



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
FEBRUARY 2, 2023

1598 University Avenue

Demolition Referral: Use Permit #ZP2022-0099 to demolish a commercial building originally completed in 1963, and to construct a new eight-story, mixed-use commercial and residential building (APN: 056-2003-001-00).

I. Application Basics

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

B. Parties Involved:

- Project Applicant: Isiah Stackhouse
Trachtenberg Architects
2421 Fourth Street
Berkeley, CA
- Evaluator: Page & Turnbull, Inc.
170 Maiden Lane, 5th Fl.
San Francisco, CA
- Property Owner: 1598 University Avenue, LLC
2343 Stuart Street
Berkeley, CA

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

II. Background

On February 2, 2022, Use Permit application #ZP2022-0099 was submitted to demolish the buildings at 1548 and 1598 University Avenue, to merge three contiguous parcels, and to construct a new eight-story, mixed-use commercial and residential building with as many as 207 dwelling units.

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

<https://aca.cityofberkeley.info/citizenaccess/Default.aspx>

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

When such a demolition request occurs under the provisions of Senate Bill 330¹, the City would be divested of the ability to impose conditions related to historic resource preservation upon Use Permit approval. Nevertheless, the study of potential significance and the LPC referral shall be completed in accordance with the BMC requirement.

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

III. Historical Resources

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

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

Figure 1: Vicinity Map (showing no nearby historic resources)

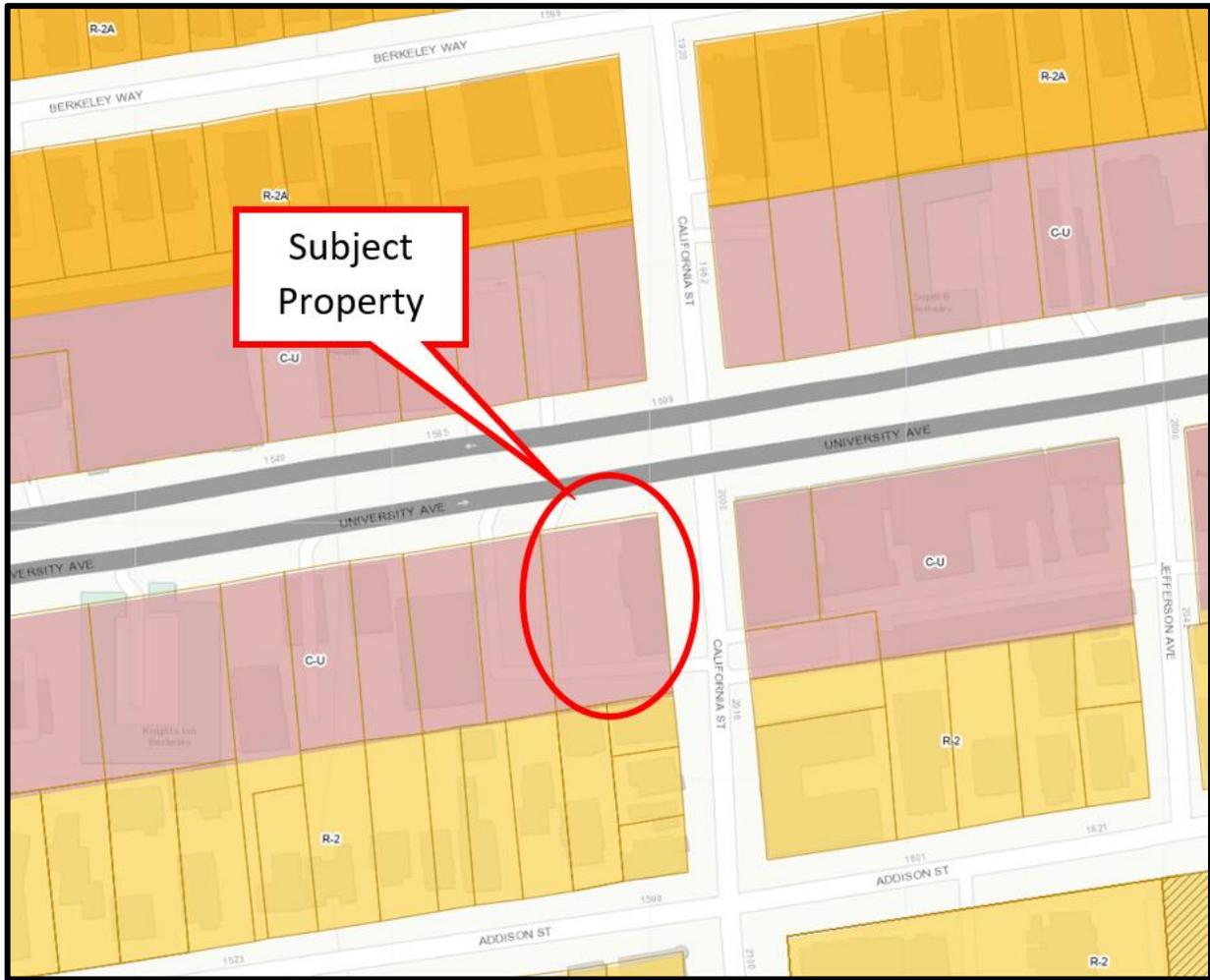
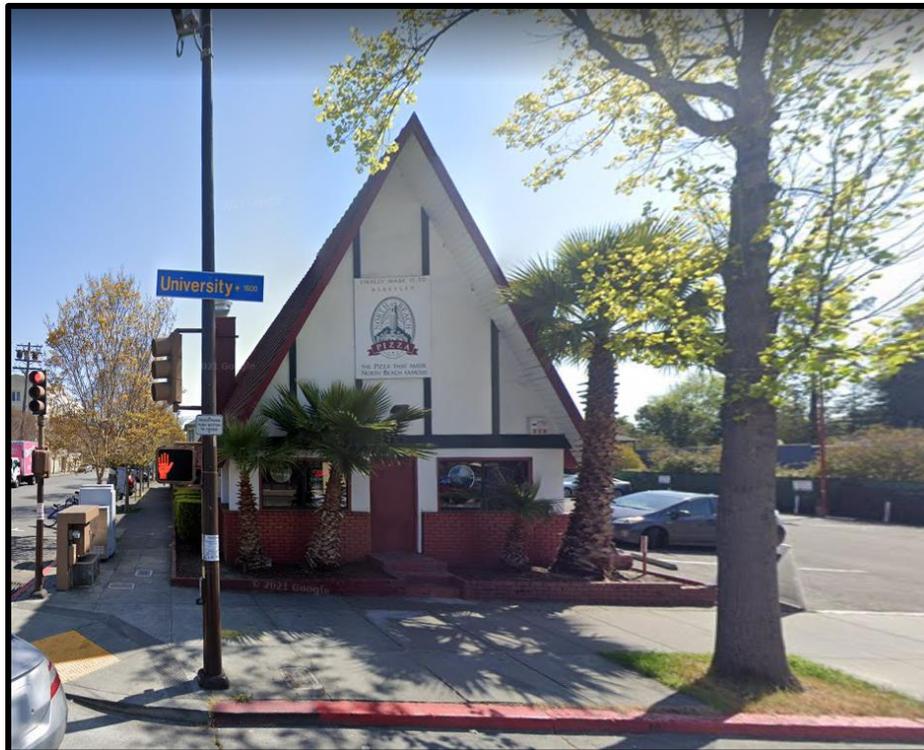


Figure 2: Subject Property, primary building façade/north elevation (Google, 2021)



IV. Property Description – see *Attachment 1*

The subject property is a corner lot with primary frontage on University Avenue (north) and secondary/side street frontage on California Street (east). It features a one-story commercial building with a mezzanine beneath a steeply-pitched gable roof that was originally completed in 1963. The approximately 3,250-sq. ft. building covers the eastern half of the parcel and a surface parking lot comprises the western half. It has retained its original restaurant use and corporate franchise design; a building expansion and enclosure are located at the rear of the structure.

The historic resource evaluation (HRE) for this property includes CA Department of Parks & Recreation Forms 523A and B, prepared by cultural resources consultants Page & Turnbull Inc. The consultant's evaluation of the site and structure are thorough and descriptive of the property and its development history, and includes a summary of all owners and commercial occupants; please refer to Attachment 1 of this report.

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context²: Owing to their commercial use and time of construction, the subject property and extant building are associated with the historical theme of Post-WWII commercial development and suburban expansion. Their period of potential significance would have begun with completion of the building in 1963 and ended in 1982, approximately 40 years prior to this evaluation – in accordance with the City’s established measure of historical maturity found in BMC Section 23.326.070.

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

In determining the potential significance of this property, Page & Turnbull have 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, the consultants have 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 Page & Turnbull’s and staff’s evaluation is discussed below.

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

The consultant’s research did not reveal that the subject property is linked to any singular event of historical importance to Berkeley or its economic development. Originally one of several East Bay outlets for the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurant franchise, it was the result of aggressive corporate growth and it is not individually unique or noteworthy for its building type or circumstance today.

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

The few individuals associated with this property during its historic period do not appear to have played a critical or far-reaching role in their professional sectors or Berkeley’s larger community. For this reason, the property was not found to have significant cultural associations.

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

Though distinctive for its massing and scale, the extant building was not found to exhibit

² National Register Bulletin #15, Item V: How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context (2002); National Register Bulletin #16A, Section III: How to Complete the National Register Registration – Period of Significance (1997).

architectural merit. The pre-fabricated building reflected the standardized International House of Pancakes corporate design, and it has been altered since completion in 1963. The extant structure is not an early, rare, or exceptionally well-preserved example of original design. The notable structural engineer Ernest Birnbaum is credited with its construction, and evaluator notes that building it is not a strong representative of Birnbaum's significant work.

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 neighborhood context. Its design is not comparable to the qualities or style of the nearby Storybook Landmark buildings at Fox Court and Fox Commons (1472 and 1670 University Avenue, respectively).

Staff concurs with these findings and concludes that the 1963 building does 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 investigations 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 subject building does not appear to be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block, or a street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks because it is:

- Not the same age as the nearest City Landmark buildings;
- Cannot serve as good of architectural design;
- Not comparable to the type/use, design or style of the nearby Landmarks; and
- Not associated with events that are historically significant to the City of Berkeley.

For all of these reasons, Page & Turnbull and staff conclude that the property is not eligible for state or 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. CA Dept. of Parks & Recreation Forms 523A and B for 1548 University Avenue, prepared by Page & Turnbull, Inc., dated May 2, 2022.

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

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMARY RECORD	Primary # _____
	HRI # _____
	Trinomial _____
	NRHP Status Code <u>6Z</u>
Other Listings _____	
Review Code _____	Reviewer _____
	Date _____

Page 1 of 15 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 1598 University Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: _____

***P2. Location:** Not for Publication Unrestricted ***a. County** Alameda

***b. USGS 7.5' Quad** Oakland West **Date** 2018

***c. Address** 1598 University Avenue **City** Berkeley **Zip** 94703

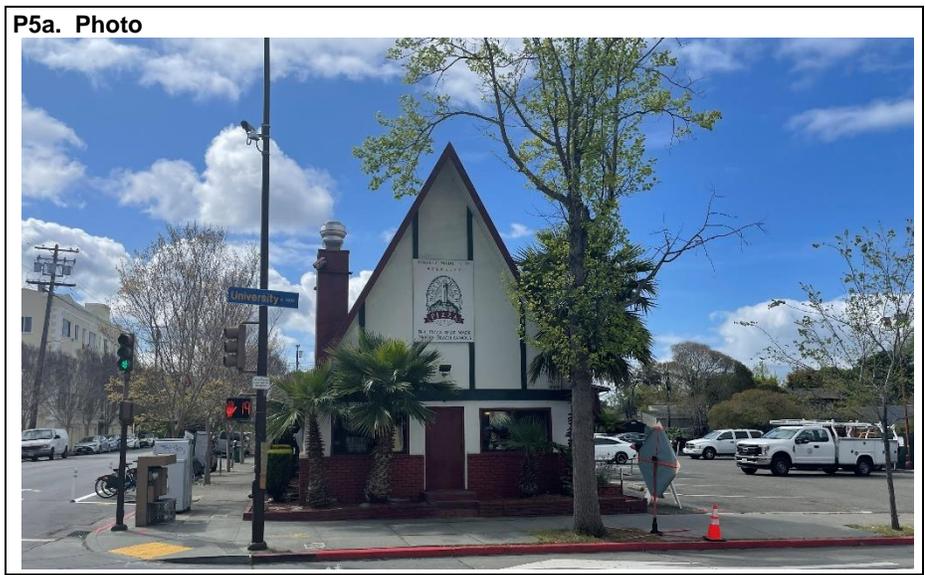
***e. Other Locational Data:** Assessor's Parcel Number 56-2003-1

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)
 The parcel at 1598 University Avenue (APN 56-2003-1) is rectangular in shape and is located at the southwest corner of University Avenue and California Street (**Figure 1**). The parcel contains a one-story restaurant building at its northeast corner, while the remainder of the parcel contains a surface parking lot. The building was originally constructed in 1963 as an International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurant, and was designed by the structural engineering firm of Eugene D. Birnbaum and Associates to the standard IHOP branch design. The building was constructed by Sessions Development Co., and the parcel was owned by Edwin "Eddie" Neff.

The high one-story building features a steeply pitched gable roof with gable ends at its north and south facing façades. The primary entrance to the building is located at its west façade. Due to the parcel's corner location and surface parking with vehicle circulation, all façades are visible from the public right-of-way. The steeply pitched roof is clad in painted aluminum shingles and features wide eaves with wood paneled soffits. An oversized brick chimney is located at the midway point of the east slope of the roof. The building is clad in stucco; additional materials include brick veneer cladding, which is located at the ground floor beneath the windowsill height on some façades, and ornamental timber framing located within the north and west gable ends. All windows have metal sash, unless described otherwise. (Refer to Continuation Sheet, page 2)

***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



P5b. Photo: (view and date)
View of the University Avenue façade, looking south, April 13, 2022

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** historic
1963 (original building permit)

***P7. Owner and Address:**
Nathan D. George
9101 Burning Tree Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

***P8. Recorded by:**
Page & Turnbull, Inc.
170 Maiden Lane, 5th Fl
San Francisco, CA 94010

***P9. Date Recorded:**
May 2, 2022

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none") 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)

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***P3a. Description (continued):**

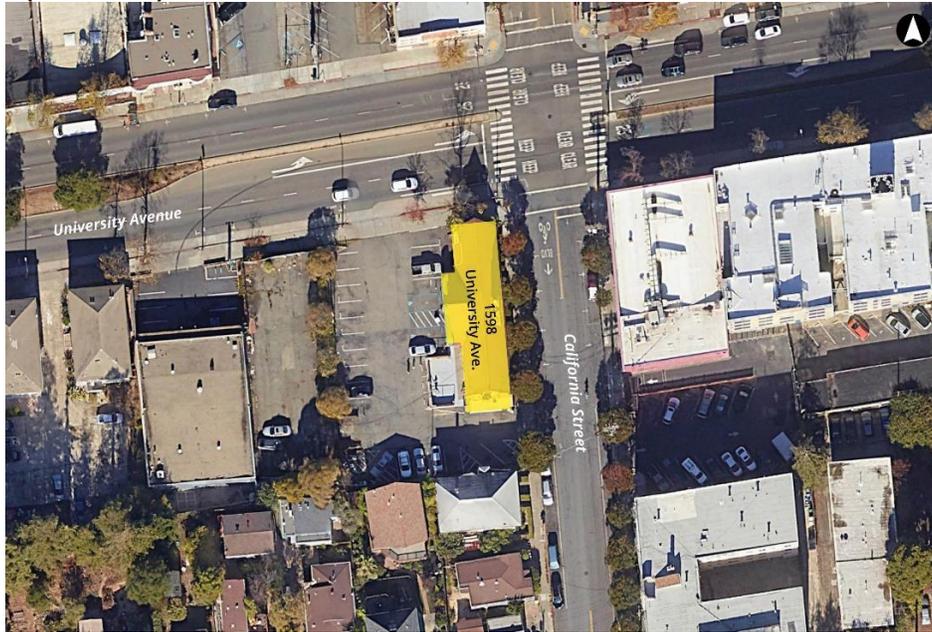


Figure 1. Location of 1598 University Avenue, subject building highlighted yellow.
Source: Google Earth, 2020, edited by Page & Turnbull.

The north façade (facing University Avenue) features a single leaf metal door at the center of the façade that is reached via a concrete step and landing (**Figure 2**). To either side of the door are two paired slider windows with metal sash. A horizontal decorative timber beam spans the façade in line with the bottom of the gable end and four evenly spaced, vertical, decorative timber beams are located within the gable end. A low brick wall separates the planting areas around the building from the pedestrian walkway and parking area (**Figure 3**).



Figure 2: Detail of ground floor of north façade of subject building. Looking south.



Figure 3: Detail of northwest corner of subject building. Looking southeast.

The primary (west) façade contains a central gable end that projects from the main volume of the building (**Figure 4**). The portion of the main volume of the building that extends to the north retains the typical design of the ground floor with slider windows with metal sash separated by stucco-clad piers over brick veneer. The portion that extends to the south has a single slider window, while the remainder of the façade has no openings. The central projecting portion of the west façade is entirely symmetrical with a partially glazed single-leaf door and paired fixed windows with metal sash to either side of a lamp over a vitrine containing the restaurant's menu. Red and white tile decorates the façade between both doors and below the line of the windowsills. A cloth awning on a metal tube frame is mounted over the ground floor. The north- and south-facing walls of the projecting portion each

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contain one fixed window. The gable end of this projecting section features stucco cladding with decorative vertical and horizontal timber beams.



Figure 4: West façade of subject building. Looking east.

The south façade of the building has a one-story trash enclosure at the ground floor with wood framing and stucco cladding. Paired, painted, plywood-covered doors are located at the east end of this enclosure, and a small wood structure with paired doors is located on its east-facing wall (Figure 5 and Figure 6). The area within the gable end above the trash enclosure contains a single-leaf metal door with louvered vents to either side and a louvered vent above.



Figure 5: South façade of subject building. Looking northeast.



Figure 6: Oblique view of south façade and east façade of subject building. Looking northwest.

The east façade is partially obscured by a hedge at the south end of the ground floor (Figure 6). This façade features evenly spaced stucco-clad piers. All bays along the ground floor façade, except for five bays at the north end, have no openings. The five northernmost bays have metal frame slider windows over brick veneer (Figure 7).

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Figure 7: East façade of subject building, facing California Street. Looking west.

Surrounding Neighborhood

The surrounding area contains a mixture of multi-family residential buildings, commercial buildings including retail and restaurants, as well as motels and a gas station. Buildings within the surrounding blocks include early to mid-twentieth century residential properties and commercial buildings (Figure 8 to Figure 11). Further to the west of the subject building, around Sacramento Street, contemporary multi-family housing has been developed in recent decades.



Figure 8: Group of commercial building at the northeast corner of University Avenue and California Street. Looking north.



Figure 9: Multi-family residential and commercial uses at the north side of University between California and Sacramento streets. Looking north.

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Figure 10: View looking northwest along University Avenue from California Street.



Figure 11: Commercial building at the southeast corner of University Avenue and California Street.

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BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 6 of 15 Primary # _____
*Resource Name or # 1598 University Avenue HRI# _____
*NRHP Status Code 6Z

B1. Historic name: 1598 University Avenue
B2. Common name: 1598 University Avenue
B3. Original Use: Restaurant
B4. Present use: Restaurant

*B5. Architectural Style: A-Frame Commercial

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
The building at 1598 University Avenue was originally constructed in 1963 as an International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurant franchise location and was designed by Eugene Birnbaum to the standard IHOP branch design. The building was constructed by Sessions Development Co., and the parcel was owned by Edwin "Eddie" Neff. (Refer to Continuation Sheet, page 7)

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: No B9a. Architect: Eugene Birnbaum b. Builder: Sessions Development Co.

*B10. Significance: Theme N/A Area N/A
Period of Significance N/A Property Type N/A Applicable Criteria N/A

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

Historic Context – City of Berkeley
Early Twentieth Century History of Berkeley
During the early twentieth century, particularly in the years between the 1906 Earthquake and the Great Depression, both the University of California and the town of Berkeley grew rapidly. After 1906, Berkeley became one of the largest cities in California, mostly as the result of an influx of as many as 20,000 San Francisco earthquake refugees. The construction of the Key System of ferryboats and streetcars made transportation between Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco quick and affordable and spurred the development of numerous residential tracts in Berkeley and Oakland. In turn, this growth brought in more customers and thereby spurred intensive commercial development in downtown Berkeley.¹

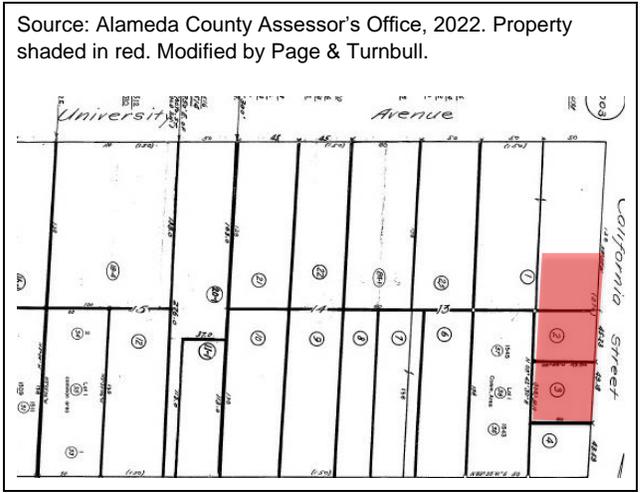
During the first decade of the twentieth century, downtown Berkeley evolved from a district of low-rise, wood-frame buildings into a substantial urban district, with numerous large masonry buildings and stately public facilities. The City Beautiful movement inspired local architects, and many buildings constructed during this era exhibited neoclassical design.

Meanwhile, the growth of the University of California under the patronage of influential people like University President Benjamin Ide Wheeler and donor Phoebe Apperson Hearst also encouraged the physical development of the city, as well as the growth of its identity and local culture. This period saw Berkeley begin to develop its reputation for progressiveness, unconventionality, and bohemianism – traits that were reflected in its architecture, especially the new First Bay Region-style houses built throughout the area that were designed by the likes of Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, and John Galen Howard.² Commercial and civic development continued through the 1920s in downtown Berkeley, with construction of several new downtown buildings including the city's first "skyscraper" – the twelve-story Chamber of Commerce (now Wells Fargo) building at the northwest corner of Shattuck Avenue and Center Street, designed by Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr. in 1925. (Reefer to Continuation Sheet, page 8)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. References: Refer to Page 14
*B13. Remarks: None
*B14. Evaluator: Page & Turnbull, Inc.
*Date of Evaluation: May 2, 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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***B6. Construction History (continued):**

When constructed in 1963, the IHOP restaurant building at 1598 University Avenue was described in City of Berkeley records as a wood-frame building with stucco, brick, and glass exterior cladding and an aluminum “shake” roof. Known alterations to the subject building that are supported by permits on file at the City of Berkeley Department of Building and Safety are listed in **Table 1** (below) and include unspecified alterations in 1964, repairs following a fire in 1973, and interior alterations and remodeling in 1995.

Table 1: Alterations to 1598 University Avenue				
Permit #	Date	Owner	Builder/Contractor	Description
97500	4/17/1963	International House of Pancakes	Eugene Birnbaum (Engineer); Sessions Development Co. (contractor)	Permit to erect a new building to be a restaurant.
98110	7/8/1963	International House of Pancakes	Electrical Products Corp.	Install pole sign.
Not listed	1/28/1964	Dorothy Neff	Not listed	Alterations or additions to building (not specified) ³
110673170	11/6/1973	Dorothy Neff	Not listed	Repairs, amounting to \$20,000, to building following fire. ⁴
94-2866	1/19/1995	Dorothy Neff	Dorothy Neff	Install new handicapped bathrooms; remove damaged interior walls and replace with new construction; install new exhaust systems and fire hoods.
95-2590	7/18/1995	Dorothy Neff	Moussouras Construction	Remodel restaurant.

Based on comparison of the subject building’s existing conditions with documentation of the standard International House of Pancakes restaurant design, which was reproduced at all locations built between the early 1960s and 1970s, other alterations to the subject property which do not appear to be reflected in permit records on file at the City of Berkeley include: replacement of all original diamond-lite windows with undivided-lite windows, painting of aluminum roof shingles, painting of brick base across all but the primary entrance area, resurfacing of brick base at the primary, west-facing entrance to provide a smooth surface with inlaid tile, and addition of the primary entrance awning.



Figure 12. A Sacramento example of the standard corporate style of International House of Pancakes restaurants, photographed 1964. Source: Center for Sacramento History.

³ “1598 University Avenue,” City of Berkeley Property Card. On file with City of Berkeley Department of Building and Safety.
⁴ “Two new living units here,” *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, November 13, 1973; refer also to permit on file at City of Berkeley Department of Building and Safety.

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***B10. Significance (continued):**

Historic Context – City of Berkeley

Early Twentieth Century History of Berkeley (continued)

Located to the west of the downtown core, the vicinity of the subject property was served by public transit from the first decade of the twentieth century, with a rail service on University Avenue running between Shattuck and the Southern Pacific line at the city's western bay shore.⁵ The blocks between downtown Berkeley and the campus and the more industrial developments around San Pablo Avenue nearer to San Francisco Bay, filled slowly during this time, with relatively sparse commercial and residential development along University Avenue between Grove Street (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way) and San Pablo Avenue through the 1910s and 1920s.⁶

The Great Depression and World War II

During the Great Depression, Berkeley's suffering was somewhat minimized by the presence of the University, which continued to provide employment for many citizens, although working-class neighborhoods in West Berkeley experienced more economic strain.

World War II brought a tremendous population boom to the entire Bay Area, and Berkeley was no exception. Wartime housing projects to accommodate military personnel were constructed in Berkeley, and facilities at the University itself were commandeered for military use. Civilian numbers also grew as people relocated to Berkeley for employment at local shipyards like the Moore Drydock on the Oakland Estuary and the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond. Transportation lines and other infrastructure in Berkeley expanded to make these workers' commutes easier.

Post-World War II

After the war, Berkeley experienced the same out-migration as many other large cities in the country, as families moved to the suburbs to take advantage of G.I. home loans and the increased ease of commuting by automobile. This led to a shift in the demographics of Berkeley, where larger working-class populations developed. G.I. benefits also resulted in soaring enrollment at the University of California, which meant that students flooded available housing around the campus. The large houses that had previously been subdivided to accommodate war workers were well-suited to housing students. In the early 1950s, the blocks surrounding the subject building were occupied by commercial, institutional, and residential uses, much like today. The development of University Avenue through the mid-twentieth-century was decidedly auto-focused, as automobile service stations were located on three of the four corners at Sacramento and California Streets (**Figure 13**).⁷

In the decades following World War II, Berkeley's reputation as a liberal stronghold grew, particularly expressed by its Democratic-leaning academic community and African American and working-class populations. Civil Rights became an important topic, leading to struggles over fair-housing and segregation of schools. The Vietnam War affected the city tremendously, as it was heavily populated by young, working-class people and students who were eligible for the draft, spurring protests and demonstrations. Berkeley has remained a politically and culturally outspoken community that largely accepts and promotes progressive thinking. The University of California remains the centerpiece of the city, which is otherwise inhabited by a wide range of social, economic, and ethnic demographics.⁸

Owner History of 1598 University

Prior to the construction of the subject building in 1963, the property was owned by Edwin "Eddie" and Dorothy Neff. Eddie Neff owned and operated a Shell service station that was located on the site at least as early as 1949, until the construction of the restaurant building. The Neffs also owned the adjacent properties at 1556 (currently used as surface parking) and 1548 University Avenue (currently occupied by an after-school education provider). Born in Oakland in 1907, Eddie Neff married Massachusetts-born Dorothy Dennett in 1928. Before operating a service station at the subject property, Neff operated a station three blocks to the east at 1798 University Avenue. Following Eddie's death in 1969, the property remained in Dorothy's ownership. The Neffs continued to own the subject property until at least 1995, when the last available building permit with Dorothy Neff's name was filed. Recently, the parcel was purchased by NX Ventures, the current owner.⁹

⁵ C. L. Huggins, Berkeley, California (map) (Berkeley, 1904) David Rumsey Map Collection, electronic resource at <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/7s77tm>, accessed April 26, 2022.

⁶ Sanborn Map Company maps for Berkeley, California, Sheets 65-71, 1911.

⁷ Sanborn Map Company maps for Berkeley, California, Sheet 51, 1950.

⁸ City of Berkeley, *City of Berkeley Landmark Application for the Preservation of All Souls Church, Parish Hall and Courtyard, 2220 Cedar Street, Berkeley, CA*, on file at Berkeley Architectural Heritage.

⁹ Sarah Klearman, "NX Ventures pitches major apartment project for Central Berkeley," *San Francisco Business Times*, February 1, 2022, accessed April 4, 2022, <https://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/news/2022/01/27/nx-ventures-1598-university.html>

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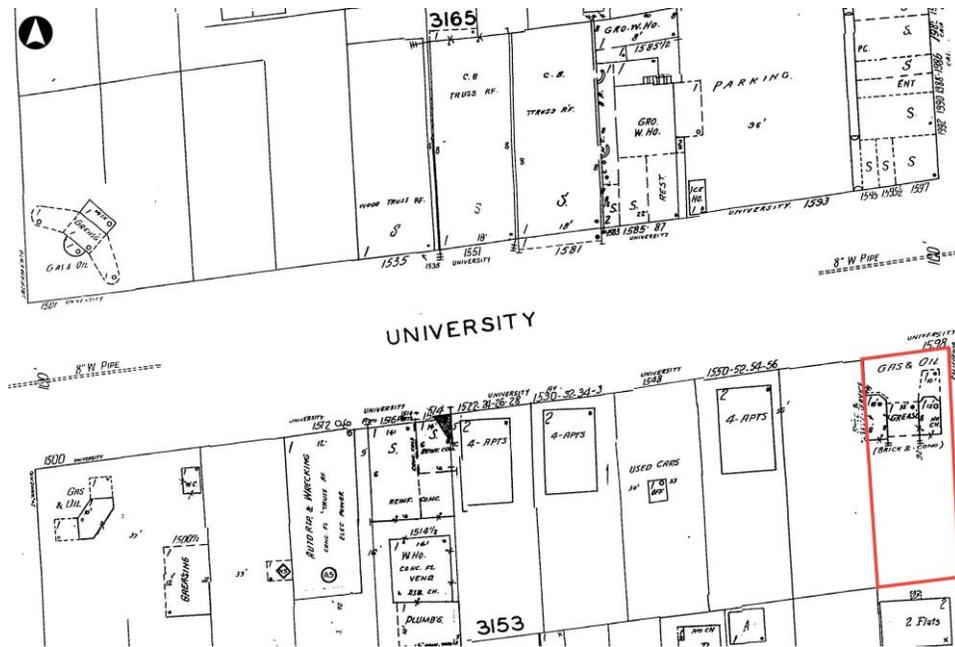


Figure 13. Detail from 1950 Sanborn Insurance Company Map for Berkeley, showing mid-twentieth-century commercial and residential development. Subject parcel outlined red.

Occupancy History

Table 2, below, lists known commercial businesses at 1598 University Avenue since 1963, the year the restaurant building was constructed. The following records were assembled through research in Alameda County Directories, building permit records, and historic newspaper archives.

Year(s) of Occupancy	Business Name
1963–1994	International House of Pancakes
1995	No business listed in directory
1996-present	North Beach Pizza

Eugene D. Birnbaum, Structural Engineer

Engineer Eugene Birnbaum was born in Massachusetts in 1915, earning his civil engineering license in 1943 after a self-directed program of correspondence courses.¹⁰ After working at Hughes Aircraft during World War II, Birnbaum opened his own firm, Eugene D. Birnbaum & Associates, in Los Angeles in 1953. Beginning in the 1950s, Birnbaum collaborated on projects with Richard Neutra, and in the following decades contributed to numerous developments from high-rise residential and office towers to prefabricated food stands. His 1999 Los Angeles Times obituary notes that:

Although Birnbaum was involved in such landmark projects as the Spruce Goose and the retrofitting of the Watts Towers, his influence may be more widely seen in mundane projects, from drive-in movie screens and fast-food stands to most of the International House of Pancakes, Chuck E. Cheese and Sizzler restaurants on the West Coast.¹¹

Historic newspaper accounts of Birnbaum’s work show this wide span, with a 1964 design for a high school baseball field backstop following an award-winning collaboration with Richard Neutra on the Garden Grove Community Church in Los Angeles, built in 1962.¹² Through the 1960s, Birnbaum provided structural engineering services on several noteworthy modern residential projects

¹⁰ Elaine Woo, “Eugene Birnbaum; Innovative Engineer [Obituary],” Los Angeles Times, June 11, 1999.

¹¹ Elaine Woo, “Eugene Birnbaum; Innovative Engineer [Obituary],” Los Angeles Times, June 11, 1999.

¹² “Base Pupil Study Near Completion,” The Lompoc Record, April 29, 1964; “Church Design Wins Award,” Los Angeles Times, February 17, 1963.

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in Los Angeles, including architect John August Reed's design for the John Katz House and Raul Garduno's designs for the Balsh House and the *Los Angeles Times' Home Magazine* House of 1966.¹³

International House of Pancakes

The International House of Pancakes was founded in 1958 in Toluca Lake, California by Al and Jerry Lapin, who developed the restaurant concept in response to the success of other chain restaurants in Southern California in the years following World War II.¹⁴ The distinctive A-frame style of the identical restaurant franchise buildings was established beginning in 1960, and within two decades hundreds of the restaurants had opened across the United States following active promotion of franchise opportunities (Figure 14 and Figure 15).¹⁵ The name "IHOP" came into use for the chain in the early 1970s.

In the East Bay, as in other counties and states, the distinctive International House of Pancakes restaurant style was part of a larger post-World War II movement in commercial architecture toward auto-oriented sites and businesses. Freestanding buildings surrounded by surface parking lots broke from earlier patterns of pedestrian-focused commercial storefront development, particularly in new suburban areas but also, as in the case of the subject building, as infill in already developed urban areas. Designed to accommodate their customers' vehicles in the surrounding parking lots, these new commercial buildings also needed to attract passing drivers to become customers. Exaggerated architectural styles, like the International House of Pancakes' steep A-frame, increased businesses' visibility and provided a kind of architectural advertising with specific building types representing recognizable business types or brands.¹⁶

In its fullest expression, this approach to architecture is represented by the Googie style, displayed by businesses from coffee shops to car washes built between the late 1940s and early 1970s. However, while Googie architecture tended toward a futuristic whimsy, with metallic finishes and references to fantasies of a burgeoning Space Age, the International House of Pancakes' restaurants referenced a rustic alpine cottage. International Industries, the larger company which operated the International House of Pancakes, experimented with a more Googie-type version of their A-frame design by incorporating a steep dip in the center of the roof ridge of their Woody's Smorgasburger restaurants built in the early 1960s (Figure 16). Some of these buildings, including the building at 2650 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, were later occupied by International House of Pancakes restaurants.¹⁷

Seven International House of Pancakes locations operated in East Bay cities by 1967 (Figure 14).¹⁸ In addition to the subject property, three buildings which housed International House of Pancakes restaurants in the late 1960s remain standing in East Bay cities. Two, located at 2650 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley and 3000 International Boulevard, Oakland, have the dipped-roof style indicating that they were originally built as Woody's Smorgasburger restaurants. The location at 22222 Foothill Boulevard, Hayward, which opened as the 32nd International House of Pancakes restaurant in May 1962, still operates as an IHOP.¹⁹ The former International House of Pancakes building at 460 West Grand Avenue, Oakland, was demolished in 2021.

¹³ "A House That's Built on Stilts," *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1964; "A House Shaped in Steel, Glass & Concrete," *Los Angeles Times*, July 3, 1966; "Home Magazine House/66," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1966.

¹⁴ IHOP, "59 years of smiles. And counting," electronic resource at <https://www.ihop.com/en/about-ihop/history>, accessed April 27, 2022; Van Nuys News, "Fifth Anniversary Celebrated by International House of Pancakes Firm," July 21, 1963.

¹⁵ SF Gate, "AL Lapin Jr. — Co-Founder of International House of Pancakes Chain [Obituary]," SF Gate, June 21, 2004, electronic resource at <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Al-Lapin-Jr-co-founder-of-International-House-2747602.php>, accessed April 27, 2022.

¹⁶ Architecture + History, LLC and Watson Heritage Consulting, *Downtown Oakland Specific Plan Historic Building Typology Study* (Oakland: Prepared for Dover & Kohl Partners, Urban Planning Partners, and the City of Oakland, 2019), 43.

¹⁷ Preservation Architecture, 2650 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, City of Berkeley Historical Evaluation (Oakland: Prepared for the City of Berkeley, August 12, 2019); City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, SurveyLA record for International House of Pancakes, 16943 W Devonshire Street, electronic resource at <http://historicplacesla.org/reports/dbba85d0-4472-4132-aed8-bb76dafaed8a>, accessed April 27, 2022.

¹⁸ Advertisement for International House of Pancakes, *Life Magazine*, October 27, 1967.

¹⁹ Rex Adkins, "Pancakes Now 'Cover the Earth,'" *Oakland Tribune*, May 15, 1962.

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Figure 14. Advertisement for the International House of Pancakes in the October 27, 1967 issue of *Life Magazine*.



Figure 15. Advertisement for International House of Pancakes and Woody's Smorgasburger franchise opportunities, *Oakland Tribune*, September 21, 1962.

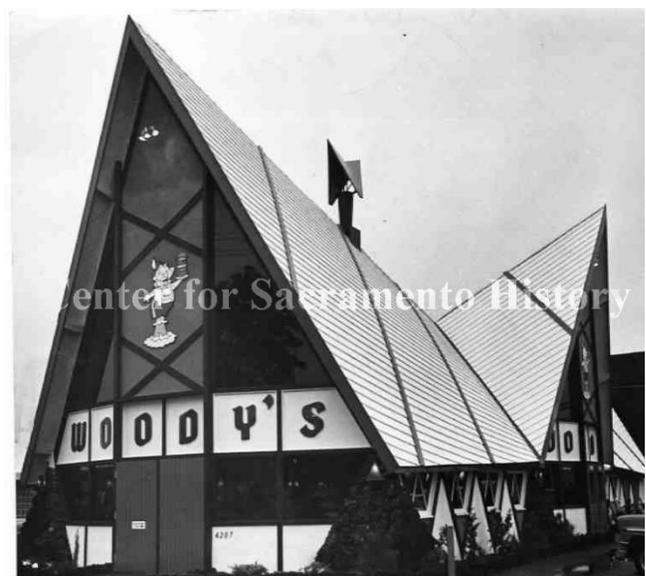


Figure 16. Woody's Smorgasburger restaurants, such as this example photographed in 1963, were operated by the same company as International House of Pancakes restaurants and had an exaggerated version of the steeply-pitched A-frame roof. Source: Center for Sacramento History.

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Evaluation:
California Register Evaluation

The property at 1598 University Avenue is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). The building does not appear in the most recent version available of the State of California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD), issued March 2020, indicating that no record of a previous survey or evaluation is on file at an information center of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS).²⁰ The subject building is not listed as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Criterion 1 (Events)

1598 University Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events) for its association 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. The subject building was constructed in 1963 as an International House of Pancakes restaurant. This chain and its franchise locations are associated with the post-World War II suburban development of California's cities, specifically the growth of chain restaurant franchises as part of the larger pattern of automobile-focused commercial development. However, the subject property is not an early or unique example of an International House of Pancakes or chain restaurant, and was not built as part of a post-war suburban development. Rather, it was built in 1963, during a period of aggressive franchise growth by the restaurant company, as commercial infill in an already developed, mixed commercial and residential neighborhood of Berkeley. No significant events are known to have taken place at the subject building that would allow the building to rise to the level of significance necessary to be individually eligible for the California Register.

Criterion 2 (Persons)

1598 University Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons). The subject building was constructed as an International House of Pancakes restaurant for property-owners Eddie and Dorothy Neff. Neither the Neff family nor any individuals associated with the operation of the restaurant at the subject building appear to have made significant contributions to the social and economic history of Berkeley, and little additional information was found regarding their personal achievements as they would relate to the subject property. The International House of Pancakes restaurant chain and its representatives were not found to have made a significant impact on local, state, or national history in a way directly associated with the subject building, such that it could be found significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture)

1598 University Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Architecture) as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. While easily recognizable as a relatively intact example of the corporation-mandated International House of Pancakes restaurant design, the subject building is not an early, rare, or exceptionally well-preserved example of this chain's restaurant buildings. Structural engineer Eugene D. Birnbaum appears to have been prolific and influential in the construction of residential, commercial, and institutional projects in the mid-twentieth century, particularly in Los Angeles. His frequent collaborations with Richard Neutra and other prominent Modernist architects required his application of engineering solutions to the architects' creative visions, and this work may elevate Birnbaum to the status of master in his field during his career. However, as an example of a standardized building plan which was reproduced for all International House of Pancakes restaurants built from the early 1960s through the 1970s, the subject property is not a strong representative of Birnbaum's significant work as an engineer. The property does not appear to be eligible as a contributor to a historic district, but the evaluation of a potential district is outside the scope of this report.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

1598 University Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 4 (Information Potential). The "potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of California" typically relates to archeological resources, rather than built resources. When California Register Criterion 4 (Information Potential) does relate to built resources, it is relevant for cases when the buildings themselves are the principal source of important construction-related information. The subject property does not appear to be individually significant under Criterion 4 as a building that has the potential to provide information important to the prehistory or history of the City of Berkeley, the state, or the nation. It does not appear to feature construction or material types, or embody engineering practices that would, with additional study, provide important information. Identification or evaluation of archaeological resources is beyond the scope of this study.

City of Berkeley Landmark and Structure of Merit Evaluation

The City of Berkeley maintains a list of properties designated as local Landmarks and Structures of Merit under Chapter 3.24 of the Berkeley Municipal Code. Much like the National and California Registers, the Municipal Code provides a number of criteria that must be met in order for a property to gain Landmark or Structure of Merit designation. Properties may be landmarked if they meet standards of architectural, cultural, educational, or historical significance, or if they are already listed in the National Register. A property may be designated as a Structure of Merit if it does not rise to the level of Landmark status, but has contextual importance

²⁰ California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), Alameda County, updated March 2020.

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and is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, block or street frontage, or group of buildings that includes Landmark properties.

The subject property at 1598 University Avenue does not appear to be eligible as a City of Berkeley Landmark. The subject building is an example of a standardized design for a chain restaurant building constructed in 1963 as an International House of Pancakes. The building is not of an early or exceptional style of mid-twentieth century commercial architecture as represented within the City of Berkeley and therefore does not demonstrate architectural merit such that it would qualify as a landmark. It does not provide architectural value to the surrounding neighborhood, which is characterized by a mixture of commercial and multi-family residential buildings of varied construction dates and architectural styles. 1598 University Avenue operated as a family restaurant, providing predictable quality meals to local families but not, at this specific location, innovating in its field or influencing Berkeley's restaurant industry. As such, the building would not be eligible as a landmark for its cultural value. 1598 University Avenue does not appear to be eligible as a landmark for its educational value. The subject building does not bear significant historic associations for it to contribute meaningfully to educational curricula. The building also does not appear to be eligible for its historic value as its type and style do not embody the history of Berkeley or the state. Additionally, the subject building is not listed on the National Register.

The subject building does not appear to have contextual importance as part of a neighborhood, block, or street frontage, as the character of University Avenue between Sacramento and California streets lacks visual, architectural, or historic distinctiveness or significance in its mixture of commercial and multi-family residential buildings dating between ca. 1929 and 2007. Therefore, 1598 University Avenue is not eligible as a City of Berkeley Structure of Merit.

Conclusion

The commercial building at 1598 University Avenue, Berkeley, California was built in 1963 for property owners Eddie and Dorothy Neff as a franchise location of the International House of Pancakes, constructed according to the chain's standardized plan under the direction of structural engineer Eugene D. Birnbaum. The building was used in this capacity until 1995, after which a new commercial tenant operated a pizza restaurant there. This evaluation is based on a site visit and analysis of available documentation pertaining to the subject building's ownership and occupant history, chronology of construction and alterations, and architectural characteristics. The subject property is not eligible for individual listing in the California Register under any criterion, nor is the subject property eligible for designation as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit. The property does not therefore appear to qualify as a historic resource for the purposes of review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, the California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "6Z" has been assigned to the building, meaning that it was "Found ineligible for NR, CR or Local designation through survey evaluation."²¹

²¹ California State Office of Historic Preservation Department of Parks and Recreation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #8: User's Guide to the California Historical Resource Status Codes & Historical Resource Inventory Directory*, Sacramento, November 2004.

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