



LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

REFERRAL
JANUARY 5, 2023

1652-1658 University Avenue

Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2022-0110) to demolish a commercial building originally completed circa 1947; APN 56-2004-20

I. Application Basics

A. Zoning District: University Commercial District (C-U)

B. Parties Involved

Project Applicant: Erik Waterman
Studio KDA
1810 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA

Evaluator: Mark Hulbert, Historic Architect
Preservation Architecture
446 17th Street, Suite 302
Oakland, CA

Property Owner: Gordon Commercial Real Estate Services
2091 Rose Street
Berkeley, CA

C. Staff Recommendation: Consider the evaluation and then take no action.

II. Background

On August 25, 2022, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish the existing commercial building, and construct a 24,732 square-foot 5-story mixed-use building with 2,264 square-feet of commercial space, including two live/work units, 22,468 square-feet for 26 dwelling units, and no parking. At this time, the Use Permit application #ZP2022-0110 is under review by the Zoning Officer, and anticipated to reach the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) in 2023. More information about this project application can be found here:

<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/zoningapplications/>

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 23.326.070, any application for a Use Permit to demolish a non-residential building or structure 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 such a demolition request occurs under the provisions of Senate Bill 330¹, the City would be divested of the ability to impose conditions related to historic resource preservation upon Use Permit approval. Nevertheless, the study of potential significance and the LPC referral shall be completed in accordance with the BMC requirement.

In considering the proposed demolition of a structure, the Commission will weigh the potential to meet the significance criteria for COB Landmarks and Historic Districts in the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3), which are relatively specific and appear to align with the California Register. The Commission will also weigh the potential to meet the broader COB Structure of Merit criteria, which can include structures that are neither individually architecturally distinctive nor associated with significant people or events but may qualify as contributors to identified districts, areas, or clusters. The LPC may initiate a designation or take no action based on the significance criteria, but still forward comments regarding potential project conditions such as relocation, salvage, and/or photographic documentation to the Zoning Adjustments Board for consideration in its action on the application.

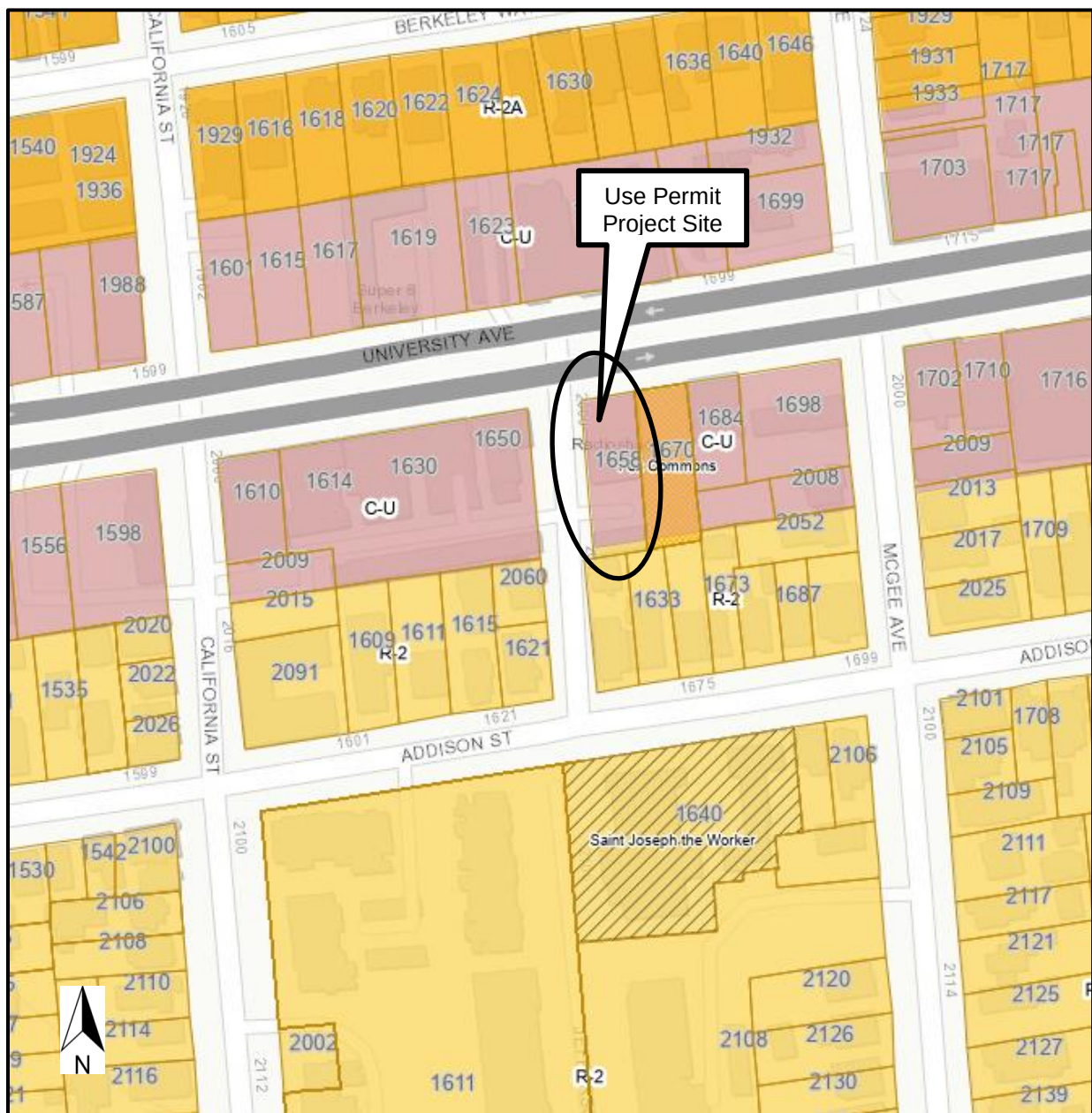
III. Historical Resources

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

¹ At the time that the Use Permit application was submitted, the subject property was not a locally-designated Landmark site and not subject to BMC Chapter 3.24. If designation status were granted after Use Permit submittal date, then SB 330 would prevent the City from imposing any conditions under BMC 3.24 related to historical resource preservation on the project.

Nearby City Landmarks and Structures of Merit include: Fox Commons at 1670-1672 University Avenue (1931, 1940), and Saint Joseph the Workers church and grounds at 1640 Addison Street (1907).

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



	Landmarks / Structure of Merit; LM,		Parcels
	Features		Demolished
	Districts		Partially Demolished

Figure 2: 1652-1658 University Avenue – Current site conditions, north elevation (Studio KDA; 2022)



Figure 3: 1652-1658 University Avenue – Current site conditions, northwest elevation (Google; 2022)



IV. Property Description

The historic resource evaluation (HRE), and DPR523A and B forms, for the subject property was completed in May 2022 by preservation architect Mark Hulbert of Preservation Architecture; please see Attachment 1 of this report. The HRE provides a description of the site's history and development, the building's construction history, previous owners and occupants, and a historical and architectural context, which are summarized below.

Parcel & Building Description: The subject parcel is a corner lot located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and University Avenue. The 7,500-sq. ft. parcel is relatively flat and features a two-story building along University Avenue, and a one-story storage building along the southern property line. Between the two buildings is a paved parking lot, with the driveway off of Jefferson Avenue.

The main building is constructed of wood, with a stucco exterior. On the north and west façades there is a painted brick base. At the first floor on the north façade there is a glass storefront with a series of aluminum-frame windows, with large square lites at the bottom near the brick base, and large rectangular transom windows above. The recessed entry is to the right of the center of the wall, with two glazed aluminum entry doors. Across the glazed storefront is a shallow overhang.

A brick staircase on the east elevation connects the street to the second floor. There are two flat roofs over the staircase, with wood guardrails along the left side of the stairs. Windows are present on all elevations at the second floor. On the east, north, and south elevations the windows are paired, with smaller sash windows below long rectangular windows. At the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the building there are two sets of paired windows. On the west elevation there are four smaller one-over-one sash windows, and a trio of windows in the same style as the paired windows on the other elevations. The roof of the building is flat, with metal coping at the edge.

The rear storage building is comprised of concrete masonry units, and is as wide as the parcel (50 feet), and 22 feet deep. On the north elevation there are five pairs of out swinging wood doors. The roof is flat, with metal coping on the wooden parapet wall, and at the top of the CMU wall.

Brief Site History: Before the existing main building was constructed the site was vacant. Harry B. Williamson was the property owner when the site was developed in 1947. Williamson was listed as the designer and builder on the building permit, but the permit also listed L.W. Howard as the preparer of the plans. Williamson worked in real estate development and property management with his father, Luther M. Williamson.

L.W. Howard designed four buildings in Berkeley, two residences in the 1920s, and two commercial buildings in 1946. Assuming L.W. Howard is Lewis W. Howard he also designed 1620 Shattuck.

The first floor has been occupied by commercial uses including a laundromat and RadioShack, and the second floor has been occupied by various offices, including medical offices.

Cold storage outbuildings were located at the rear of the first floor, and a porch was also located at the rear, as shown in the 1950 Sanborn Map; both were subsequently removed prior to 1990. The storage building along the southern property line was added in 1958. The front doors and the storefront windows at the first floor have likely been replaced, but it is not clear when the replacement occurred. The second-floor windows were replaced in 2003.

The evaluator classifies the building's design as Commercial Modern, characterized, generally, by a flat roof and an aluminum frame storefront.

The ownership and occupancy history of the subject building are available in detail in the HRE, Attachment 1, and summarized in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Summary of Owners & Occupants for 1652-1658 University Avenue

Owner		Occupants			
Owner	Tenure	Ground Floor Business	Duration	Upstairs Business	Duration
Harry B. Williamson	1947-1990	U-Save Market	1948-1951	Counseling	1983-?
		Jack Clarkson Launderette, University Laundromat, University Clean-O-Mat	1957-1983	Central Health Network (1654 University)	1986-?
Janis L. Mitchell and John K. Gordon (Gordon Commercial Real Estate)	1991?-Present	RadioShack	2003-2020	Herbal medicine, acupuncture (1654 University)	2004-2011
				Massage (1656 University)	2008-Present

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context²: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff suggests that the building's period of significance would have begun with the extant structure's date of completion circa 1947 and continued until 1982, at least 40 years prior to this demolition referral, in accordance

² 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).

with BMC Section 23.326.070(C). Owing to the subject building's design, continued use for commercial business, and its location along the University Avenue commercial corridor, it is associated with the historical theme of Berkeley's commercial development.

Significance Criteria: The subject building has been evaluated based on the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC Chapter 3.24). The existing building is more than 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. Because it is more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23C.08.050 requires that it be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

In determining the potential significance of this building, the evaluator has analyzed the property's extant 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's and staff's evaluations are discussed below.

Events – CR Criterion 1/BMC Criteria *Historical and Cultural Value*

The building is associated with the historical pattern of commercial development in Berkeley. However, a study of its construction history, ownership and occupancy records revealed no information linking this site to any events or singular episode of primary importance to Berkeley's history or economic development. For this reason, it does not exhibit historical significance under the local or state criteria.

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

With respect to significant persons and potential cultural value, the consultant's research confirmed that the persons and enterprises that owned and occupied this property do not appear to have made a significant or lasting contribution to history or commercial development. Similar to the findings and conclusions for the previous significance criterion, this property is not associated with a historically significance person.

Design – CR Criterion 3/BMC Criteria *Architectural Merit*

The design of the building is Commercial Modern. The evaluator concludes -- and staff agrees -- that the building could not be considered an outstanding example of the style and, therefore, would not be significant for its design.

Information – CR Criterion 4/BMC Criterion *Educational Force*

There have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigations for the subject parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it was not likely to yield archeological information or other sub-surface resources related to pre-history or pre-colonial and tribal cultural resources.

LPO/BMC Criteria for *Structure of Merit*

As a potential Structure of Merit (BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)), the extant building does not appear to be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block, or a street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks because it is:

- Neither a contemporary of the nearest City Landmark, nor is it compatible with its style or design.
- Not a good example of design.
- Possesses no historically significant connections to its neighborhood, block, frontage or group of resources.

VI. Recommendation – Take No Action.

Staff recommends 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. CA Dept. Parks & Recreation Forms A and B, and Historical Evaluation for 1652-1658 University Avenue, prepared by Mark Hulbert of Preservation Architecture, 446 17th Street #302, Oakland, CA; dated May 2022.

Prepared by: Allison Riemer, Associate Planner, ariemer@cityofberkeley.info, 510-981-7433

State of California ☐ The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMARY RECORD	Primary # HRI # Trinomial NRHP Status Code Other Listings Review Code Reviewer Date
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Page 1 of 5 *Resource Name or #: 1652-1658 University Avenue
 P1. Other Identifier: None

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted
 *a. County Alameda and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)
 *b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 1993 Township & Range --
 c. Address 1652-1658 University Ave. City Berkeley Zip 94703
 d. UTM: Zone --, -- mE/ -- mN
 e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 56-2004-20

*P3a. Description:
 The 50 foot wide by 150 foot deep subject parcel (APN 56-2004-20) is located at the southeast corner of University Ave. and Jefferson St. Fronting on University with a blank ground floor wall on Jefferson, the extant building is 40 feet wide by 75 feet deep by 25 feet high. The simple, 1-part building form is a rectangular box that stands at the back of both sidewalks and with an open rear parking lot. Within its east side setback and appended to that side of the building is a covered exterior stair that provides access to and from the second floor. An uncovered rearward stair leg provides direct access to and from the parking lot. (cont.)

P5a. Photograph



Fig.1 – 1652-1658 University Ave., front (north) and east side

*P3b. Resource Attributes:
 HP6: 1-3 story
commercial building
 *P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐
 Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐
 Element of District ☐ Other
 P5b. Description of Photo:
fig.1, 3-5) MH, 2022;
fig.2) Sanborn map, c1990
 *P6. Date Constructed/Age and
 Source: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric
☐ Both
1927 building permit #61817
(attached)
 *P7. Owner and Address:
Gordon Commercial Real
Estate Services,
2091 Rose St.,
Berkeley, CA 94709
 *P8. Recorded by:
Mark Hulbert
446 17th St. #302
Oakland, CA 94612

P9. Date Recorded:
May 27, 2022

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. Report Citation:
None

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location 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): _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # 1652-1658 University Avenue, Berkeley *NRHP Status Code _____
Page 2 of 5

B1. Historic Name: 1652-1658 University Avenue
B2. Common Name: --
B3. Original Use: Commercial — office over store B4. Present Use: same/vacant
*B5. Architectural Style: Commercial Modern

***B6. Construction History:**

The subject lot #20 comprises lot 8 plus the northern 22 feet of lot 5 originally mapped as part of the 1878 Hardy Tract. Thereon, the existing 2-story commercial building was constructed for a store and offices in 1947, prior to which the parcel was vacant. (cont.)

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____
*B8. Related Features: None
B9a. Architect: L. W. Howard (?) b. Builder: H. B. Williamson (?)
*B10. Significance: Theme -- Area --
Period of Significance -- Property Type -- Applicable Criteria --

Per the attached evaluation, the subject, 1947 commercial building has no identifiable historic significance. (cont.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: none

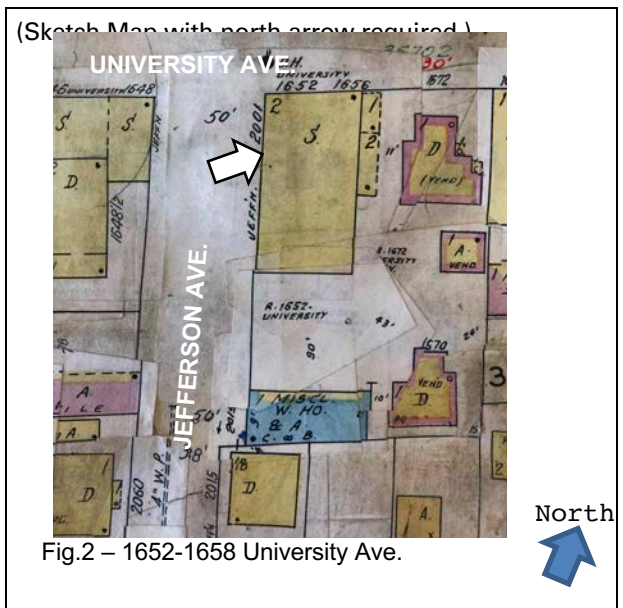
***B12. References:**

Alameda County/Oakland directories – 1920-1975 (@loc.org); Sanborn maps – 1929, 1950 (@sfpl.org) & c1990 (from City of Berkeley; City of Berkeley permit records, 1924-present; U.S. Census records (@heritagequest.com); additional reference in text.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Mark Hulbert Preservation Architect
*Date of Evaluation: May 27, 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 1652-1658 University Avenue, Berkeley

Page 3 of 5

Description (continued from p1)

The building structure is wood frame, its exterior walls painted stucco with a shallow, painted brick base across the front and west side, storefront windows and doors at ground floor front (north), 2 flush metal doors at ground floor rear, synthetic sash windows at second floor, and a flat roof with a simple sheet metal roof coping at top of wall all around. The storefront is 6 units wide with a recessed pair of glazed aluminum entry doors to the right of center, 2 windows to its right and 3 to the left, which fixed metal framed windows are large square lites with transom lites above and aside from which there are no other windows at the ground floor. An overhanging lip spans the storefront.

The frontward east side stairway is brick construction covered with wood framed upper and lower flat roofs and with wood guardrails. The rearward stair is open wood construction. Second floor windows at the front, east side and rear are pairs each with integral awning sashes below, including at the conjoined corner windows at 3 street-oriented building corners. In the center of the upper west side wall is a similar window yet configured as a trio, which window is flanked by 2 small hung units at each side.

To the rear of the building is a paved parking lot and, across the very rear of the lot, a single-story, 50 foot wide by 22 foot deep garage/storage outbuilding that dates to 1958, is constructed of cmu walls, has 5 garage openings with outswinging pairs of wood panel garage doors facing north and a flat roof with metal coping.

The building's design style is Commercial Modern.



Fig.3 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – East side and front

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 1652-1658 University Avenue, Berkeley

Page 4 of 5



Figs.4-5 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – West side and rear (left); garage outbuilding at rear (right)

Construction History (continued from p2)

The property owner and developer of the 1947 store and office building was Harry B. Williamson, who remained its owner and property manager until his passing in 1990. It is presently owned by Gordon Commercial Real Estate (Janis L. Mitchell and John K. Gordon), who acquired the property in the 1990s.

The 1947 permit identified Williamson as the owner, designer and builder, yet a certification attached to the permit identified L. W. Howard as the preparer of the plans and specifications (no original or early drawings or documents have been located).

Based on permit and directory listings, the original ground floor commercial use was the U-Save Market, which store was listed in directories from 1948 to 1951. The next identified ground floor occupant was a laundromat variously identified as “Jack Clarkson Launderette,” “University Laundromat” or “University Clean-O-Mat,” for which permit records span from 1957 to 1983. From 2003 to 2020, the ground floor tenant was a Radio Shack store. A mix of office tenants have occupied the second floor.

Based on permit records, in addition to numerous interior changes to the ground floor, exterior changes included replacement of all second floor windows in 2003. The front doors at the store are also replacements, as are the storefront windows, though there is no specific evidence of when. Address changes have been made, with the earlier lettered suites at the second floor replaced, again in 2003, by the address numbers 1654, 1656 and 1658. Earlier, a pair of “cold storage” outbuildings depicted in the 1950 Sanborn map, behind and evidently for the market’s use, as well as an original porch roof across the back of the building were each removed prior to 1990. And the garage outbuilding was permitted and added in 1958.

Significance (continued from page 2)

Associated Person

Harry B. Williamson (1906-1990) was, in 1947, the developer and from 1947-1990, the owner of the subject commercial building.

Williamson worked in real estate development and management under his father, Luther M. Williamson (1861-1936), and thereafter on his own. (cont.)

In the 1950 census, Williamson, his wife Helen and a son resided at 1709 University Ave., an extant apartment building one block east and opposite of 1652 University building. The Williamsons were likewise listed at 1709 University in 1947, when 1652 University was constructed.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 1652-1658 University Avenue, Berkeley

Page 5 of 5

Significance (continued from p4)

The 1950 census also recorded his occupation as the proprietor of a property management company. In the 1950 directory, the Williamson Property Co. was listed at the address 1632 University, another extant apartment building located in the block west of his 1652 University Ave. building and which address was listed in its 1947 permit. Per a 2017 historic resource inventory for another Williamson building development, the 1632 University building was developed and owned by the Williamsons (Michael R. Corbett; *Department of Parks and Recreation Forms 523, 2009 Addison St., Berkeley*; 27 June 2017). It is likewise possible that the 1709 University apartment building, where Harry B. Williamson, resided was a family property development and/or holding. Further, the small commercial property between the subject building and the 1632 University apartment building was likely another Williamson property (though no such research has been undertaken as part of the current effort).

Designer

The 1947 permit application indicated that the subject building was designed by L.W. Howard. Per the 2017 record cited above, "a compilation of data from building permit applications prepared by B.A.H.A. lists L.W. Howard as designer of four buildings in Berkeley, two houses in the 1920s and two commercial buildings in 1946. If L.W. Howard is Lewis W. Howard, he also designed 1620 Shattuck. L.W. Howard was not prominent and it is not certain who he was. The most likely candidate from newspaper and census research is Lewis W. Howard who was a carpenter and contractor in the 1920s who went to work for the post office in the 1930s" (p5).

Evaluation

Per the *California Register of Historical Resources* evaluation criteria:

Criterion 1 – In its mid-University Ave. and mid-20th century commercial development context, there are no identifiable events of any potential historic importance associated with this property or its ordinary store and office building, so 1652-1658 University Ave. does not meet *CR criterion 3*.

Criterion 2 – The individual directly associated with the subject building, Harry B. Williamson (1906-1990), was the developer of this 1947 commercial property along with another, at 2009 Addison St., in 1946, which buildings he managed for the duration of his life. In that period, as also noted, Williamson was also the manager of nearby apartment buildings inherited from his father. Based on the evidence of his identified developments and business activities, Harry B. Williamson is of no identifiable historical importance. Consequently, the subject property and its building do not meet *CR criterion 2*.

Criterion 3 – This standard Commercial Modern building lacks distinctive design and construction character and characteristics of its type, period or region, and there are no distinctive methods of construction. Its few design features consist of its altered storefront and second floor windows – which were all replaced in 2003, including the 3 corner windows – along with its covered east side brick stair and railing, none of which are of design or construction importance. Neither is the tentatively identified architect, L. W. Howard, potentially noteworthy. Nor does the building embody any artistic intent or artistry. Therefore, there is no identifiable design or construction significance under *CR criterion 3*.

Criterion 4 – Relative to potential historic architectural resources, the subject property has not yielded and at this juncture, beyond the contents of this report, does not appear to have any potential to yield additional information of any historical importance.

Conclusion – The subject building at 1652-1658 University Ave. in Berkeley lacks potential historical significance per the California Register criteria.

20,000

6006
1137203

60 96
30 48
20 144
10 75
5 369

CITY OF BERKELEY Building Department

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT FOR A TYPE IV OR V BUILDING

Application is hereby made to the Building Department of the City of Berkeley for permission to build a Group 4 corner 2 Story, 4 8 Room Building, to be occupied as Store Office

Lot located on the S.E. of Union Square street feet of street,
side

Being Lot No. 8 Block 9+10 Hardy Tract

Estimated entire cost of building \$15,000.00 (Includes all materials and labor for finished building.)
According to plans and specifications herewith submitted. All provisions of the Building Code will be complied with in the erection of said building whether specified herein or not.

Size of lot 50 by 150 feet. Size of proposed building 40' feet by 75' feet.

Extreme height of building 22' feet

Ceiling heights in clear to be as follows:

Cellar	ft.	in.
First Story	<u>12</u>	ft. in.
Second Story	<u>8</u>	ft. in.
Third Story	ft.	in.

Foundation to be of (material) Concrete

Walls	Width at top	inches.
	Width at bottom	inches.
	Least height	inches.
	Greatest height	inches.
Piers	Size at top	X inches.
	Size at bottom	X inches.
		ft. on centers
	Height	inches.

Mud sills 2 X 6

Main sills (plates) 2 X 6

Post on piers 8 X 8

Girders 8 X 16 Max. span 9'3"

Underpinning X inches inches O. C.

Size of studs in outside walls to be as follows:

First story	<u>2</u> X <u>6</u> inches <u>16</u> inches O. C.
Second story	<u>2</u> X <u>4</u> inches <u>16</u> inches O. C.
Third story	<u>X</u> inches inches O. C.

Bearing partitions to be same as outside walls of each story.

Exterior wall coverings to be of Stucco. All outside walls covered with shingles or plaster will be close boarded.

Roof { Covered with Tar & Gravel
Sheating X inches inches O. C.
Pitch

First floor joists Concrete inches inches on centers. Longest span between supports ft.

Second floor joists 3 X 16 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 19'8" ft.

Third floor joists X inches inches on centers. Longest span between supports ft.

Ceiling joists 2 X 4 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 10 ft.

Rafters 2 X 4 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 11 ft.

Chimneys { Brick: Number lined with terra cotta.
Patent: Number size. Number of inlets per flue. Size of inlets.

Be Sure to Sign Statement on Other Side

Furnace, to burn

Name of Owner of Ground H. B. Williamson Address 1632 University

Name of Owner of Building H Address "

Name of Lessee of Building H Address "

Name of Architect or Designer H Address "

Name of Engineer H Address "

Name of Builder H Address "

State License No. "

We
I hereby agree to save, indemnify and keep harmless the City of Berkeley and/or its employees, against all liabilities, judgments, costs and expenses which may in any wise accrue against said City in consequence of the granting of this permit, or from the use or occupancy of any sidewalk, street or sub-sidewalk space by virtue thereof, and will in all things strictly comply with the conditions of this permit and Ordinances of the City of Berkeley.

In Zone No. " Ordinance No. " Signature of Owner, Agent or Builder H. B. Williamson
Fire Zone No. 2 Address 1632 University

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

1660-1670 University 52 Permit No. 61817
Number Street Page
Filed 516 Ready. Checked by " Date Issued 9-3-27

910-172 National Automobile and Casualty Insurance Co
C 393444

I hereby CERTIFY that the plans and specifications used in making the application hereon for a Building Permit were prepared by: H. W. Howard

Address

and that the Laws of the State of California governing the practice of Architecture, Civil and/or Structural Engineering have not been violated in so doing.

Address

Date

H. B. Williams
1632 University Ave
July 28, 1947 Attest

31.00
62.00
36.00

May 27, 2022

1652-1658 University Ave., Berkeley
City of Berkeley Historical Evaluation

This historical and historic architectural evaluation addresses the existing commercial property and building at the above address and based on the City of Berkeley's historical and cultural resource evaluation criteria. This overall effort has been based on site visits, the acquisition and review of city permit records, U.S. census and telephone directory searches, along with general historical and architectural research.

The following first summarizes the subject resource then proceeds to the City of Berkeley evaluation. In sum, per the City of Berkeley's *Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO)*, the subject property and building are not eligible for designation as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Summary History

The 50 foot wide by 150 foot deep subject parcel (APN 56-2004-20) is located at the southeast corner of University Ave. and Jefferson Ave. Subject lot #20 comprises lot 8 plus the northern 22 feet of lot 5 originally mapped as part of the 1878 Hardy Tract (figs.1-3). Thereon, the existing 2-story commercial building was constructed for a store and offices in 1947, prior to which the parcel was vacant.

The property owner and developer of the 1947 store and office building was Harry B. Williamson, who remained its owner and property manager until his passing in 1990. It is presently owned by Gordon Commercial Real Estate (Janis L. Mitchell and John K. Gordon), who acquired the property in the 1990s.

The 1947 permit identified Williamson as the owner, designer and builder, yet a certification attached to the permit identified L. W. Howard as the preparer of the plans and specifications (no original or early drawings or documents have been located).

Based on permit and directory listings, the original ground floor commercial use was the U-Save Market, which store was listed in directories from 1948 to 1951. The next identified ground floor occupant was a laundromat variously identified as "Jack Clarkson Launderette," "University Laundromat" or "University Clean-O-Mat," for which permit records span from 1957 to 1983. From 2003 to 2020, the ground floor tenant was a Radio Shack store. A mix of office tenants have occupied the second floor.

Based on permit records, in addition to numerous interior changes to the ground floor, exterior changes included replacement of all second floor windows in 2003. The front doors at the store are also replacements as are the storefront windows, though there is no specific evidence of when. Address changes have been made, with the earlier lettered suites at the second floor replaced, again in 2003, by the address numbers 1654, 1656 and 1658. Earlier, a pair of "cold storage" outbuildings depicted in the 1950 Sanborn map, behind and evidently for the market's use, as well as an original porch roof across the back of the building were each removed prior to 1990. And the garage outbuilding was permitted and added in 1958. The c1990 Sanborn map depicts the existing property and its structures (fig.4).

Summary Descriptions (figs.5-11)

Fronting on University with a blank ground floor wall on Jefferson, the extant building is 40 feet wide by 75 feet deep by 25 feet high. The simple, 1-part building form is a rectangular box that stands at the back of both sidewalks and with an open rear parking lot. Within its east side setback and appended to that side of the building is, frontward, a covered exterior stair that provides primary access to and from the second floor. An uncovered rearward stair leg provides direct access to and from the parking lot.

The building structure is wood frame, its exterior walls painted stucco with a shallow, painted brick base across the front and west side, storefront windows and doors at ground floor front (north), 2 flush metal doors at ground floor rear, synthetic sash windows at second floor, and a flat roof with a simple sheet metal roof coping at top of wall all around. The storefront is 6 units wide with a recessed pair of glazed aluminum entry doors to the right of center, 2 windows to its right and 3 to the left, which fixed metal framed windows are large square lites with transom lites above and aside from which there are no other windows at the ground floor. An overhanging lip spans the storefront.

The frontward east side stairway is brick construction covered with wood framed upper and lower flat roofs and with wood guardrails. The rearward stair is open wood construction. Second floor windows at the front, east side and rear are pairs each with integral awning sashes below, including at the conjoined corner windows at 3 street-oriented building corners. In the center of the upper west side wall is a similar window yet configured as a trio, which window is flanked by 2 small hung units at each side.

To the rear of the building is a paved parking lot and, across the very rear of the lot, a single-story, 50 foot wide by 22 foot deep garage/storage outbuilding that dates to 1958, is constructed of cmu walls, has 5 garage openings with outswinging pairs of wood panel garage doors facing north and a flat roof with a metal coping.

The building's design style is Commercial Modern. Its setting is on University Ave., the primary east-west corridor of Berkeley, thus with a broad mix of surrounding property types including, immediate to the subject property, several relatively large apartment buildings from 1920 to the present, a residential cottage complex, small commercial buildings, a gas station and a church. Directly behind is a residential neighborhood with another church.

Associated Persons

Harry B. Williamson (1906-1990) was, in 1947, the developer and from 1947-1990, the owner of the subject commercial building.

Williamson worked in real estate development and management under his father, Luther M. Williamson (1861-1936), and thereafter on his own.

In the 1950 census, Williamson, his wife Helen and a son resided at 1709 University Ave., an extant apartment building one block east and opposite of 1652 University building. The Williamsons were listed at 1709 University in 1947, when 1652 University was constructed. The 1950 census also recorded his occupation as the proprietor of a property management company. In the 1950 directory, the Williamson Property Co. was listed at the address 1632 University Ave., another extant apartment building located in the block west of his 1652 University building and which address was

listed in its 1947 permit. Per a 2017 historic resource inventory for another Williamson building development, the 1632 University building was developed and owned by the Williamsons (Michael R. Corbett; *Department of Parks and Recreation Forms 523, 2009 Addison St., Berkeley*; 27 June 2017). It is likewise possible that the 1709 University apartment building, where Harry B. Williamson resided, was a family property development and/or holding. Further, the small commercial property between the subject building and the 1632 University apartment building was likely another Williamson property (though no such research has been undertaken as part of the current effort).

Architect/Designer

The 1947 permit application indicated that the subject building was designed by L.W. Howard. Per the 2017 record cited above, “a compilation of data from building permit applications prepared by B.A.H.A. lists L.W. Howard as designer of four buildings in Berkeley, two houses in the 1920s and two commercial buildings in 1946. If L.W. Howard is Lewis W. Howard, he also designed 1620 Shattuck. L.W. Howard was not prominent and it is not certain who he was. The most likely candidate from newspaper and census research is Lewis W. Howard who was a carpenter and contractor in the 1920s who went to work for the post office in the 1930s” (p.5).

Evaluation

The commercial building and property at 1652-1658 University Ave. are not eligible for designation as a Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit on the basis of any cultural value, as the subject property and building:

- Are not associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social or economic developments of the City (LPO Section A.2). In its mid-University Ave. and mid-20th century commercial development context, there are no development patterns of any potential historic importance associated with this property or its ordinary store and office building,
- Are not worth preserving for usefulness as an educational force (LPO Section A.3), as there is no potential educational value associated with the subject commercial building or its uses.
- And as an ordinary, mid-20th century commercial building, the subject building does not embody or express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States (LPO Section A.4).

Additionally, on the basis of architectural merit, the subject building is not eligible to be a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit, as:

- The subject building is not a “first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region” as there are numerous surviving predecessors and successors. Moreover, the 2-story, retail and office building at 1652-1658 University Ave. is a building of insignificant design character (LPO Section A.1.a).
- The subject building is not a prototypical or outstanding example of its post-WWII period (LPO Section A.1.b).
- This commercial store and office building is not an architectural example worthy of preservation for any “potentially exceptional values” relative to its neighborhood (LPO Section A.1.c).
- Nor is this building worthy of potential preservation as part of its neighborhood, block or street frontage. Fox Commons, Berkeley Landmark #211 (1670-1676 University, Fox Bros., 1931-1940), is a set of romantic cottages that stands directly to the east. Another, St. Joseph the Worker, Berkeley Landmark #164 (1600-1640 Addison St., Shea & Lofquist, 1907), stands 1

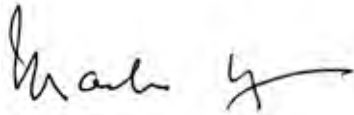
block directly south. Yet the subject building has no historical or historic architectural association or compatibility with either (LPO Section B.1).

Further, under CoB Structure of Merit criteria:

- As cited above, the existing commercial building is not worthy of preservation as part of the neighborhood, block or street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings that includes landmarks (LPO sec.B.1).
- The age of the subject building is not contemporary with an historic period or event of significance to the City or to this neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings (LPO sec.B.2a). Neither does the subject commercial building constitute a potential event of importance relative “to the structure’s neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings” (LPO Section B.2.a[2]).
- As also noted above, 2 Berkeley Landmarks stand adjacent and nearby, yet to which the subject building is neither architecturally related nor compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design (LPO sec.B.2b).
- The existing building has no identifiable historical significance to the City and/or to its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings (LPO sec.B.2d).

Consequently, the property and apartment building at 1652-1658 University Ave. in Berkeley are not eligible as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark Hulbert", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Hulbert
Preservation Architect

attached: figs.1-11 (pp.5-9); 1947 & 1958 building permit copies (4pp.)



Fig.1 – 1652-1658 University Ave. (highlighted) – Aerial (Google Earth, 2022, north is up)

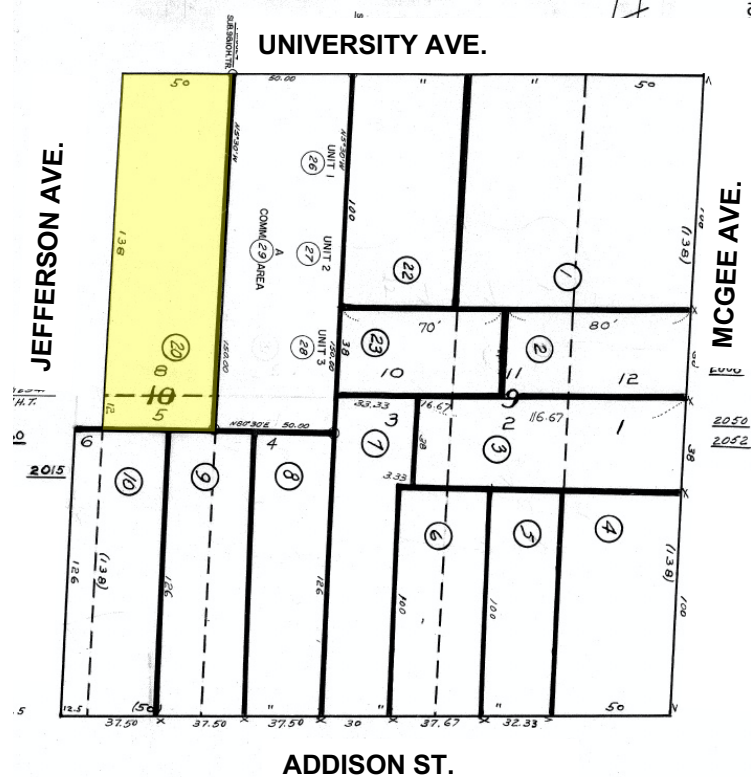


Fig.2 – 1652-1658 University Ave. (highlighted) – from Assessor's Parcel Map

MAP OF
SUBDIVISIONS 9 & 10.
HARDY TRACT
OAKLAND.

Adairson Street. Scale 100 ft. 1 in.

[illegible]

1652-58 UNIVERSITY, BERKELEY
COB-HREVAL-052722-P6



Fig.5 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – Front (left) on University and west side on Jefferson (figs.5-11, MH 2022)



Fig.6 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – East side and front



Fig.7 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – East side and rear



Fig.8 – 1652-1658 University Ave. – Garage outbuilding at rear



Fig.9-11 – 1652-1658 University Ave. (far right) – Neighboring properties directly east (above), directly across Jefferson Ave. to west (middle) and directly across University Ave. (below)

CITY OF BERKELEY
Building Department

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT FOR A
TYPE IV OR V BUILDING

Application is hereby made to the Building Department of the City of Berkeley for permission to build a Group 1 Type 2 Story, 4 Room Building, to be occupied as Store Office
Lot located on the S.E. side of University street, 19 + 10 feet of Hardy street,
Being Lot No. 8 Block 19 + 10 Tract Hardy
Estimated entire cost of building \$15,000.00 (Includes all materials and labor for finished building.)
According to plans and specifications herewith submitted. All provisions of the Building Code will be complied with in the erection of said building whether specified herein or not.

Size of lot 50 by 150 feet. Size of proposed building 40' feet by 75' feet.

Extreme height of building 22' feet

Ceiling heights in clear to be as follows:

Cellar ft. in.

First Story 12 ft. in.

Second Story 8 ft. in.

Third Story ft. in.

Foundation to be of (material) Concrete

Walls { Width at top inches.
Width at bottom inches.
Least height inches.
Greatest height inches.

Piers { Size at top X inches.
Size at bottom X inches.
ft. on centers
Height inches.

Mud sills 2 X 6

Main sills (plates) 2 X 6

Post on piers 8 X 8

Girders 8 X 16 Max. span 9'3" ft.

Underpinning X inches inches O. C.

Size of studs in outside walls to be as follows:

First story 2 X 6 inches 16 inches O. C.

Second story 2 X 4 inches 16 inches O. C.

Third story X inches inches O. C.

Bearing partitions to be same as outside walls of each story.

Exterior wall coverings to be of Stucco. All outside walls covered with shingles or plaster will be close boarded.

Roof { Covered with Tar & Gravel
Sheating X inches inches O. C.
Pitch

First floor joists Concrete inches on centers. Longest span between supports ft.

Second floor joists 3 X 16 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 19'8" ft.

Third floor joists X inches inches on centers. Longest span between supports ft.

Ceiling joists 2 X 4 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 10 ft.

Rafters 2 X 4 inches 16 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 11 ft.

Chimneys { Brick: Number lined with terra cotta.
Patent: Number size Number of inlets per flue Size of inlets

Be Sure to Sign Statement on Other Side

Furnace, to burn

Name of Owner of Ground H. B. Williamson Address 1632 University

Name of Owner of Building Address

Name of Lessee of Building Address

Name of Architect or Designer Address

Name of Engineer Address

Name of Builder Address

State License No.

We I hereby agree to save, indemnify and keep harmless the City of Berkeley and/or its employees, against all liabilities, judgments, costs and expenses which may in any wise accrue against said City in consequence of the granting of this permit, or from the use or occupancy of any sidewalk, street or sub-sidewalk space by virtue thereof, and will in all things strictly comply with the conditions of this permit and Ordinances of the City of Berkeley.

In Zone No. Ordinance No.

Fire Zone No. 2

Signature of Owner, Agent or Builder H. B. Williamson
Address 1632 University

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

1660-1670 University 52
Number Street Page

Filed 516 Ready Checked by

Permit No. 61817

Date Issued 9-3-17

I hereby CERTIFY that the plans and specifications used in making the application hereon for a Building Permit were prepared by: H. W. Howard

Address

and that the Laws of the State of California governing the practice of Architecture, Civil and/or Structural Engineering have not been violated in so doing.

H. B. Williams
Address 1632 University Ave
Date July 28, 1947 Attest.....

3100
6200
3600

CITY OF BERKELEY
Building Department

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT FOR A
Group J Building

Application is hereby made to the Building Department of the City of Berkeley for Permission to build a
Type III building to be occupied as a Group J occupancy for: garage
Located at 1652 University Ave.
Value 2,000.00

SIZE, LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION TO BE AS FOLLOWS:
(See Over For Plans)

Size: 50 x 22 Height: 10
Floor: concrete
Outside Walls: Block
Roof: for gravel
Distance from nearest building on the lot: 50
Distance from side lot line: on property line
Distance from rear lot line: on property line
Walls closer than 3 feet to the side and/or rear lot lines will be fireproofed as follows:

Footings and also existing
work to done consist of constructing roof and block walls

Name of Owner J. B. Williams Address 1632 University Ave.
Name of Architect or Designer same Address same
Name of Engineer same Address same
Name of Builder same Address same
State License No.

I We hereby agree to save, indemnify and keep harmless the City of Berkeley against all liabilities, judgments, costs and expenses which may in any wise accrue against said city in consequence of the granting of this permit, or from the use or occupancy of any sidewalk, street or sub-sidewalk space by virtue thereof, and will in all things strictly comply with the conditions of this permit and Ordinances of the City of Berkeley

In Zone No. Ordinance No. J. B. Williams
Signature of Owner, Agent or Builder
File Zone No. Address 1632 University Ave.

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

1652 UNIVERSITY
Number Street Page

Permit No. 69800
APR 13 1951

Filed Ready Checked by Date Issued

Planning Department
(Section 17, Ordinance No. 3018-N.S.)

Permit for garage bldg approx 30 x 22
At 1656 Underhill Ave. In a C.1 District
Area of lot 50 x 150 Coverage 75 x 150 present bldg
50 x 22 addition
Yards Front 50 ft ^{MAIN Bldg,} Left Side — Right Side — Rear —
Height Main Building to + 20' Accessory Building 10'

Issued: 4/13/51
By Emstang
Planning Department

Certificate:
I hereby certify that the foregoing statement and data are in all respects to the best of my knowledge and belief true and correct.

Signature: H. B. Williamson
Owner's Name
By — Agent