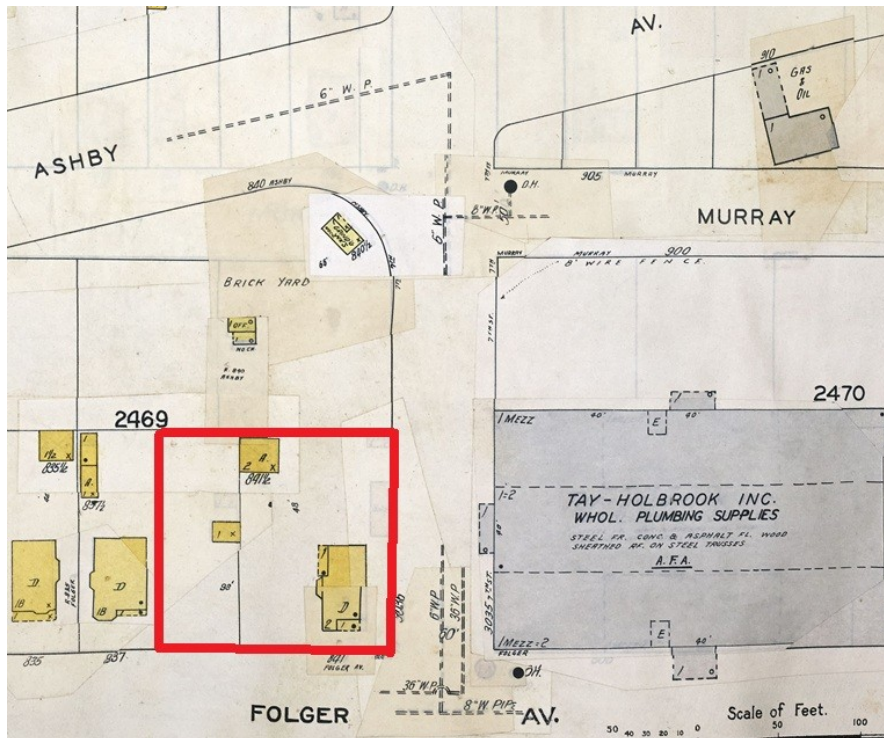
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Historical Images:



Aerial view, oriented northwest, 1949. Subject property, prior to current building, outlined in red. (Berkeley Historical Society)



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950. Subject property, prior to current building, outlined in red. (Historical Information Gatherers)

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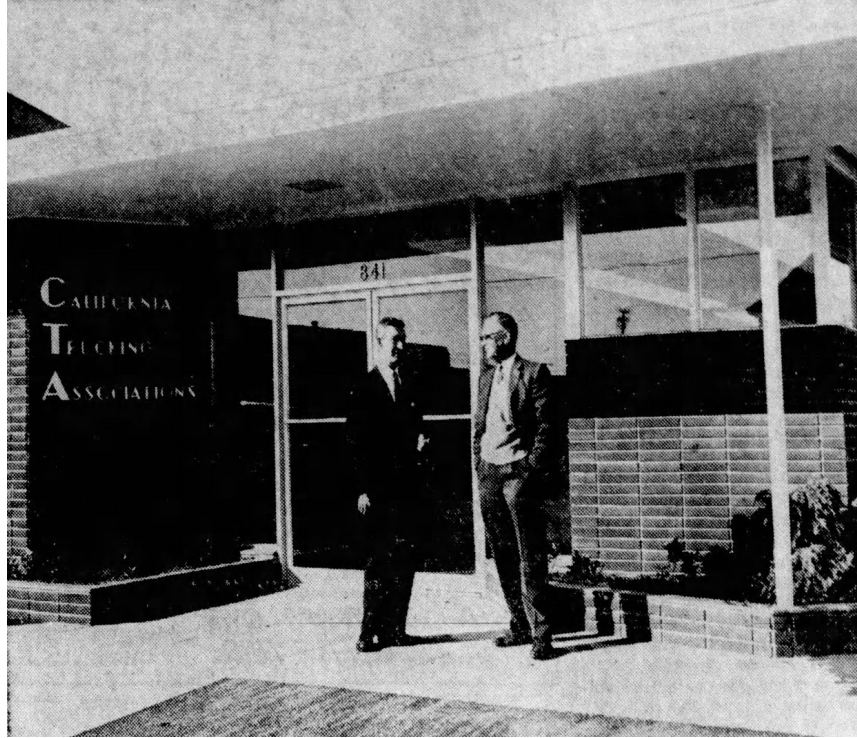
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**Historical Images:**



Primary entrance of 841 Folger Ave. (originally at south end of north-south ell), 1957. (BG, 22 Jan. 1957)



Aerial view, 1958. Subject property circled. (U.C. Santa Barbara Library)

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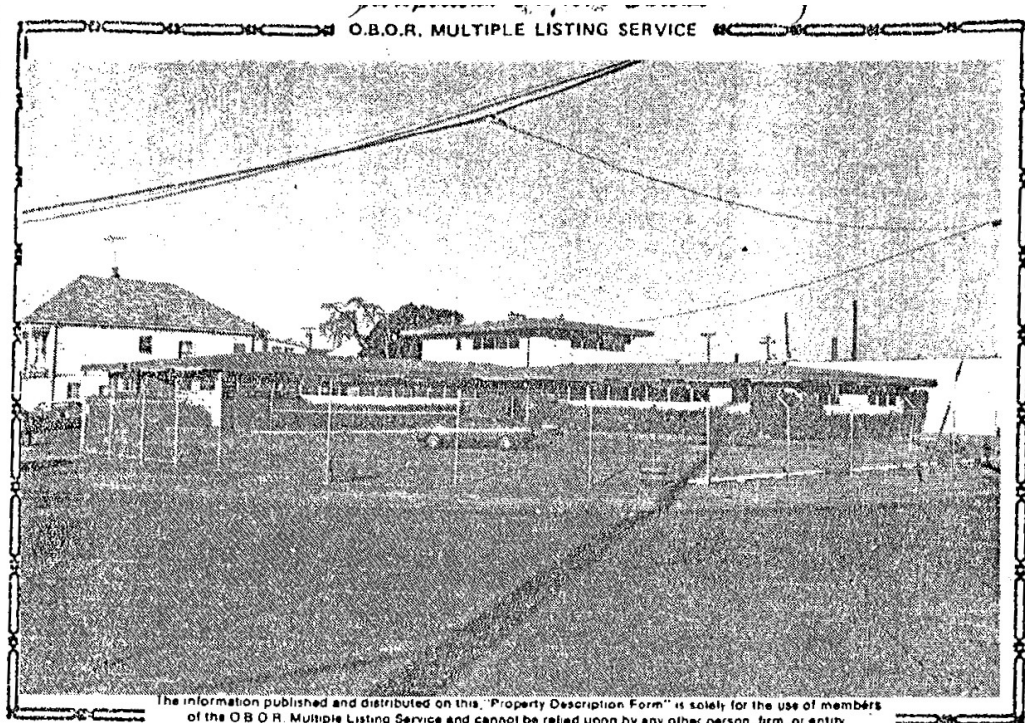
Continuation

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Historical Images:



Aerial view, 1965. Subject property circled. (U.C. Santa Barbara Library)



841 Folger Ave. in 1980. (City of Berkeley Building Department records)

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**Current Photographs:**



Primary (south) facade from Folger Avenue, looking north.



West and primary (south) facade, looking northeast.

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**Current Photographs:**



Concrete curb at front (south) of lot.



Lower primary (south) facade.

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**Current Photographs:**



Upper primary (south) facade.



West facade, looking east.

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**Current Photographs:**



Rear (north) and west facades, looking southeast.



Rear (north) facade, looking south.

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**Current Photographs:**

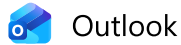


Detail of first story entry, right side of rear (north) facade.



5/26/26, 9:20 AM

June Agenda Request for 841 Folger Ave - Fu, Boshi - Outlook



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## June Agenda Request for 841 Folger Ave

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**From** James Wiley <jamesw@ashbylumber.com>  
**Date** Thu 5/21/2026 4:37 PM  
**To** Landmarks Preservation Commission <PlanningLPC@berkeleyca.gov>  
**Cc** Emily Brown <emilym@ashbylumber.com>

**WARNING:** This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is James Wiley, and I am the Operations Manager at Ashby Lumber. We are currently scheduled for the June 4th meeting regarding our demolition permit, a process that has been ongoing for over three years.

We have completed the required historical research, which established that the building holds no historical significance. Furthermore, Boshi Fu from the planning department has finalized the report for this meeting.

Given the expected length of the discussion regarding the Elmwood application, we are concerned that our case may be delayed further. We respectfully request that our demolition permit be placed on the agenda prior to the Elmwood topic.

As our case is straightforward and the report is complete, addressing it early would ensure we can proceed to the Zoning Adjustments Board in July and avoid entering a fourth year of the permitting process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

James Wiley

--

James Wiley

VP of Operations

**Ashby Lumber**

2295 Arnold Industrial Way | Concord, CA 94520

(925) 689-8999 x311 | [ashbylumber.com](http://ashbylumber.com)

5/26/26, 9:20 AM

June Agenda Request for 841 Folger Ave - Fu, Boshi - Outlook

