



L A N D M A R K S
P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I S S I O N
S T A F F R E P O R T

REFERRAL
APRIL 7, 2022

2440 Shattuck Avenue

Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2021-0201) to demolish a Downtown commercial building originally completed in 1946; APN 055-1896-005-00.

I. Application Basics

A. Zoning District: Downtown Mixed Use (C-DMU)

B. Parties Involved

Project Applicant: Dave Johnson, AIA
Johnson Lyman Architects
1375 Locust Street, #202
Walnut Creek, CA

Evaluator: Caitlin Hibma, Architectural Historian
Left Coast Architectural History
Richmond, CA

Property Owner: Lair QOZB, LLC
2440 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA

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

II. Background

On November 9, 2021, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish the subject building and adjacent surface parking lot, and to construct a new, multi-story mixed-use building containing as many as 40 dwelling units. At this time, the Use Permit application #ZP2021-0201 is under review by the Zoning Officer, scheduled for Design Review Committee on April 21, 2022, and anticipated to reach the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) later this year. 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.

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.

Nearby City Landmarks and Structures of Merit include: The Barker Building at 2484 Shattuck Avenue (1905); Morrill Apartments at 2429 Shattuck Avenue (1911), and Mattern/Berkeley Bank site at 2500 Shattuck Avenue (1923).

Figure 1: Vicinity Map showing nearby City Landmark sites

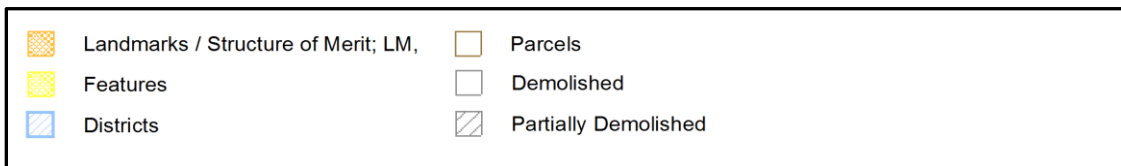
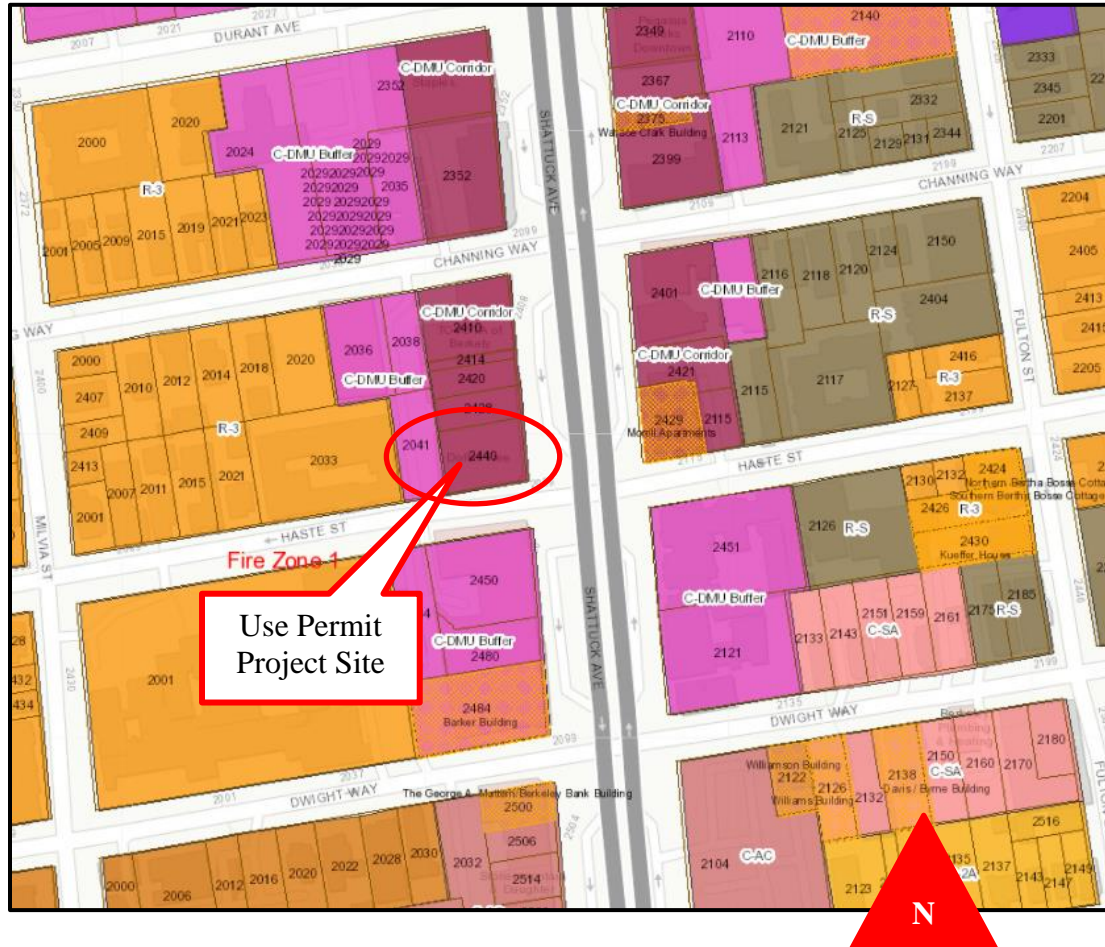


Figure 2: 2440 Shattuck Avenue – 1950 Historic Photograph (Berkeley Historical Society)



Figure 3: 2440 Shattuck Avenue – Current Site Conditions (Google Maps; 2021)



IV. Property Description

The historic resource evaluation (HRE) for the subject property was submitted as California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) Forms 523 A & B, completed in September 2021 by architectural historian Caitlin Hibma of Left Coast Architectural History; 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 located on the west side of the 2400-block of Shattuck Avenue. It is a corner lot with its shorter, primary frontage on Shattuck Avenue on the east, and its longer, secondary frontage on Haste Street on the south. The approximately 8,400-sq. ft. parcel is relatively flat and features a single-story, commercial building that covers it completely. The brick building features a flat roof and parapet walls with a stucco finish on the front-face façade, and painted brick throughout. The main entrance (recessed within an alcove) and ten display windows of varying sizes appear on the primary (east) façade along with a projecting, flat canopy that wraps the rounded building corner, where the primary façade meets the side street elevation (south). A corner stone, located on the northern end of the primary façade, is inscribed with the name "WHITTEN BLDG 1946." The site is currently vacant.

A detailed description and photographs of the property are provided in the historic resource evaluation for this consideration; see Attachment 1 of this report.

Brief Site History: Prior to construction of the subject building, the parcel featured a small dwelling according to the 1911 Sanborn Map and a gas station as early as 1919; the gas station later served as a used car lot until 1945.

In 1946 the property owner, Percy E. Whitten (1897-1995), completed construction of the subject building, which was designed by Ben V. Harry (1916-1989). The evaluator classifies its design as an example of the Streamline Moderne commercial architecture. Though not an elaborate expression of Moderne style, the building features many of its trademark features, including: horizontal orientation, flat roof, rounded corners, and horizontal lines and decorative speedline detailing.

Several exterior alterations have occurred since its construction, the most notable in the permit history confirms removal of the original storefront system and display windows in 1970.

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 2440 Shattuck Avenue

Owner		Retail Occupants	
Name	Tenure	Name	Duration
Percy E. Whitten (1897-1995) and heirs	1945-2021	Rit's Variety Store Llyod J. Rittenhouse	1946-1951
		Wiseman Appliances Sol Wiseman	1952-1954
		Hink's Appliance J.F. Hinks & Sons	1954-1977
		Electronical City	1977
		Sattler's TV, Radio & Appliances Dennis Sattler	1982-1988
		Honker's Sound Company Henry Hong	1988-1992
		The Used Computer Store Bill Chen	1992-2006
		Dollar Tree	2006-2021
Lair QOZB LLC	2021-present	vacant	-

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context¹: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff suggests that the property's period of significance would have begun with the extant structure's date of completion in 1946 and continued until no longer than 40 years prior to this evaluation, or 1982. The minimum 40-year threshold for historical maturity is derived from the demolition referral provisions of BMC Section 23.326.070. Owing to the subject building's design, continued use as a commercial structure, and its location in Downtown Berkeley, it is associated with the historical themes of commercial and economic development.

Significance Criteria: The subject property 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 property, the evaluator has analyzed the property's extant features and any associated parties against the criteria of the

¹ 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 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 evaluation are discussed below.

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

This property is associated with the historical patterns of commercial/economic 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 were active in Berkeley's business community. Their contributions are notable but 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*

In its original 1946 condition, the building's design would have been classified as Streamline Moderne. A photograph captured four years after its construction (see Figure 2) confirms that it exhibited many of the character-defining features of this style, including horizontal massing, a rounded corner where the front and side street elevations meet, a flat roof and projecting canopy. However, subsequent exterior alterations have eroded the integrity of its original design, removed certain defining features such as the original storefront system, and diminished what was a basic, though not overly expressive², commercial Moderne building design. Ben Harry, who designed the building, is not among the notable architects of the Streamline Moderne era. The evaluator concludes -- and staff agrees -- that this structure 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, Paragraph 2), the extant structure does not appear to be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a

² Attachment 1, page 5 of 20.

block, or a street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks because it is:

- Neither a contemporary of the nearest City Landmarks and Structures of Merit, nor is it compatible with their style or design.
- Not a good example of Streamline Moderne commercial 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 for 2440 Shattuck Avenue, prepared by Caitlin Hibma of Left Coast Architectural History, P. O. Box 70415, Richmond CA.; dated September 2021.

Prepared by: Fatema Crane, Senior Planner; fcrane@cityofberkeley.info; (510) 981-7410

L E F T C O A S T A R C H I T E C T U R A L H I S T O R Y



P.O. Box 70415, Richmond, CA. 94807 * (415) 745-1906 * caitlin@leftcoastarchitecturalhistory.com

1 October 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Left Coast Architectural History has completed a Historic Resource Evaluation of the property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley. The attached California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms present a physical description of the property, a record 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 found that the commercial property dates to 1946 and was designed by Ben V. Harry. The property has been owned by Percy E. Whitten and the Whitten family throughout its history. It was occupied by a number of businesses, which, aside from the initial variety store and the most recent Dollar Store, were all household appliance and electronics retailers. The property does not appear to have any significant associations with historically important events, Downtown Berkeley commercial developmental history, or noteworthy historical figures. Its Art Moderne style architecture does not exhibit high merit and no information was found about Ben V. Harry that would indicate he could be considered a master architect. 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, has undergone character-diminishing alterations, and therefore does not 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 addition assistance, as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caitlin Paige Hibma".

Caitlin Hibma
Principal/Architectural Historian
Left Coast Architectural History

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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*Resource Name or #: 2440 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA

P1. Other Identifier: n/a

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*a. County: Alameda

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

c. Address: 2440 Shattuck Avenue City: Berkeley Zip: 94704

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: 55-1896-5

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

The building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue sits on a rectangular parcel on the northwest corner of Shattuck Avenue and Haste Street. Topography in the area is flat. The building fills its lot with concrete sidewalks bordering the east and south sides. A surface parking lot is located to its immediate west, but is on a separate parcel. The north side of the building abuts an adjacent building of similar height. There is no vegetation or other landscape features on the property, although street trees stand on the sidewalk bulb-out at the property's southeast corner.

The building is one-story high and has a rectangular plan. It is capped by a flat roof. The exterior walls are clad with smooth stucco (primary facade) and painted brick (south and west facades). Typical fenestration consists of punched window openings fitted with single-lite plate glass, surrounded by thin projecting frames.

The primary (east) facade faces Shattuck Avenue and is clad with smooth stucco. A recessed entry vestibule, (Continued)

*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 #)
South and east facades, looking northwest; September 2021

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: Historic
 Prehistoric Both
1946; building permit, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assoc.

*P7. Owner and Address:

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

*P9. Date Recorded: Sept. 2021

*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):

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD	Primary # HRI#
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*NRHP Status Code 6Z

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2440 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA

- B1. **Historic Name:** None
 B2. **Common Name:** None
 B3. **Original Use:** commercial
 B4. **Present Use:** commercial
 *B5. **Architectural Style:** Googie (transitional)
 *B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 Constructed 1946. (See alterations chart on Continuation Sheets for additional construction history.)
 *B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** n/a **Original Location:** n/a
 *B8. **Related Features:** None

- B9a. **Architect:** Ben V. Harry
 b. **Builder:** unknown
 *B10. **Significance: Theme:** None
Area: Downtown 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.)

Contextual History

The building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue is located in Downtown Berkeley, along the Shattuck Avenue commercial corridor, study of which was undertaken by the “Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey” (Archives & Architecture, 15 Sept. 2015). Although the study only formally included the section of Shattuck Avenue north of Durant Avenue (two blocks north of the subject property), aspects of the historic context are applicable, as follows.

Downtown Berkeley is characterized by a variety of uses but is heavily commercial, as is typical of an urban downtown. Along Shattuck Avenue, these commercial uses – restaurants, boarding houses, groceries, laundries – were present as early as the 1870s, encouraged by the establishment of the nearby University of California campus; construction of a rail line along Shattuck Avenue; and ultimately, incorporation of the community as the Town of Berkeley. The University spurred surrounding residential growth as well and the presence of a train station at Shattuck and University avenues made that the locus of the city’s de facto downtown.

In the 1880s, residential growth boomed and the area’s character transitioned from rural to urban. In the 1890s, the previously vacant east side of Shattuck Avenue was graded, allowing for additional development and more businesses to be established along the corridor. Such development extended as far south as Allston Way, while a smaller secondary commercial cluster existed around Shattuck Avenue and Dwight Way. The future site of the subject property was situated in between, where small-scale residential development dominated.

The turn of the 20th century brought electric rail lines and further commercial growth to Shattuck Avenue, but the 1906 earthquake did the most to spur massive residential and commercial growth, as displaced residents from San Francisco came (Continued)

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

- *B12. **References:**
 (See parenthetical citations within text and on last Continuation Sheet)

B13. **Remarks:**

- *B14. **Evaluator:** Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date of Evaluation: September 2021

(This space reserved for official comments.)



aterState of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	Primary # HRI# Trinomial
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 *Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Sept. 2021 Continuation Update

P3a. Description: (continued)

enclosed by a metal security gate, is located at the center of the facade. Within the vestibule tall narrow windows are located on either side of the entrance and on the sidewalls of the vestibule, while two stacked transom lites are located above the entrance. The entrance, itself, consists of a fully-glazed, extruded aluminum assembly that forms an additionally recessed vestibule. The assembly includes a set of fully-glazed, metal double-doors. To the right of the entrance, three identical square windows span the right side of the facade. To the left of the entrance is a single tall narrow window, with a large horizontally rectangular window to its left, followed by a series of square windows farther to the left that wrap the rounded southeast corner of the building. A flat canopy with a horizontally ribbed metal fascia spans the facade and wraps the southeast corner. Above the canopy is a high parapet wall that is flat-topped and unadorned.

The southeast corner of the building is rounded and the windows and flat canopy wrap the corner of the building. These features stop once they round the corner and the south facade, which faces Haste Street, is clad with painted brick and has few features. At the far left of the facade, there is a pedestrian door at ground level that is covered by a metal security gate. A large opening above it is boarded up, and to the immediate right is an elevated loading door clad with plywood or particle board. The door is mounted on an exterior overhead track. On the far right side of the facade, three long horizontal window openings filled with glass block are located high on the wall, above the level of the canopy, which terminates to their immediate right.

The rear (west) facade faces a surface parking lot. It is clad with painted brick and is completely unfenestrated and unadorned. The north facade abuts an adjacent one-story building and is not visible.

(see following sheets for current images)

B10. Significance: (continued)

across the Bay to settle in Berkeley and demand for goods and services subsequently increased. Many older properties along Shattuck Avenue were redeveloped to meet the needs and fashions of the new century.

Downtown was spared the destruction of the 1923 Berkeley Fire, but Shattuck Avenue was nevertheless changed by the growing popularity of the private automobile. Although modes of transit conflicted at times, the car allowed additional travel to and from the commercial corridor. A number of large department stores came to the area at the time and, along with other businesses, flourished until the Great Depression. Even the serious economic downturn of the 1930s had gentler effects in Berkeley, though, due to the University's student population, which kept business flowing.

By the mid-1940s, when the building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue was constructed, the entire Bay Area had just experienced a war-time population boom and prosperity was high. Although the evolution of transportation away from public mass transit and toward the private automobile dispersed many businesses into new outlying areas, Shattuck Avenue remained a strong commercial core, and as was a recurring theme, the proximity of the University of California campus continued to bolster Downtown commerce. Somewhat ironically, areas at the fringes of the Shattuck corridor, including south of Durant Avenue, included a number of automobile-related businesses like dealerships, repair garages, and parking lots, which kept motorists coming to the area.

As happened in many cities, Downtown declined in the 1950s and 60s due to the migration of commercial uses to outlying malls and shopping centers. Population also diminished as urban residents moved to the suburbs, which were accessible by car and did not require the presence of convenient nearby businesses. In Berkeley, the deterioration of residential hotels and apartments that were commonly located above the street-level commercial establishments along Shattuck Avenue compounded the loss of Downtown vitality. Additional challenge was presented by the construction of BART in the 1970s, although this ultimately connected Berkeley's Downtown to the wider Bay Area region once it was completed.

Property History

The 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map illustrates the vacant corner of Shattuck Avenue and Haste Street. A small dwelling was located to the north of the subject property. This provides evidence of the small residential enclave that existed between the main Shattuck Avenue commercial core and the secondary commercial cluster at Dwight Way in the early 20th century. By at least as early as 1914, the corner property had then been developed with a one-story filling station that was owned by a Mrs. Susan Merriweather. By 1919, the filling station was branded as an Associated Oil Company station, which persisted until around 1941 and appears at the street corner in a 1939 aerial photo. (City of Berkeley, Building Department, permits.)

In early 1945, an advertisement in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* (9 February) indicated that the subject property was being used by a business known as E.C. Flynn, which was selling used cars at the address. Similarly, a number of advertisements in the *Oakland Tribune* from May through October 1945 place Western Motors, also selling used cars, at the address. It may be that the property – possibly a vacant lot between the demolition of the filling station and the construction of the current building –

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B10. Significance: (continued)

was being employed as a used car lot.

By late 1945, the subject property was owned by Percy E. Whitten and the current building, which was permitted on 1 October 1945, was under construction. It was presumably completed in 1946; that date being commemorated on a small "corner stone" on the building's facade. The original building permit described a new, 1-story, brick store building designed by Ben V. Harry and built by P.E. Whitten.

Percy E. Whitten, who owned the subject property from the time the building was constructed until his death in 1995 (it is now owned by members of the Whitten family) was born in California in 1897. The 1940 census lists him as a groceryman in business for himself, while a 1944 newspaper article states that he was an assistant project man with the Richmond Housing Authority. ("So We're Told," *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 4 March 1944.) The latter may have been a wartime job, as most sources note his occupation was in the grocery industry. He was married to Beatrice C. Whitten, who was born in Italy, and the couple had two sons, Thomas J. and William L. Whitten. Although Whitten owned the subject property for half a century, he served as landlord and was not the proprietor of any of the businesses located in the building.

The first business to occupy the building was Rit's Variety Store. Rit's was owned by Lloyd J. Rittenhouse who filed a "Notice of Doing Business Under a Fictitious Name" at 2440 Shattuck Avenue in the 3 October 1946 *Berkeley Daily Gazette*. The business was a tenant of the building until at least November 1951 and is evidenced in countless newspaper advertisements announcing sales on everything from Christmas tree light bulbs and toys, to floor polisher rentals, to Halloween costumes.

In 1952, a building permit record indicates that some interior work was done at the property. This may be indication of a change in tenancy, as by 23 May 1952, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* was running ads for Wiseman's Appliances at the subject address. Wiseman's, owned by Sol Wiseman and previously located two buildings to the north on the same block of Shattuck Avenue, sold a wide range of household appliances, including televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines. The company also had stores in Lafayette, Walnut Creek, and later, Richmond.

Wiseman's was present until 1954, when newspaper advertisements indicate that the store was taken over by J.F. Hink & Son. Hink's, as it was more commonly known, had a main department store four blocks north, on the ground floor of the Shattuck Hotel (Shattuck Avenue and Kitteridge Street), which existed at least as early as 1909 (Online Archive of California, photograph of "Hink's, ca. 1952". Berkeley Historical Society, postcard collection.) Hink's maintained their household appliance department, known as Hink's Appliance Warehouse, in the subject building. Hink's remained in the building into the 1970s and was responsible for replacing the large, continuous, corner-wrapping, plate glass, storefront windows with the current smaller punched openings in 1970.

In 1977, Percy Whitten, who still owned the property, was issued a non-conforming sign notice by the City of Berkeley Planning Department. It concerned a sign reading "Electrical City" on the building's roof. It appears that "Electrical City" was a tenant business succeeding Hink's, although research revealed no information about it. Earlier photographs of the building from 1967 do show large blade and rooftop signs; however, at the time they read "Hink's" (blade) and "Appliances" (rooftop). The signs were likely retained and re-branded by Electrical City. The signs were not removed until November 1978, after several enforcement letters were issued by the City. In January 1979, a sign permit indicates that painted signage was then added to the curved southeast corner and east facade of the building, each spelling out "Appliances" and were specifically intended to replace identification that was lost when the roof sign was removed.

By 1982, the building was occupied by Sattler's TV, Radio, & Appliances, owned by Dennis Sattler, which remained until at least 1985 and likely as late as 1988. No additional information about the business or Dennis Sattler was found. (City of Berkeley Building Department, permit records.)

In 1988, Honker's Sound Company, owned by Henry Hong, occupied the building. Tenant improvements and signage installation was undertaken at that time, suggesting Honker's had just moved in. (City of Berkeley Building Department, permit records.) The same year, a zoning permit application indicates that Resistance Repair, a stereo and video repair window was located at the property; the "repair window" description suggesting that perhaps this was a related service business located within the larger Honker's store.

In December 1989, following the devastating Loma Prieta Earthquake, the City of Berkeley identified 2440 Shattuck Avenue as a "potentially hazardous" Un-reinforced Masonry Building. However, correspondence from Percy Whitten indicates that he was able to appeal and avoid having to do seismic retrofit work. He described the building as "not an ordinary brick building as these bricks are dovetailed. They do have steel reinforcing between the bricks and they have not any cracks or damage due to the earthquake." The building was subsequently removed from the City's hazardous buildings list. (City of Berkeley Building Department records.)

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B10. Significance: (continued)

In 1992, The Used Computer Store, owned by Bill Chen, became the tenant of the building and remained until 2006, when the most recent tenant, Dollar Tree, moved in. Dollar Tree, a national retail chain, remained until June 2021.

Architectural Style

The building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue can be classified as an example of the Art Moderne style. The Art Moderne style was popular in the 1930s and 1940s. It was applied to a wide variety of building types, from residences to industrial buildings. It was characterized by overall asymmetry and a horizontal emphasis, flat roofs, horizontal groupings of windows, smooth wall surfaces (usually stucco) with horizontal bands of raised or incised trim (known as “speedlines”), flat canopies, railings with horizontal members, rounded corners, and geometric details. Corner windows and glass block were common, as were porthole windows, which made direct reference to the transportation-related industrial design of cars, ships, trains, and airplanes that inspired the style. Sometimes referred to as Streamline Moderne, it drew on the influences of the motor age and the evolution of streamline design that increased airstream efficiency around moving vehicles, but also had an appealing and strikingly modern aesthetic.

The building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue has basic, but not overly expressive, characteristics of the Art Moderne style, including very rudimentary asymmetry (in that only one corner is rounded) and basic horizontality instated mostly by its one-story height. It has boxy massing, a flat roof and roofline, smooth stucco siding, a shallow flat canopy with a speedline-adorned fascia spanning the primary facade, a series of horizontal glass block windows, and a rounded corner. It originally had continuous full-height, plate glass, storefront windows that spanned the primary facade and wrapped the rounded southeast corner, but they were replaced with small punched openings in 1970. The building qualifies as an Art Moderne style design, but is simple and altered and, therefore, not considered to be a prime example of the style.

Architect

Ben V. Harry is listed as the “designer” on the original building permit for 2440 Shattuck Avenue. The 1940 census notes that Ben V. Harry was an architectural draftsman based in Santa Cruz. By 1951, city directories place him in Oakland, and in 1954, a newspaper mention places him in El Cerrito. (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 20 Sept. 1954) The AIA Historical Directory provides little information on Harry, but indicates that he was born in 1916, died in 1989, and was a member of the AIA in 1964-1965 at which time he was also based in El Cerrito. No other examples of his work were identified by research. The specification of his role as designer on the original permit suggests that he was not a licensed architect at the time he produced the design for 2440 Shattuck Avenue, although he must have been licensed later to have gained AIA membership.

Alterations

The following building permits and other records are on file with the City of Berkeley Department of Planning & Development and provide documentation of alterations that the property has undergone throughout it’s history:

Date	Permit #	Description of Work
10/1/45	57937	New 1-story brick store building for P.E. Whitten. Designed by Ben Harry, built by P.E. Whitten.
1/9/52	70719	Install 2'x 6' x 18' wall inside building. Install door in existing non-bearing wall.
5/24/56	79779	Install lattice planters, relocate sales office.
4/27/70	454	Remove display windows and replace with smaller sized windows. Steel stud and stucco exterior. No structural changes.
5/11/56	79698	New “Hink's” vertical neon sign for J.F. Hink.
9/13/56	80606	Re-hang “J.F. Hink & Son” sign for J.F. Hink Appliances.
7/22/64	101118	Install single-face sign on canopy above sidewalk.
5/18/67	108913	Remove existing steep concrete steps and install new with banister and guardrail. Install new entry door.
11/1978	n/a	Rooftop sign removed (violated new city sign ordinance).
1/3/79	01379	Paint the word “Appliances” on two exposures to replace identification lost when roof sign removed.
9/27/85	1016852086	Electrical outlets, interior walls, storefront windows.
10/6/88	10188818962	Add 5 rooms by adding partition walls. For hi-fi and VCR sales.

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B10. Significance: (continued)		
10/12/88	11228820033	Move and install existing signs; 1 double-face projecting sign, 2 single-face wall signs. Existing "Sattler" signs to be removed.

Comparing historic images (from 1946, 1950, and 1967) with the building's current appearance confirms and elaborates upon the following changes:

- Full-height, continuous, plate glass storefront windows above a low inlaid tile dado originally spanned the entire primary facade and wrapped the southeast corner of the building. The primary entrance was at the center of the primary facade and consisted of fully-glazed double-doors, but was not located within recessed vestibules as currently. Original signage included "Rit's Variety Store" over the main entrance and "Fountain" at the southeast corner in stand-up lettering at the top edge of the canopy.
- ca.1967-1968 blade and rooftop signage reading "Hink's Appliances" had been added to the primary facade and roof. Flat signage applied to the fascia of the canopy was also present. The storefront windows and entry appear to have still been intact and a permit confirms that the windows, and possibly the entry, were changed in 1970.

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 2440 Shattuck Avenue:

Criterion 1 (Event): *Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.*

Research revealed no specific events of historical importance that occurred at 2440 Shattuck Avenue. The property has been a retail establishment from the time of its construction to the present and, aside from the initial variety store, has housed primarily household appliance and electronics businesses. None of these businesses is known to have been associated with any specific achievements, inventions, or developments in their industries that would make the property a significant site by association. In a number of cases, the businesses had primary or additional stores elsewhere in Berkeley or the East Bay.

In addition to the assessment of specific events, the property does not appear to be significant within patterns of local or regional history. In general, Downtown Berkeley is characterized by a variety of uses but is heavily commercial, as is typical of an urban downtown, and the property is one of numerous commercial properties in the area. The "Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey" (Archives & Architecture, 2015) notes that Shattuck Avenue south of Durant Avenue was characterized by a small residential enclave in the area of the subject property that persisted into the 20th century. It separated two commercial areas and represented an anomaly within the context of Shattuck Avenue's concentration of commercial uses. As noted above, once the subject property and surrounding properties were redeveloped with commercial uses, 2440 Shattuck Avenue does not appear to have been a particularly prominent business in the area and was often a branch or annex store to a larger establishment. Ultimately, 2440 Shattuck Avenue is not an outstanding element within Berkeley's commercial district.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 (Persons): *Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.*

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue has been occupied by nine businesses since its construction. Names associated with those businesses, primarily as owners/proprietors, do not appear to be individuals of any historical importance. Lloyd J. Rittenhouse, Sol Wiseman, J.F. Hink, Dennis Sattler, Harry Hong, Cynthia Campbell, and Bill Chen were simply local merchants. A number of them owned and operated well-known establishments, some with multiple locations, but claim no significant accomplishments beyond contributing to Berkeley's commerce over the years. The long-time owner of the property, Percy E. Whitten, was a grocer, who does not appear to claim any significant achievements in that industry and simply owned the subject property, renting the premises to other merchants. He, therefore, has no connection to it as his own place of business or the location of any noteworthy activities.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture): *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.*

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B10. Significance: (continued)

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue was designed in the Art Moderne style, but is a modest example and has been altered. It exhibits basic characteristics that identify it as Art Moderne, such as rudimentary asymmetry (in that only one corner is rounded), basic horizontality instated mostly by its one-story height, boxy massing, a flat roof and roofline, a shallow flat canopy with speedlines spanning the primary facade, a series of horizontal glass block windows, and a rounded corner. However, it lacks a profusion or strong expression of any of these features and omits others such as horizontal railings and porthole windows. Its original full-height, plate glass, storefront windows, which spanned the primary facade and wrapped the rounded southeast corner, are gone and the tile dado below them appears to have been covered with stucco. Both elements would have lent themselves to the Art Moderne aesthetic. Thus, the building qualifies as an Art Moderne style design, but is not considered to be a prime or intact example and does not possess the high architectural merit that would make it historically significant.

The building was designed by Ben V. Harry, who does not appear to have been a licensed architect at the time he designed 2440 Shattuck Avenue, although he was a member of the AIA at a much later date. No other examples of his work are known by which to judge the subject building in context. There is not sufficient professional or biographical information on Harry to deem him a master architect/designer and the building, in its own right, is not of such noteworthy design that it would elevate Harry to that status.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential): *Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.*

Criterion 4 is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, Criterion 4 typically relates to rare construction types, of which 2440 Shattuck Avenue is not an example.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 4.

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 2440 Shattuck 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 values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue is not the first, last, only, or most significant commercial property in Downtown Berkeley. It was designed in a modest iteration of the Art Moderne style, and lacks the overt and expressive forms and thematic motifs that epitomize that style and which would make it a noteworthy example thereof. It was designed by Ben V. Harry, who does not appear to have been a licensed architect at the time he designed the building, and does not appear to qualify as a master architect. Little is known about Harry, including other examples of his work. As a common commercial property located on Shattuck Avenue, the building does not add exceptional value to the neighborhood fabric of Downtown Berkeley. Thus, the property does not appear to qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

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 has been a commercial store building from the time it was built to the present and has housed nine businesses, most of which have been household appliance or electronics retailers. As a commercial property, economic growth would be the most applicable category of influence for the property, but beyond general contribution to business in Downtown Berkeley, the property has not been the generator of any noteworthy local economic development. Many of the businesses located at the property were related to other primary locations or had been established elsewhere and later came to the property. Additionally, none appear to have been doing revolutionary work, particularly in light of the fact that numerous household retail businesses were located nearby. The property does not appear to have the high cultural value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

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

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B10. Significance: (continued)

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue does not appear to have any use as an educational tool. It is a typical example of a post-war/mid-century commercial building of which many others exist. It has been used by numerous businesses for common retail activities. The property is not noteworthy or outstanding as an example of its commercial functions or appliance/electronics-related retail business. It, therefore, does not appear to have the high educational value 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.

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue does not embody or express local history in any significant way. It is a single, small component of Downtown Berkeley's commercial and economic functions, but is not unusual or outstanding within that context. Neither the construction of the property, nor its use over time, were directly influenced by social, cultural, economic, political, religious, or military events or developments in the area beyond a general congregating of businesses along Shattuck Avenue and the historical progress of technology that influenced the types of products sold at the property. People associated with the property do not appear to have been historically significant and no specific events of significance occurred at the property. It, therefore, does not appear to have the high historic value that would qualify it 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 2440 Shattuck Avenue is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, does not qualify as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

Berkeley Structure of Merit

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, 2440 Shattuck Avenue is not of great architectural merit or cultural, educational, or historic value. It is a common and unremarkable element of Downtown Berkeley's commercial development, and is one of multiple properties of a similar context in the area. Visual observation and contextual familiarity with properties in the vicinity does not indicate any physically or thematically cohesive historic grouping within which 2440 Shattuck Avenue would play a meaningful role. Therefore, the property does not appear to qualify as a Structure of Merit under the General Criteria.

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.

There are numerous Berkeley Landmarks in Downtown Berkeley. Within a one-block radius of the the subject property there are seven, including:

- Barker Block: 2486 Shattuck Avenue, 1905, Renaissance Revival style mixed-use building
- Howard Automobile Company Showroom: 2140 Durant Ave., 1930, Art Deco style commercial building
- Keuffer House: 2430 Fulton Street, 1891, Queen Anne style single-family residence
- Morrill Apartments: 2429–2437 Shattuck Avenue, 1911, Mission Revival/Craftsman style mixed-use building
- Northern Bertha Bosse Cottage: 2424 Fulton Street, 1884, Queen Anne style single-family residence
- Southern Bertha Bosse Cottage: 2426 Fulton Street, 1884, Queen Anne style single-family residence
- Wallace Clark Building: 2375-77 Shattuck Ave., 1894, Italianate/False Front commercial building

Within a diagonal block of the subject property the Berkeley High School Campus Historic District (1980 Allston Way) is also present. It is a National Register Historic District containing a number of buildings that are Berkeley Landmarks. The period of significance is 1922 to 1950, and the district includes institutional buildings in the Beaux Arts and Art Deco/Moderne styles.

Having been built in 1946, the subject property is not contemporaneous with any of the Landmarks listed above and, in fact, is a

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B10. Significance: (continued)

relative late-comer to the Downtown area. Its construction date falls within the last few years of the Berkeley High School Campus Historic District's period of significance; however, other than that minimal time frame and basic styling, the subject commercial property has little in common thematically with the large, multi-building school campus.

The building's construction date relates to the end of World War II and a subsequent period of renewed confidence and prosperity throughout Berkeley and the nation. However, this was an extremely broad event that influenced development and commerce throughout the country. Countless buildings in Berkeley were likely the result of the same influences and 2440 Shattuck Street does not stand out within the broad context of post-war growth.

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.

The subject property shares little in common with nearby Landmarks, which range from small wooden cottages to large, concrete or brick, mixed-use commercial/residential buildings. Of any of the Landmarks listed above, the Howard Automobile Company showroom is perhaps most comparable to 2440 Shattuck, being one-story (though more sprawling) and designed in the preceding Art Deco style (though sixteen years older and rendered in concrete). The subject building's size, scale, style, materials, and design are not particularly noteworthy in a downtown commercial area that features a densely developed and extremely varied environment of numerous buildings in a broad range of ages, sizes, styles, and construction types; therefore, 2440 Shattuck Avenue has no strong or specific reference to the Howard Automobile Company showroom (which, itself, is located on a cross-street and oriented away from the subject building, thus making no visual reference), nor any of the other nearby Landmarks.

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

The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue was designed in a modest iteration of the Art Moderne style, and lacks the overt and expressive forms and thematic motifs that epitomize that style and which would make it a noteworthy example thereof. As such, it expresses neither style strongly and is not a particularly good example of architectural design.

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

The property demonstrates no particular historical significance within the context of Berkeley's history or that of the neighborhood that surrounds it. It is a late element of Downtown Berkeley's commercial development and has no distinctive place within the patterns of development that shaped the Shattuck Avenue corridor.

Integrity

In order to qualify for historic designation, a property must possess significance under the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity. The property at 2440 Shattuck Avenue does not appear to possess the historic significance necessary to qualify for designation; therefore, an analysis of its integrity is not required. It should be noted, however, that the building underwent significant alteration when the full-height, continuous, plate glass, storefront windows were replaced with small punched windows in 1970. This drastically altered the building's original character and design, diminishing the Art Moderne styling, and constituting a loss of integrity.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, the property at 2440 Shattuck 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 qualify as a Historic Resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Sources

Specific sources are found in parenthetical citations within the text. Repositories and general sources consulted include:

- Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association
- City of Berkeley Planning & Development Department
- Internet Archive
- NETR Online, Historic Aerials
- NewspaperArchive.com
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map archives via ProQuest and Historic Information Gatherers (HIG)
- University of California Riverside, California Digital Newspaper Collection
- University of California Santa Barbara Library, aerial photographs collection

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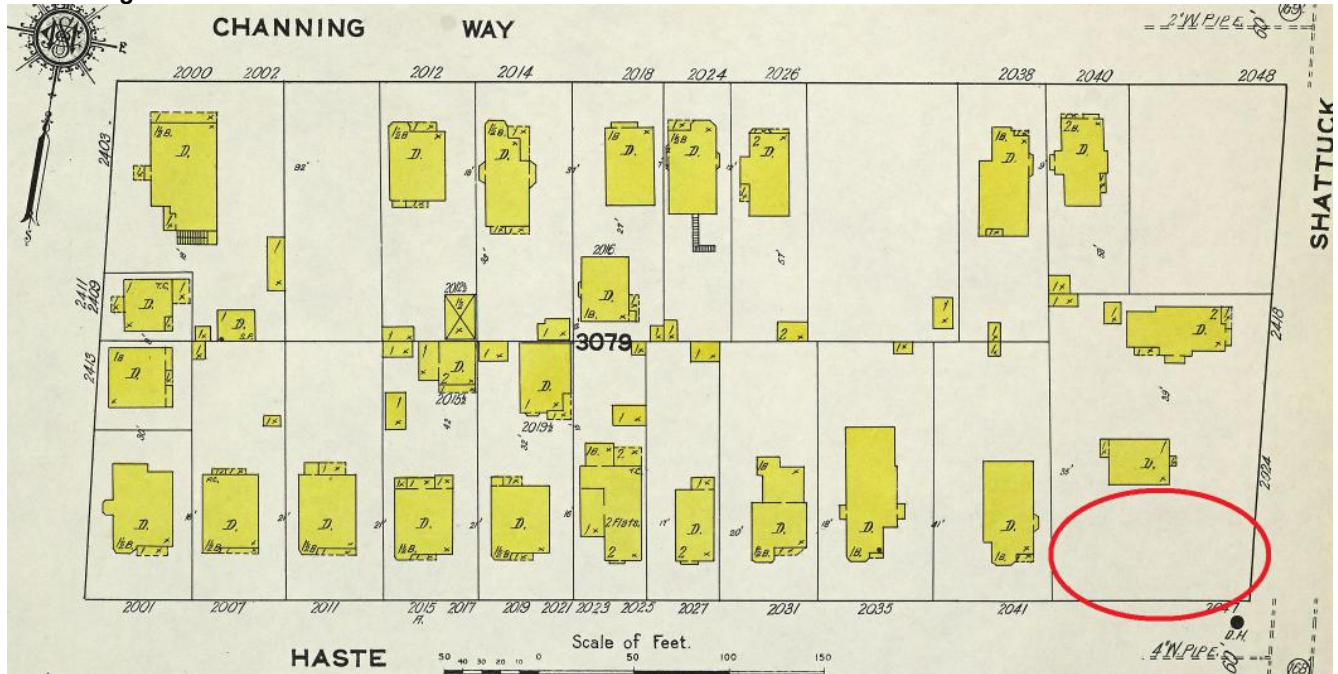
*Date: Sept. 2021

Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: (continued)

Historic Images



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1911. Future site of 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled.
(Historic Information Gatherers)



Aerial photograph, 1939. Future site of 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled. Previous filling station present.
(University of California Santa Barbara Library, aerial photographs collection)

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2440 Shattuck Avenue as Rit's Variety Store in 1946.
(Berkeley Daily Gazette, 18 December 1946)



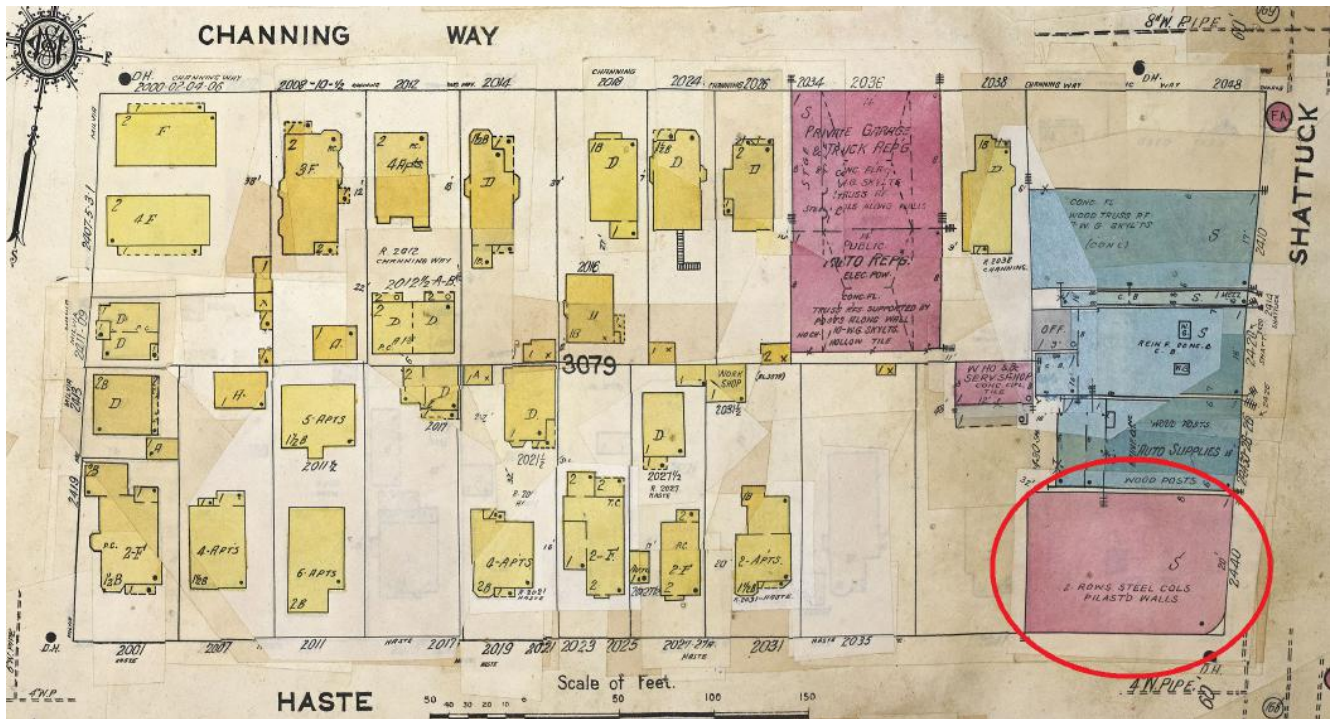
Aerial photograph, 1947. Building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled.
(University of California Santa Barbara Library, aerial photographs collection)

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950. Building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled.
(Historic Information Gatherers)



2440 Shattuck Avenue in 1950.
(Berkeley Historical Society)

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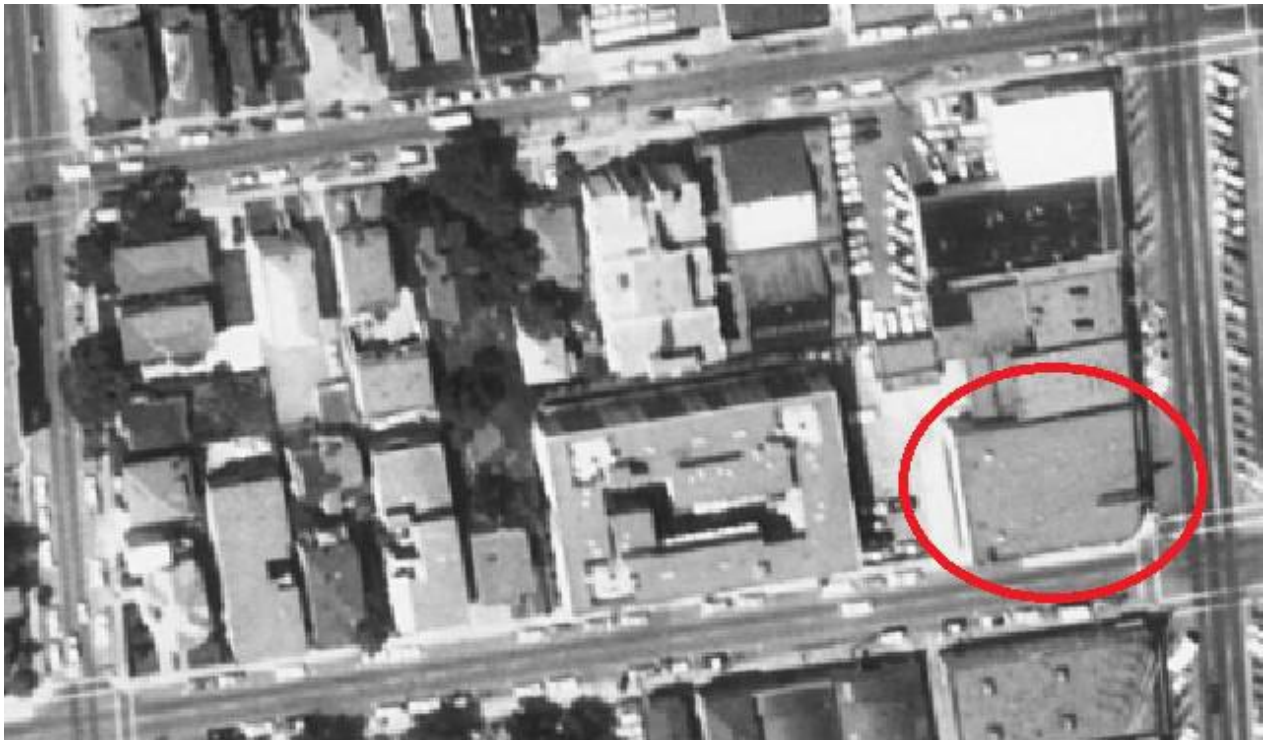
Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: (continued)



*Aerial photograph, 1958. Building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled.
(University of California Santa Barbara Library, aerial photographs collection)*



*Aerial photograph, 1965 Building at 2440 Shattuck Avenue circled.
(University of California Santa Barbara Library, aerial photographs collection)*

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2440 Shattuck Avenue, indicated by arrow, 1967.
(Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assoc)



2440 Shattuck Avenue, indicated by arrow, 1967.
(Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assoc)

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2440 Shattuck Avenue, indicated by arrow, 1967.
(Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assoc)

Current Images:



Primary facade, looking west from Shattuck Avenue.

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Current Images:



South facade and rounded southeast corner, looking northwest from Shattuck and Haste.



South facade, looking northeast from Haste Street.

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Current Images:



Rear (west) facade, looking northeast from Haste Street.



Detail of primary entrance, east facade.

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Current Images:



Detail of rounded southeast corner, including punched window openings and awning.



Detail of service entrance, south facade.

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Current Images:



Detail of glass block window, upper south facade.



East block face of Shattuck Avenue, opposite subject property.

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Current Images:



West block face of Shattuck Avenue, subject property at center.



Detail of "corner stone" at lower right side of primary facade.