

D E S I G N
R E V I E W
C O M M I T T E E
S T A F F R E P O R T

For Committee Decision
DECEMBER 21, 2023

2587 Telegraph Avenue

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW

Design Review #DRCP2023-0009 to demolish a two-story retail building and construct an eight-story (95-foot) 112,562 square-foot mixed-use residential building with 52 dwelling units, including six (6) Very Low-Income Density Bonus Units, 2,903 square feet of ground floor commercial, and 73 long term and six (6) short term bicycle parking spaces.

I. Introduction

This 8-story mixed-use project is proposed in the C-T Telegraph Commercial District on the east side of Telegraph between Parker Street and Blake Street.

This project is applying under the Housing Crisis Act, SB 330, which seeks to boost homebuilding throughout the State with a focus on urbanized zones by expediting the approval process for and suspending or eliminating restrictions on housing development and limiting the number of public meetings. Housing development is defined as a project that is: all residential; a mixed-use project with at least two-thirds of the square-footage residential; or for transitional or supportive housing.

The project is tentatively scheduled for the Zoning Adjustments Board on January 25, 2024. It is before the Design Review Committee this month for Preliminary Design Review.

II. Background

The proposed project would involve the demolition of a two-story retail building and construction of a new eight-story (95 foot) 112,562 square-foot mixed-use residential development with 52 dwelling units, including six (6) Very Low Income (VLI) units, 2,903 square feet of ground floor commercial, and 73 long term and six (6) short term bicycle parking spaces. No parking spaces are proposed. The major components of the proposed mixed-use building are as follows:

- 52 dwelling units (units are a mix of 1-4 bedrooms - 219 bedrooms total)
- 2,903 square feet of ground floor commercial space

- 5,105 square feet of useable open space provided as roof decks, lounge areas and private balconies
 - 2,633 square foot courtyard on the ground floor
 - 1,020 square foot shared balcony on the third floor
 - 2 roof terraces on the eighth floor (750 square feet and 740 square feet)
- 2,044 square foot fitness room
- Study pods on each floor
- 350 square foot amenity room on eighth floor
- 73 Long-Term and six (6) Short-Term bike parking spaces
- Five (5) new street trees on Telegraph

III. Project Setting

A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

The project site is located at 2587 Telegraph Avenue, north of Parker Street, south of Dwight Way and west of Regent Street. The project is located within the Telegraph Avenue Commercial (C-T) zoning district and within the Southside Area Plan. The project site is surrounded by a variety of commercial, retail and residential (in mixed uses buildings) uses to the north, south and west across Telegraph Avenue. The mixed-use residential buildings range in height from three (3) to six (6) stories. Directly to the east of the site, there are smaller apartment projects and single-family residences ranging in height from two (2) to three (3) stories. Bus stops are located to the north at Telegraph Avenue and Dwight Way, and to the south at Telegraph Avenue and Parker Street. The project is located 0.4 miles from the Downtown Berkeley BART station.

B. Site Conditions:

The project site is located on the east side of Telegraph Avenue. The parcel has 176 feet of frontage along Telegraph Avenue, and the width of the lot ranges between about 76 feet on the northern end to 113 on the southern end. The 18,870 square foot lot contains an existing 14,427 square foot commercial structure which contains six (6) commercial spaces. Some street parking is located in front of the project site on Telegraph Avenue. There is no vehicular access or driveways into the property. The project site does not contain protected, culverted, or historic creek beds and is not subject to seismic hazards.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map

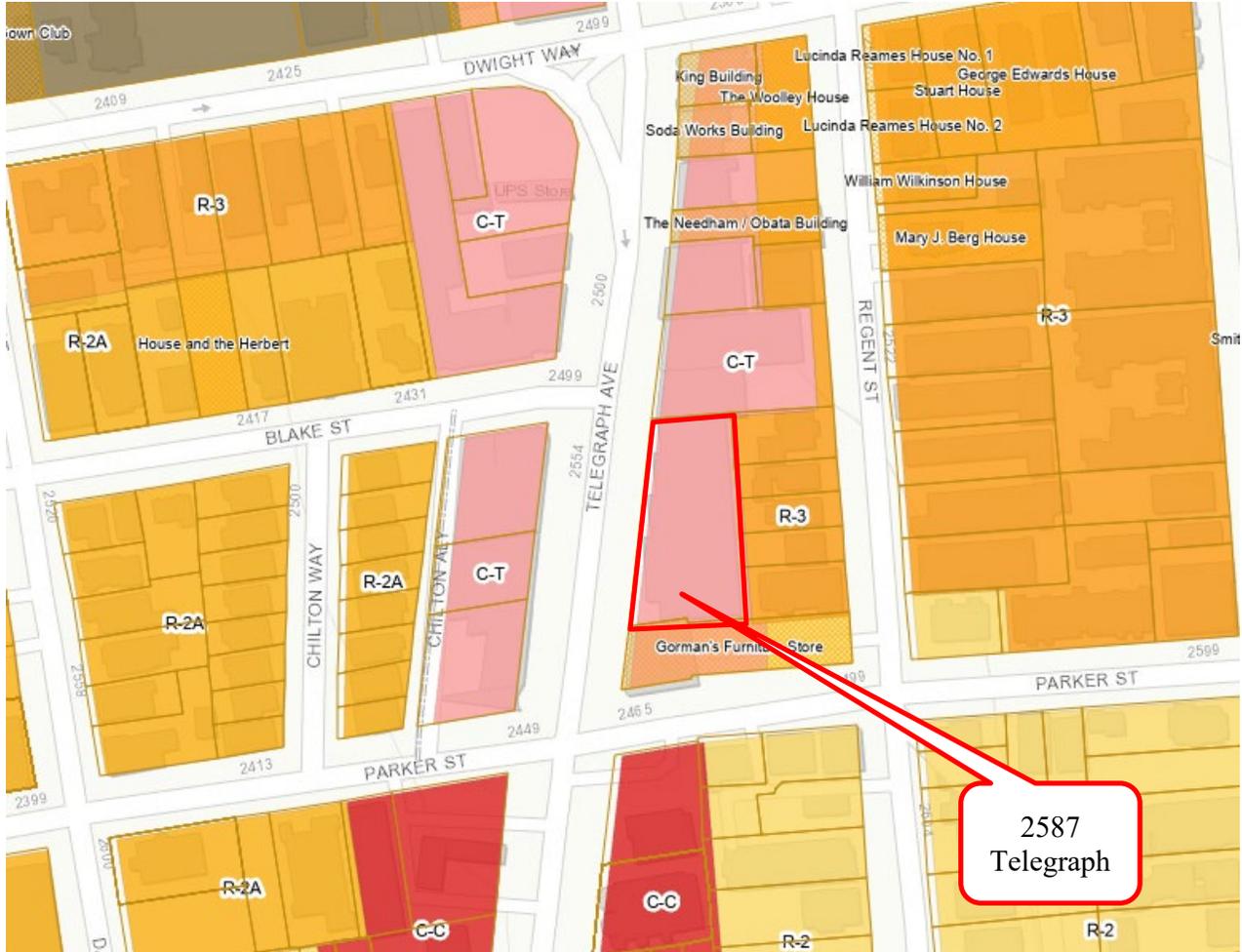


Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		2-Story Retail Building	Telegraph Avenue Commercial (C-T)	Avenue Commercial (AC)
Surrounding Properties	North	Apartments – “The Panoramic”	C-T	AC
	South	Mixed Use Residential/Retail and Residential Building	C-T and (R-2) Restricted Two-Family Residential	AC and Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR)
	East	Single-family dwellings and “Regent Apartments”	Multiple-Family Residential District (R-3)	Medium Density Residential (MDR)
	West	Retail, restaurants and a Mixed Use Residential building “The Laureate”	C-T and R-2A – Restricted Multiple-Family Residential	AC and MDR

Table 2: Development Standards

Standard		Existing	Proposed Total	Permitted/ Required
BMC Sections 23.204.110				
Lot Area (sq. ft.)		18,780	Same	N/A
Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)		14,427	112,562	N/A
Floor Area Ratio		.76	6	4
Dwelling Units	Total	0	52	53 max (with DB)
	Affordable	0	6	6 min to qualify for DB
Building Height	Maximum (ft.)	29	90' 3"	65" – higher with DB
	Stories	2-stories	8	N/A
Building Setbacks (ft.)	Front	0-25	2	0
	Rear	0-8	5	10
	Left (east) Side	0	1	0
	Right (west) Side	0-5	1	0
Lot Coverage (%)		77	89	100 max
Usable Open Space (sq. ft.)		0	5,105 (Balconies – 1,040 and Common UOS – 4,065)	40 min/unit (2,080 s.f.)
Percent Landscaped		0	833	832
Parking	Automobile	0	0	0 min
	Bicycle Long Term	0	73	73 min (1 space per 3 bedrooms)
	Bicycle Short Term	0	6	6 min (1 space per 40 bedrooms)

IV. Project Description

A. Requested Use Permits

- Use Permit under BMC Section 23.204.020(A) to construct a mixed-use residential development;
- Use Permit under BMC Section 23.204.020(A) to construct a multi-family dwelling;
- Use Permit under BMC Section 23.204.030(A) to create new gross floor area of 5,000 square feet or more;
- Use Permit under BMC Section 23.204.110(D)(4) to allow for the height to be 65 feet and five (5) stories;
- Administrative Use Permit under BMC Section 23.304.050(A) to construct rooftop architectural elements which exceed the maximum height limit for the district;
- Use Permit under BMC Section 23.326.070(A) to demolish a non-residential building.

B. CEQA Determination

It is staff's recommendation to the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq. and California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq.) pursuant to Section 15332 ("Infill Development Project") of the CEQA Guidelines. The determination is made by ZAB.

C. Density Bonus Information

- Waiver of BMC Section 23.204.110(D)(1) to allow for a floor area ratio of six (6) where four (4) is the maximum south of Dwight Way
- Waiver of BMC Section 23.204.110 (D)(4) to allow for an increase in building height - up to 90 feet and 3 inches and eight (8) stories, where 65 feet and five (5) stories is the limit
- Waiver of BMC Section 23.304.030(C)(2)(a) to reduce the required rear yard setback for when a lot abuts or confronts a lot in a residential district from ten (10) feet to five (5) feet

V. Design Review Guidelines

The project is located within the Telegraph Commercial subarea of the Berkeley South Side plan. Our Southside Design Guidelines – Mixed Use Subarea applies to this project and can be found on the City's website.

The following are several key guidelines from our commercial subarea guidelines which relate closely to this project.

Building Mass and Height

- Building heights should respect the general heights in the Commercial Subareas.
- New construction in the Telegraph Commercial Subarea should reflect the scale and massing established by the older three to five story buildings in the subarea.
- During the design phase of project development in the Commercial Subareas, evaluate impacts of proposed buildings exceeding three stories to determine wind corridor and shadow impacts on the shadow impacts on the public sidewalk.
- Maintain a continuous zero front setback at the ground floor except to provide recessed storefront entrances, a special corner feature, or usable open space.

Building Design and Facades

- The proportions, rhythm, and attention to detailing established by the facades of older historic buildings should be reflected and reinforced in new construction.
- Street facades in general and the ground-floor level in particular should include elements of pedestrian scale and interest.
- Architecturally distinguish the floors to form a defined hierarchy of base, middle, and top. Architecturally distinguish the top of the building to provide a visual termination.

Storefronts

- Reflect the traditional storefront rhythm and proportion found throughout the Commercial Subareas. Emulate traditional elements such as large display windows of clear glass, bulkheads below the storefront windows and clerestory windows above, recessed front entries, and appropriate locations for signs and awnings.
- Clearly distinguish entrances to upper floors from storefront entrances through differentiated architectural treatment and materials.

Roof Shape and Lines

- On new buildings, there should be some form of articulation or detailing where the roof meets the wall.

Materials

- Utilize materials that provide a sense of continuity with the existing area structures, such as brick, smooth-faced cement plaster, finished concrete, tile and stone.
- Use high quality durable materials that convey a sense of permanence, are easily cleaned, and cannot be permanently damaged by graffiti or heavy cleaning.

The complete Southside Design Guidelines can be found online at:

[http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_\(new_site_map_walk-through\)/Level_3_-_General/04-11%20Southside%20Plan%20Design%20Guidelines%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Planning_(new_site_map_walk-through)/Level_3_-_General/04-11%20Southside%20Plan%20Design%20Guidelines%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

VI. Issues and Analysis

A. Design Review Issues:

Neighborhood Context The project site is located in the C-T Telegraph Commercial district abutting the R-4 Residential district to the east. The Telegraph corridor features a mixture of single story commercial buildings and mid-level mixed use projects, including the 6-story Panoramic Apartments (north), a Landmarked 3-story mixed use building (south), and the 5-story Laureate apartments across Telegraph (west).

Massing This seven-story mass is designed with a single story base supporting seven floors of residential units. The ground floor on Telegraph is recessed, and the façade on Telegraph is broken up by vertical bands of recessed balconies. At the northwest corner, the project steps down adjacent to the neighboring 6-story building to the north. At the rear of the project, the massing angles away from the residential district to the east, providing ground floor open space and a buffer for the neighboring parcels. A courtyard at the third floor pulls the massing back even further from the east property line. Private balconies are adjacent to the courtyard space at the south and at the northwest corner.

Setbacks The setbacks for this project vary as both the building and the property line is stepped in on three of the four sides. The building meets the property line at the west on Telegraph. The north and south sides have a minimum setback of one foot, and the east side has a minimum setback of five feet. The ground floor is recessed on all four sides. The west side is recessed four feet and ten inches from the property line; the south side is recessed approximately ten feet from the property line; the east side has a maximum of thirty feet and a minimum fifteen feet from the property line; and the north is setback fifteen feet.

Ground Floor Design The project's main frontage is on Telegraph, and the building area along the street is divided between commercial space to the south and a residential lobby to the north. A corridor from the lobby connects to a bike room, and fitness room. Two trash rooms are located behind the retail space, one accessible via a corridor that connects to the courtyard at the rear of the project and the other is accessible via an external door at the south side of the project. Open space is provided along the east and north edges of the parcel.

Open Space/Landscape The project provides open space at the ground floor, third floor, and roof level. At the streetscape, the project would remove one existing street tree and proposes five new street trees on Telegraph with raised planters proposed at the storefront. The courtyard at the east edge of the project features a raised

deck, planting area, and other proposed amenities. Seating and concrete pavers are proposed along the north side of the project at the ground floor. At the third floor, outdoor amenity space facing east is proposed with raised planters and both moveable and built in seating. The roof level deck is located at the northern edge of the eighth floor. The roof deck provides both individual and group seating options with raised planting areas and screen wall.

Colors and Materials Building materials include flat and profiled metal panels on the Telegraph street façade, masonry veneer at the ground floor, wood-like cladding at the gates and railings, metal canopies over the window on the east façade, and vinyl windows throughout the project. See Sheet A4.1.

B. Issues for Discussion:

- Massing/Building Design
- Ground Floor Design/ Streetscape
- Façade Design / Bird Safety
- Open Space Design/ Landscape
- Colors and Materials

VII. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee discuss the issues outlined above and forward a favorable recommendation on to ZAB with conditions as necessary to address any design concerns and specific direction for Final Design Review.

Attachments:

1. Project Plans, received September 13, 2023
2. Applicant Statement, received September 13, 2023

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