



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

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S T A F F R E P O R T

REFERRAL  
NOVEMBER 3, 2022

## 2555 College Avenue

**Demolition Referral: Use Permit #ZP2022-0019 to demolish a former gas station original completed in 1929, and to construct a new multi-family residential apartment building (APN: 055-1847-020-00).**

### I. Application Basics

**A. Zoning District:** Multi-Family Residential (R-3)

**B. Parties Involved:**

- Project Applicant: Isiah Stackhouse  
Trachtenberg Architects  
2421 Fourth Street  
Berkeley, CA
- Evaluator: Mark Hulbert, Historic Architect  
446 17<sup>th</sup> Street, #302  
Oakland, CA
- Property Owner: 2555 College, LLC  
1321 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA

**C. Staff Recommendation:** Consider evaluation and take no action.

## II. Background

On February 2, 2022, Use Permit application #ZP2022-0019 was submitted to demolish the former gas station and current auto repair structures located at 2555 College Avenue, and to construct a new four-story, 11-unit residential apartment building. The development proposal is subject to Senate Bill 330, a state provision that allows for streamlined review.

The Use Permit application is under review by the Zoning Officer and expected to reach the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) for consideration in 2023; see link to plans below.

<https://berkeleyca.gov/construction-development/land-use-development/zoning-lookup>

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 23.343.050, 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.

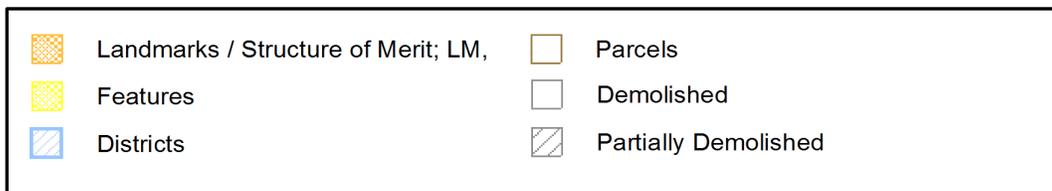
When such a demolition request occurs under the provisions of Senate Bill 330, the City would be divested of the ability to impose conditions related to historic resource preservation upon Use Permit approval. Nevertheless, the study of potential significance and the LPC referral shall be completed in 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 property does not appear on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the State Historic Resources Inventory. It is not adjacent to any City of Berkeley landmark sites. However, nearby City of Berkeley Landmark sites include three residential properties: Dickman House (1894) at 2555 Benvenue Avenue; Villa Wiley House and Cottages (1897) at 2545 Benvenue; and Jennie C. Smith House (1897) at 2539 Benvenue. See Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map showing historic resources



**Figure 2: Subject Property, site conditions late 1930s** (Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association)



**Figure 3: Subject Property, current site conditions along College Avenue** (Google)



**Figure 4: Subject Property, current site conditions along Parker Street (Google)**



#### **IV. Property Description**

The historic resource evaluation (HRE) for the subject property includes CA Department of Parks & Recreation Forms A and B that were completed by Historic Architect Mark Hulbert; please see Attachment 1 of this report. The following description derives from the information contained in the HRE as well as the City's land use archives and building permit records.

**Parcel Description:** The subject property is an approximately 4,000-sq. ft. corner lot located on the northeast side of the intersection of College Avenue and Parker Street. The lot is flat and features two main structures, large areas of concrete pavement with a small pocket of vegetation, and fences along the perimeter and within the site. The site is currently vacant but, until recently, was an auto repair use.

**Building Descriptions:** Two main structures are the subject of this referral: a centrally located "office" building with a canopy, and a garage/service building located at the rear of the site (northeast corner).

The office/canopy building has a hipped roof and features approximately 165 square-feet of interior space and an extensive canopy that overhangs and covers a drive-through area of equivalent size. The steel-framed structure has large windows above low walls clad with wood shingles; a wood door is located on the west elevation. The canopy overhang has just a single support, comprised of a vertical and a diagonal post.

The garage building has a metal frame and wood shingle cladding. Its roof is primary flat and smaller shed roof extensions slope downward on the north and east sides of the building. The west elevation has a vehicle entrance with a gate.

The HRE provides detailed descriptions of the structures and site features; see Attachment 1.

**Brief Development History:** The extant structures were erected in 1929 and designed by Independent Iron Works of Oakland. This foundry produced iron works and pre-fabricated commercial and industrial buildings as well as accessory structures. Hulbert reports that dozens of pre-fabricated gas stations were commissioned throughout the Bay Area between the 1920s-1940s.

The site was designed and operated as a gas and oil service station from 1930, when it officially opened, until the early 1970s when auto repair became its primary function. The original canopy was altered in 1945. The fueling bay, located beneath the canopy, had as many as three pumps; City records indicate that the pumps were removed by 1991. Other alterations include: exterior wall material, window and door replacements on both buildings; expansions to the garage building; and signage installation and removal. The evaluator describes other documented and observable changes to the original building design in the HRE (Attachment 1).

Operators and owners of the property during the study period are listed in Table 1, below.

**Table 1: Summary of Activity & Ownership during Historic Period**

Dates	Use	Operator	Corporate Franchise	Property Owner
1929-1930	Gas Station	L.D. Smith	Texaco (1934-1959)	Paul T. Carroll & Ermadell Carroll- Frederickson
1931-1934		Mark Havenhill		
1934-1964		Victor Feuillard	Shell (1959-1964)	
1964-1970		Unknown	Shell Refining Company (1960s-1974)	
1970-2021	Auto Repair	Donald Lawson	Don's Auto Service	Donald Lawson

## V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

**Historic Context<sup>1</sup>:** For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff concludes that the period of significance for property at 2555 College Avenue would have begun with completion of the subject service station structures in 1929 and would have ended in early 1970s, by which time the structures had been altered and the fueling use shifted to exclusively auto repair.

Owing to the subject buildings' original service station use and design, and period of significance, this property is linked to a historic context that is best defined as Berkeley's auto-oriented infrastructure development. This evaluation of the property's historical analyzes the significance criteria within the thematic pattern of *transportation* development.

**Significance Criteria:** The subject property is evaluated based on the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC 3.24). The existing building is over 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. Because they are 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, Mark Hulbert has analyzed the building's extant features and any associated parties against the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources (CR). To supplement this analysis of the CR, Hulbert has also provided an analysis of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO), BMC Chapter 3.24, which closely aligns to criteria of the CR. 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 result of Hulbert's and staff's evaluation is discussed below.

### Events – CR Criterion 1/BMC Criterion *Historical Value*

The former gas station at 25 College Avenue is not directly associated with any specific event in Berkeley's history, but with the broad pattern of its auto-oriented transportation development. A study of its history, ownership and occupancy records did not indicate that the property played an important or influential role in that overall pattern. Therefore, it is not found to hold historical significance as an individual property.

There has been no in-depth consideration of the collection of extant service station property types from this historic period in Berkeley.

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

With respect to significant persons and cultural value, the consultant's research did not uncover information that suggests any of the owners or corporate franchises that occupied

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

the site made a particular or lasting contribution to history or transportation/auto-oriented development. Similar to the assessment of historical significance, these property's associations with these entities were not found to warrant designation consideration.

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

The subject pre-fabricated structures were originally built and designed in a common style that was reflective of its historic period and use. The distinctive character of metal-frame service station is captured in an early photograph of the site; see Figure 3, above. However, subsequent alterations have eroded its integrity and removed many of its distinguishing design features.

The property was not found to be the first/last/only property of its type in Berkeley, or the notable work of a designer, or to have exceptional value in its residential neighborhood context. Staff concurs with these findings and concludes that the extant gas station structures do not exhibit architectural merit.

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

The evaluation of this property was limited to above ground and did not involve survey or evaluation of the subject property for the purposes of archaeological information. Moreover, there have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigation for this parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it is not likely to yield archeological information.

LPO/BMC Criteria for *Structure of Merit*

As a potential Structure of Merit (BMC Section 3.24.110.B, Paragraph 2), the extant features do 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:

- The extant structures are not the same age as the nearby City Landmark buildings.
- In their altered condition, the structures cannot serve as good examples of pre-fabricated service station design.
- The structures are not comparable to the type/use, design or style of the nearby Landmarks.
- The property is not associated with events that are historically significant to the City of Berkeley.

For all of these reasons, Hulbert and staff conclude that the property is not eligible for state local register listing.

## VI. Recommendation

1. **Take No Action.** Staff recommends that the Commission consider the extent to which the buildings meet (or do not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit, and then **Take No Action** to initiate it for consideration.

### Attachment:

1. Historic Resource Evaluation for 2555 College Avenue, prepared by Mark Hulbert of Preservation Architecture, dated March 2, 2022.

**Prepared by:** Fatema Cane, Principal Planner, fcrane@cityofberkeley.info, (510) 981-7410

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

Page 1 of 6 \*Resource Name or #: 2555 College Avenue  
P1. Other Identifier: None

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County Alameda and

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 2021 Township & Range --

c. Address 2555 College Ave. City Berkeley Zip 94704

d. UTM: Zone   ,    mE/    mN

e. Other Locational Data:

Assessor's Parcel Number: 55-1847-20

\*P3a. Description:

The 2 existing structures at 2555 College Ave. were built in 1929 as a gasoline service station by the Texas Oil Co. (Texaco). At the northeast corner of College Ave. and Parker St., the structure in the front (southwest) corner served gas and oil, the structure in the back (northeast) corner was a lubrication shed. Those combined gasoline and service station uses remained until c1975. Thereafter, the property and its structures were given over to auto repairs. While no original drawings have been found, a late-1930s photo provides some clear evidence of its original character. (cont.)

P5a. Photograph



Fig.1 – 2555 College Ave., looking north from Parker St.

\*P3b. Resource Attributes:

HP6: 1-3 story commercial building

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

P5b. Description of Photo:

1 )MH,2022; 2) from 1950 Sanborn  
3) Hist.photo

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

1929, building permit

#33642 (attached)

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Panoramic Interests

1321 Mission St., Ste.101

San Francisco, CA 94103

\*P8. Recorded by:

Mark Hulbert

446 17th St. #302

Oakland, CA 94612

\*P9. Date Recorded:

March 2, 2022

\*P10. Survey Type:

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):

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

\*Resource Name or # 2555 College Ave., Berkeley \*NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Page 2 of 6

B1. Historic Name: none  
B2. Common Name: 2555 College Avenue  
B3. Original Use: Service station B4. Present Use: Auto care/vacant  
\*B5. Architectural Style: Pre-Fab  
\*B6. Construction History:

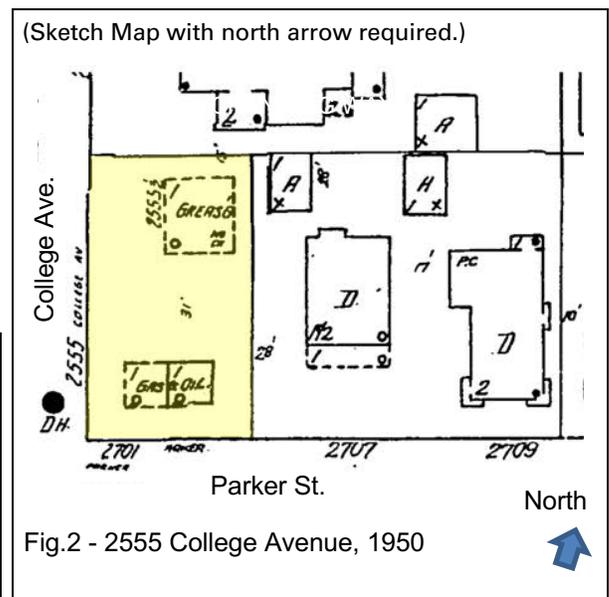
The subject site – a portion of lot 10 of the 1876 *Map of the Property of John Kearney* – was vacant land prior to its initial development as a service station in 1929-30. Prior to development, the subject site was the western portion of an 80 foot wide (College) by 135 foot deep (Parker) parcel. In the 1911 Sanborn, that full parcel had a residence at its southeast corner, at the address 2709 Parker (note: no volume 2 of the 1929 Sanborn map is available). Another residence then stood at 2539 College, which was the first subdivided part of original lot 10. Between 1911 and 1930, the adjoining parcel at 2707 Parker was also created – concluding the subdivision of original lot 10 into 4 lots – and the existing residence at #2707 built thereon. (cont.)

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
\*B8. Related Features: None  
B9a. Architect: -- b. Builder: Independent Iron Works  
\*B10. Significance: Theme -- Area --  
Period of Significance -- Property Type -- Applicable Criteria --

The built remains of the former gas and service station at 2555 College Ave. are of no design or construction importance. Of standardized, pre-fabricated steel, these structures exemplify early 20th century, pre-fabricated station structures that were once numerous. Other examples remain standing, though not in urban environs, where their usefulness has been lost to larger and more centralized service stations and as their more valuable sites have been requisitioned for infill development. While many such pre-fab station structures remain – even a few examples in Berkeley – few if any serve their original use. In this case, the original use is long obsolete and what remains of the original structures are without design or construction value other than limited potential material salvage. (cont.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: none  
\*B12. References: see continuation page 6  
B13. Remarks: none  
\*B14. Evaluator: Mark Hulbert Preservation Architect  
\*Date of Evaluation: March 2, 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 2555 College Ave., Berkeley

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### Description (continued):

The former gas station structure is a pre-fabricated, steel-framed and metal clad roof canopy with a small office structure under its rearward half, the office with a central front (west) door and surrounding windows, and with several windows at each side. The metal roof is hipped, standing seam, its ridge a roof-mounted sign support. The gas pumps stood on a low curb under the front edge of the roof and in line with support columns at each corner, allowing for a vehicle to pass between the pumps and the office enclosure, with another lane outboard of the pumps and site entrances and exits at both College and Parker fronts. The College Ave. egress has been abandoned. The gas pumps as well as the supporting columns are also not extant. At its present front, the canopy is propped up with a steel v-brace. What remains of the former station is the roof canopy and the office enclosure, though the latter has also been altered at the exterior by the addition of wood shingles and boards, a replacement wood door, and window alterations. Permit records also indicate that, while vacant in the late-1960s, there was a fire in the enclosure, so the rear of the enclosure has been altered and possibly added onto.

At this juncture, the gas station structure is a raw skeleton of the original structure.

The rearward structure was apparently originally covered yet open and was also pre-fabricated steel, based on the evidence of the existing rooftop canopy with its wraparound metal fascia. In 1976, that open structure was extended with shed-roofed additions at the north and east and fully enclosed with wood shingled walls, leaving 1 vehicular opening at the front (west).

The site has approximately 7 foot high property line fences across the north side where there is a wood board fence and, at the rear, a combined wood board and concrete block fence atop a low concrete retaining wall. An approximately 4 foot high wood fence with a narrow planting bed stands along the property line at the College Ave. sidewalk. Another planting area is located alongside the Parker St. driveway and outboard of the station enclosure. Otherwise, the site is concrete paved.



Fig.3 – 2555 College Ave., late-1930s (from *The Berkeley Gazette*, “Pre-fab gas stations and other ephemera,” Feb.9,1983, p5, courtesy BAHA)

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Property Name: 2555 College Ave., Berkeley

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### Construction History (continued):

In Berkeley and elsewhere, such small neighborhood service stations were permitted in residential zones from the late 1920s to the late 1940s and were in fact numerous in that period. Of this “non-conforming” commercial use in a residential zoning district, there is much in the 2555 College Ave. permit records, specifically concerns from the neighborhood and City as the gas station gave way to an auto repair business. Mid-century traffic was also an ongoing consideration, as southbound drivers along College found left turns more-and-more difficult, as was attempting to reenter the southbound traffic flow. Thus, the last gas service was in the early-1970s. Thereafter, as numerous inspection records indicate, the auto repair use has regularly conflicted with the adjoining residential neighborhood.

As noted, the 2555 College Ave. Texaco station was permitted in late 1929 and opened in 1930, when it was first listed in the classified directory under the name L.D. Smith. In 1931, its proprietor was listed as Mark Havenhill. The station was not listed in the 1932 classifieds and, in 1933, it was simply listed as a Texaco service station without an associated operator. Then, in 1934, Victor Feuillard became the operator and whose proprietorship lasted until 1964, as a Texaco station from 1934-1959 (listed as Vic's Texaco in 1958-59) and as Vic's Shell from 1959-1964. In that period, the property owner was, from 1929 to 1948, Paul T. Carroll and, following his passing, from 1948-1970, Ermadell S. Carroll-Frederickson. No early deed for the property has been found, but Carroll's initial lease to The Texas Co. dates to January 1929, prior to yet in anticipation of the erection of its service station. That lease was renewed in July of 1939 and, presumably, again in 1949.

At this juncture, no station operator has been identified from 1964-1970, though several notes amidst permit records reference the Sunland Refining Co. as the tenant in the late 1960s, prior to the property's changing hands to Donald Lawson, in March 1970, who operated Don's Auto Service from then until 2021.

### Contractor

The fabricator of the original gas and service station structures was Independent Iron Works of Oakland, an iron works and foundry whose lines of business included pre-fabricated commercial and industrial structures. Based on directory listing, they operated in Oakland from 1924 to 1962 (at 1824 Chase St. in the 1924-1940, at 821 Pine St. from 1941-1960, and finally at 1723 Peralta). No catalog or brochures for their pre-fabricated buildings has in the course of this research effort been located, though from the late-1920s into at least the late 1940s they were responsible for dozens of pre-fabricated gas stations in the S.F. Bay Area.

### Associated Persons

Two individuals had long associations with the former service station at 2555 College Ave.: the original property owner, Paul T. Carroll; and a long time station proprietor Victor Feuillard.

Paul T. Carroll (1873-1946) was a San Francisco resident and hat merchant in the period of his subject property ownership. As stated, a deed for his acquisition has at this juncture not been located nor have any other local property transactions been identified. The subject parcel was evidently an investment property which Carroll leased to the Texas Co. for and prior to its development. In 1947, following Carroll's death, the property passed to his wife, Ermadell Carroll-Frederickson, who retained ownership and continued to lease the property to its service station operators until 1970.

One such operator, Victor Feuillard (c1903-1974), was the 2555 College Ave. service station proprietor from 1934-1964, was a Berkeley resident. Feuillard was a sub-lessee to The Texas Co., who were the prime-lessees and developers of this service station property from 1930-1959.

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### Significance (continued):

#### Evaluation

The following addresses historic resource potential per the *California Register of Historical Resources* evaluation criteria:

#### *Criterion 1 – Events*

The applicable historic context is, broadly, early-to-mid 20th century automotive transportation and associated infrastructure, more specifically the development of gas and oil service stations. In this broad context, this one service station does not constitute an event of any importance nor have any specific historic events been associated with this property. Consequently, 2555 College Ave. does not meet *CR criterion 1*.

#### *Criterion 2 – Persons*

In the primary period of ownership, from 1929-1970, the property owners – Paul T. Carroll and, subsequent to his death, Ermadell S. Carroll-Frederickson – leased this property to the Texas and, later, Shell Oil companies. The former had the service station designed and built yet did not operate it. The operators were several sub-tenants, including one – Victor Feuillard – who was the proprietor of this former service station from 1934-1964, and another – Donald Lawson – who operated his auto repair facility on this site from c1970 until recently. Neither is a person of identified or identifiable historical importance.

In sum, no persons of historical importance were directly associated with the development of the existing service station building, so the subject property does not meet *CR criterion 2*.

#### *Criterion 3 – Design/Construction*

The built remains of the former gas and service station at 2555 College Ave. are of no design or construction importance as they are not prototypical or outstanding examples of their period or style. Their fabricator was an Oakland iron foundry, Independent Iron Works, who supplied standard, pre-fabricated structures, of which the subject structures are barely surviving examples and which reality exemplifies the nominal type of such work.

The subject service station's 1929 design and construction are attributed to the Texas Co. and Independent Iron Works, so there is no individual architect, builder, etc. of any identifiable importance. Additionally, the extant building and property do not manifest any historical artistic value. Thus, the subject resource does not meet *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. (Pre-history is not included in this historic architectural evaluation.)

In conclusion, the subject property and structures at 2555 College Ave. in Berkeley have no potential historical or historic architectural significance per the California Register criteria.

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### Selected References:

*Organized Labor*, "2555 College Avenue, Berkeley. Gasoline service station," November 1929.

The Historical Marker Database, "Exxon Super Service Station," 1441 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, @  
<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=171532>.

Berkeley Historical Society, "History of the Super Service Station at 1441 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley, Calif. by the Berkeley Planning and Development Department," 2007-2009.

From BAHA:

*Berkeley Urban Conservation Study, 2555 College Ave.*, 2pp., nd).

Victor Emile Feuillard, obituary (clipping, nd).

*The Berkeley Gazette*, "Pre-fab gas stations and other ephemera." Feb.9, 1983, p5, with late-1930s photo of 2555 College.

Copies of early City of Berkeley permit records: 1929 - #33642; 1936 - #40975.

City of Berkeley permit records:

<i>date</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>work</i>	<i>owner/contractor</i>
Nov.1929	33642	New service station	Texas Co./Independent Iron Works
Jul.1936	40975	New sign	Texas Co.
Apr.1969	18227	Repairs	Frederickson
May.1970	B51470819	Sign	Union Oil
Dec.1977	120177690	Repair gutters, gen'l. repairs	Donald Lawson
Jan.1978	abatement	Rooftop sign removal	" "
Jun.1978	712(variance)	Expand walls to propline	" "
Jul.1984	A360(use)	Conc. block wall	" "

WRITE IN INK

# Application for Building Permit

✓ ~~Garage~~  
SERVICE STATION

Application is hereby made to the Department of Buildings and Inspections of the City of Berkeley for permission to build a ~~masonry garage to house~~ STEEL SERVICE STATION ~~machines.~~

Located NE Corner College Ave and Parker St

Value 1500

SIZE, LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION TO BE AS FOLLOWS:

Size: B 2000<sup>sq</sup>

Floor: 11'0" x 14'0" Floor Slab

Outside Walls: }  
Roof: } ALL STEEL

Distance from furthest projection of dwelling:

Distance from side lot line:

Distance from rear lot line:

Walls closer than 2 feet to the side and/or rear lot lines will be fireproofed as follows:

Name of Owner Faxon Company

Residence Address 17 Dennis St Oakland

Name of Builder Independent Iron Wks

Residence Address 1824 Chase St.

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. III Ordinance No. Independent Iron Wks.

Signature of Owner, Architect or Builder.

Address 1824 Chase St. Oakland

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

Number \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ Page 45  
Filed \_\_\_\_\_ Ready \_\_\_\_\_ Checked by \_\_\_\_\_

Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Issued OCT 31 1929

# PRESERVATION ARCHITECTURE

March 2, 2022

## **2555 College Ave., Berkeley City of Berkeley Historical Evaluation**

The following provides an historical and historic architectural evaluation of the existing property and structures at the above address and based on the City of Berkeley's evaluation criteria. This overall effort has been based on the acquisition and review of city permit records, census and telephone directory searches, County deed research and acquisition of available records from the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association.

The 2555 College Ave. property (assessor's parcel no. 55-1847-20) is located along the College Ave corridor on Berkeley's southside, at the northeast corner of College Ave. and Parker St. (figs.1-2).

The following summarizes the subject resource then proceeds to the City of Berkeley evaluation.

### **Summary History**

The subject site – the western 50 feet of the southern 80 feet of lot 10 of the 1876 *Map of the Property of John Kearney* (fig.3) – was vacant prior to its initial development as a service station in 1929.

Prior to development, the subject site was the western portion of an 80 foot wide (College) by 135 foot deep (Parker) parcel. In the 1911 Sanborn, that full parcel had a residence at its southeast corner, at the address 2709 Parker. Another residence then stood at 2539 College, which was the first subdivided part of original lot 10. As depicted in the 1950 Sanborn map, between 1911 and 1930, the eastern adjoining parcel at 2707 Parker was also created – concluding the subdivision of original lot 10 into 4 lots – and the existing residence at 2707 built thereon (fig.4).

In Berkeley and elsewhere, such small neighborhood service stations were permitted in residential zones from the late 1920s to the late 1940s and were in fact numerous in that period. Of this “non-conforming” commercial use in a residential zoning district, there is much in the 2555 College Ave. permit records, specifically concerns from the neighborhood and City. Mid-century traffic was also an ongoing consideration, as southbound drivers along College Ave. found left turns more-and-more difficult, as was attempting to reenter the southbound traffic flow. Thus, the last gas service was by the mid-1970s. Thereafter, as the gas station gave way to an auto repair business, and as the numerous inspection records indicate, the auto repair use has regularly conflicted with the adjoining residential neighborhood.

The 2555 College Ave. Texaco station was permitted in late 1929 and opened in 1930, when it was first listed in the classified directory under the name L.D. Smith. In 1931, its proprietor was listed as Mark Havenhill. The station was not listed in the 1932 classifieds and, in 1933, it was simply listed as a Texaco service station without an associated operator. Then, in 1934, Victor Feuillard became the operator and whose proprietorship lasted until 1964, as a Texaco station from 1934-1959 (listed as Vic's Texaco in 1958-59) and as Vic's Shell from 1959-1964. In that period, the property owner was, from 1929 to 1948, Paul T. Carroll and, following his passing, from 1948-1970, Ermadell S. Carroll-Frederickson. No early deed for the property has been found, but Carroll's initial lease to The Texas Co. dates to January 1929, prior to yet in anticipation of the erection of its service station. That lease was renewed in July of 1939 and, presumably, again in 1949.

At this juncture, no station operator has been identified from 1964-1970, though several notes amidst permit records reference the Sunland Refining Co. as the tenant in the late 1960s, prior to the property's changing hands to Donald Lawson, in March 1970, who operated Don's Auto Service from then until 2021.

### **Summary Descriptions** (figs.5-9)

The 2 existing structures at 2555 College Ave. were built in 1929 as a gasoline service station by the Texas Oil Co. (Texaco). At the northeast corner of College Ave. and Parker St., the structure in the front (southwest) corner served gas and oil, the structure in the back (northeast) corner was a lubrication shed. Those combined gasoline and service station uses remained until c1975.

Thereafter, the property and its structures were given over to auto repairs. While no original drawings have been found, a late-1930s photo provides some clear evidence of its original character (fig.5).

The gas and oil structure is a pre-fabricated, steel-framed and metal clad roof canopy with a small office structure under its rearward half, the office with a central front (west) door and surrounding windows, and with several windows at each side. The metal roof is hipped, standing seam, its ridge a roof-mounted sign support. The gas pumps stood on a low curb under the front edge of the roof and in line with support columns at each corner, allowing for a vehicle to pass between the pumps and the office enclosure, with another lane outboard of the pumps and site entrances and exits at both College and Parker fronts. The College Ave. egress has been abandoned. The gas pumps as well as the supporting columns are also not extant. At its present front, the canopy is propped up with a steel v-brace. What remains of the former station is the roof canopy and the office enclosure, though the latter has also been altered at the exterior by the addition of wood shingles and boards, a replacement wood door, and window alterations. Permit records also indicate that, while vacant in the late-1960s, there was a fire in the enclosure, so the rear of the enclosure has been altered and possibly added onto.

At this juncture, the extant structure is a raw skeleton of the former gas station.

The rearward structure was originally covered yet open and was also pre-fabricated steel, as is evident at the existing rooftop canopy with its wraparound metal fascia. In 1976, that open structure was extended with shed-roofed additions at the north and east and fully enclosed with wood shingled walls, leaving 1 vehicular opening at the front (west).

The site has approximately 7 foot high property line fences across the north side where there is a wood board fence and, at the rear, a combined wood board and concrete block fence atop a low concrete retaining wall. An approximately 4 foot high wood fence with a narrow planting bed stands along the property line at the College Ave. sidewalk. Another planting area is located alongside the Parker St. driveway and outboard of the station enclosure. Otherwise, the site is concrete paved.

### **Associated Persons**

Two individuals had long associations with the former service station at 2555 College Ave.: the original property owner, Paul T. Carroll; and a long-time station proprietor Victor "Vic" Feuillard.

Paul T. Carroll (1873-1946) was a San Francisco resident and hat merchant in the period of his subject property ownership. As stated, a deed for his acquisition has at this juncture not been

located nor have any other local property transactions been identified. The subject parcel was evidently an investment property which Carroll leased to the Texas Co. for and prior to its development. In 1947, following Carroll's death, the property passed to his wife, Ermadell Carroll-Frederickson, who retained ownership and continued to lease the property to its service station operators until 1970.

One such operator, Victor Feuillard (c1903-1974), the 2555 College Ave. service station proprietor from 1934-1964, was a Berkeley resident. Feuillard was a sub-lessee to the Texas and, later, Shell Oil companies, who were the prime-lessees while the former was the developer of this service station property.

### **Architect, Builder, etc.**

The fabricator of the original gas and service station structures was Independent Iron Works of Oakland, an iron works and foundry whose lines of business included pre-fabricated commercial and industrial structures. Based on directory listing, they operated in Oakland from 1924 to 1962 (at 1824 Chase St. in the 1924-1940, at 821 Pine St. from 1941-1960 and, finally, at 1723 Peralta St.). No complete catalog or brochures for their pre-fabricated buildings has in the course of this research effort been located, though from the late-1920s into at least the late 1940s they were contracted for dozens of pre-fabricated gas stations in the S.F. Bay Area, another type of which was depicted in a 1948 Independent Iron Works catalog page (fig.10).

### **Evaluation**

Under the evaluation criteria of the City of Berkeley's *Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO)*, the former service station property and structures located at 2555 College Ave. are not eligible for designation as a Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit on the basis of any cultural value, as follows:

- *LPO Section A.2:* In the context of 20th century automotive transportation and associated infrastructure, the remains of this small, standard, 1929 service station have no potential historic importance. Of standardized, pre-fabricated construction, these structures exemplify early 20th century, pre-fabricated stations that were once numerous. Other examples remain standing – even a few in Berkeley – though they are typically not found in urban environs, where their usefulness has been lost to larger and more centralized service stations and as their increasingly valuable sites have been requisitioned for infill development. Moreover, a reality of their obsolescence, few surviving early-to-mid-20th century stations serve their original use. Altogether, this property is not associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social or economic developments of the City.
- *LPO Section A.3:* As the subject property shares a general and widely shared role as the site of a former service station, beyond that basic fact, there is no potential educational value associated with the subject site or building, so which are not worth preserving for usefulness as an educational force.
- *LPO Section A.4:* The subject property and structures have no potential to embody or express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/ United States.

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:

- *LPO Section A.1.a:* The subject structures are not a “first, last, only or most significant

architectural property of their type in the region.” Of standardized, pre-fabricated steel construction, such structures exemplify early 20th century service stations that were once numerous and many of which pre-date these examples. However few – given their obsolescence – other pre-fabricated, early to mid-20th century service stations remain, including in Berkeley. For example, 1745 Cedar St. – yet other, later stations of pre-fab construction are also more common.

- *LPO Section A.1.b:* The built remains of the former gas and service station at 2555 College Ave. are of no design or construction importance as they are not prototypical or outstanding examples of their period or style. Its fabricator was an Oakland iron foundry, Independent Iron Works, who supplied standard, pre-fabricated structures, of which the subject structures are barely surviving examples and which reality exemplifies the nominal type of such work. In conclusion, this former service station is not a representative work of an identifiable, individual architect, engineer or builder.
- *LPO sec.A.1.c:* As the original use is long obsolete and as what remains of the original structures are without design or construction value (other than limited potential material salvage), these surviving service station structures are not an architectural example worthy of preservation for any “potentially exceptional values relative to its neighborhood fabric.” Further, the historical record appears to show that this auto repair site has often been a neighborhood detriment.
- *LPO sec.B.1:* Nor is this building worthy of potential preservation as part of its neighborhood, block or street frontage.

Further, under CoB Structure of Merit criteria:

- *LPO sec.B.1:* As cited above, the extant service station structures are not worthy of preservation as part of the neighborhood, block or street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings that includes landmarks.
- The age of the subject structures 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)
- *LPO sec.B.2.a[2]:* The subject structures do not constitute a potential event of importance relative “to the structure’s neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.”
- *LPO sec. B.2b:* The subject structures are not compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with any designated landmark structure within the neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.
- *LPO sec.B.2d:* The existing structures have no identifiable historical significance to the City and/or to the structure’s neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

Consequently, the existing property and structures at 2555 College Ave. in Berkeley are not individually or collectively eligible as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Signed:



Mark Hulbert  
Preservation Architect

attached: figs.1-9 (pp.5-10); 1929 permit application

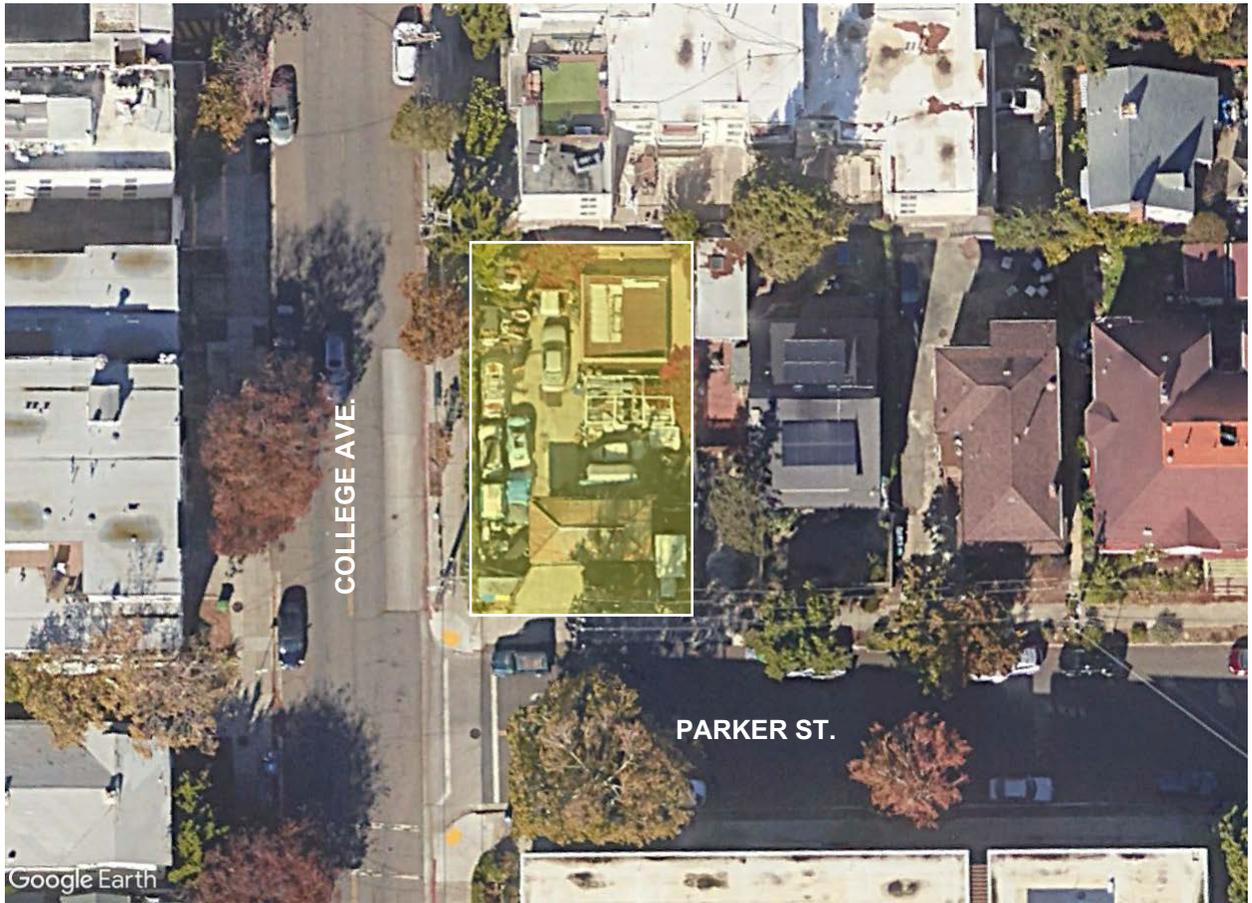


Fig.1 – 2555 College Ave.. – Aerial (Google Earth, 2022, north is up)

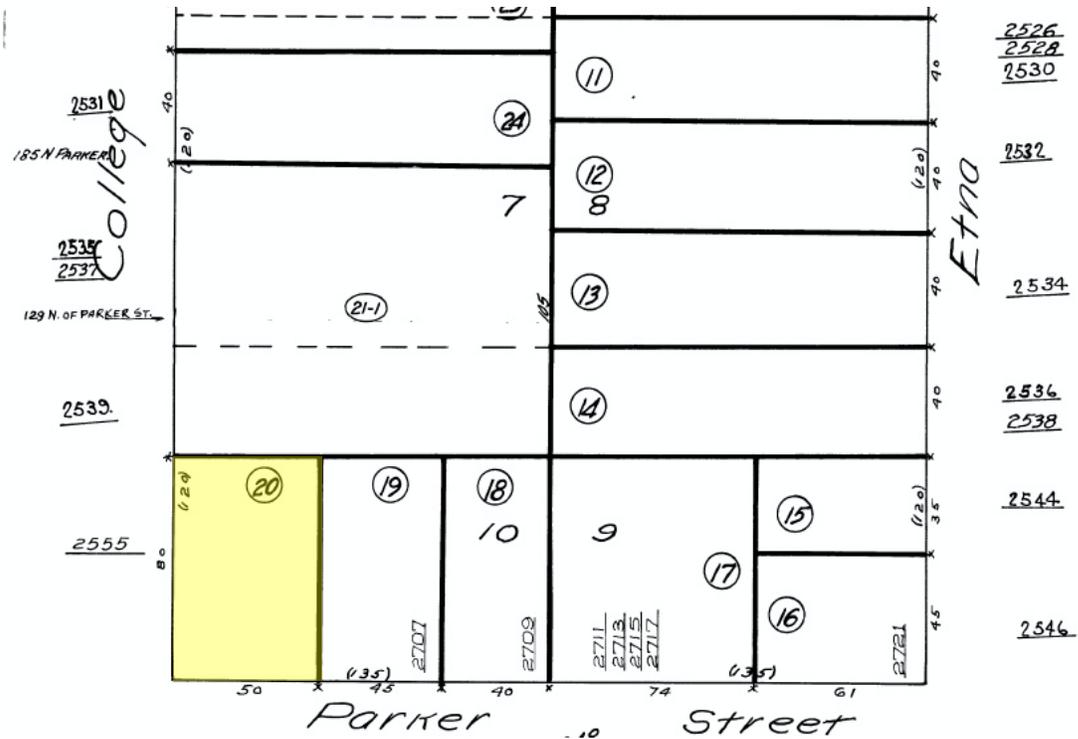


Fig.2 – 2555 College Ave. (highlighted) – Western 50 feet of the southern 80 feet of original lot 10 - from Assessor's Parcel Map (north is up)





Fig.5 – 2555 College Ave. – View from College Ave., late-1930s (from *The Berkeley Gazette*, “Pre-fab gas stations and other ephemera,” Feb.9,1983, p5, courtesy BAHA)



Fig.6 – 2555 College Ave. – Front (west), from College Ave. (Google streetview 2021)



Fig.7 – 2555 College Ave. – South side, from Parker St. (Google streetview, 2021)



Fig.8 – 2555 College Ave. – Existing gas station structure (MH, 2022)



Fig.9 – 2555 College Ave. – Existing service station structure (MH, 2022)

We invite inquiries on the design and fabrication of any of the following types of steel products—

STEEL BUILDINGS — FABRICATED STRUCTURAL STEEL  
STEEL SERVICE STATIONS — STEEL STORAGE TANKS  
TRUCK TANKS — STEEL & SHEET METAL PRODUCTS  
BRIDGES — MISCELLANEOUS IRON — FABRICATED PLATE WORK  
JOBBER'S OF STEEL PLATE, BARS, SHAPES AND SHEET METAL

*Build with Steel*

TYPICAL STEEL SERVICE STATION

Fig.10 – from Independent Iron Works ad, 1948 (from vintageadsandbooks.com)

WRITE IN INK

# Application for Building Permit

✓ ~~Garage~~  
SERVICE STATION

Application is hereby made to the Department of Buildings and Inspections of the City of Berkeley for permission to build a ~~masonry garage to house~~ STEEL SERVICE STATION ~~machines.~~

Located NE Corner College Ave and Parker St

Value 1500

SIZE, LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION TO BE AS FOLLOWS:

Size: B 2000<sup>sq</sup>

Floor: 11'0" x 14'0" Floor Slab

Outside Walls: }  
Roof: } ALL STEEL

Distance from furthest projection of dwelling: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance from side lot line: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance from rear lot line: \_\_\_\_\_

Walls closer than 2 feet to the side and/or rear lot lines will be fireproofed as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Owner Faxon Company Residence Address 17 Dennison St Oakland

Name of Builder Independent Iron Wks Residence Address 1824 Chase St.

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. III Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Independent Iron Wks.  
Signature of Owner, Architect or Builder.  
Address 1824 Chase St. Oakland.

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

Number \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ Page 45 Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Filed \_\_\_\_\_ Ready \_\_\_\_\_ Checked by \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued OCT 31 1929