



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
MARCH 7, 2024

2733 - 2737 San Pablo Avenue

Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2023-0090) to demolish an existing two-story mixed-use building, originally constructed in 1948 with an addition in 2006 (APN: 054-1742-032-00).

I. Application Basics

A. Zoning District: West Berkeley Commercial (C-W) Zoning District

B. Parties Involved:

- **Project Applicant** Isaiah Stackhouse
Trachtenberg Architects
2421 Fourth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
- **Evaluator** Page & Turnbull, Inc.
170 Maiden Lane, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94010
- **Property Owner** Robert D. McGee
2762 Reliez Valley Rd.
Martinez, CA 94553

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

II. Background

On August 17, 2023, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish a two-story mixed-use building located at 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue [APN 54-1742-32], and to construct a new, 8-story, mixed-use residential building with 154 units over ground-floor commercial spaces. The application is eligible for streamlined review per Senate Bill 330.

The Use Permit application #ZP2023-0090 is under review by the Zoning Officer and the project is not yet scheduled for Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) consideration; see link to plans below.

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

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) 23.326.070.C, 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 criteria. 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.

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.

III. Historical Resources

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

The subject property is not adjacent to any City of Berkeley landmark sites. The nearest City of Berkeley Landmarks/Structures of Merit are: The H.S Heinz Co. Plant (1927) situated two blocks south on San Pablo Avenue; and the Standard Die & Specialty Company (1924), located three blocks northwest at 2701 Eighth Street (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Vicinity Map showing nearby historic resources (City of Berkeley GIS, 2023)

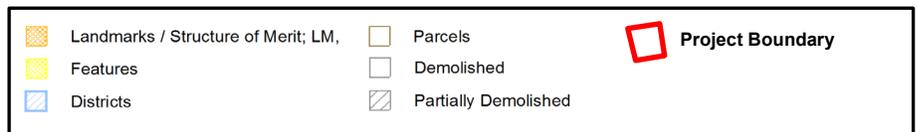
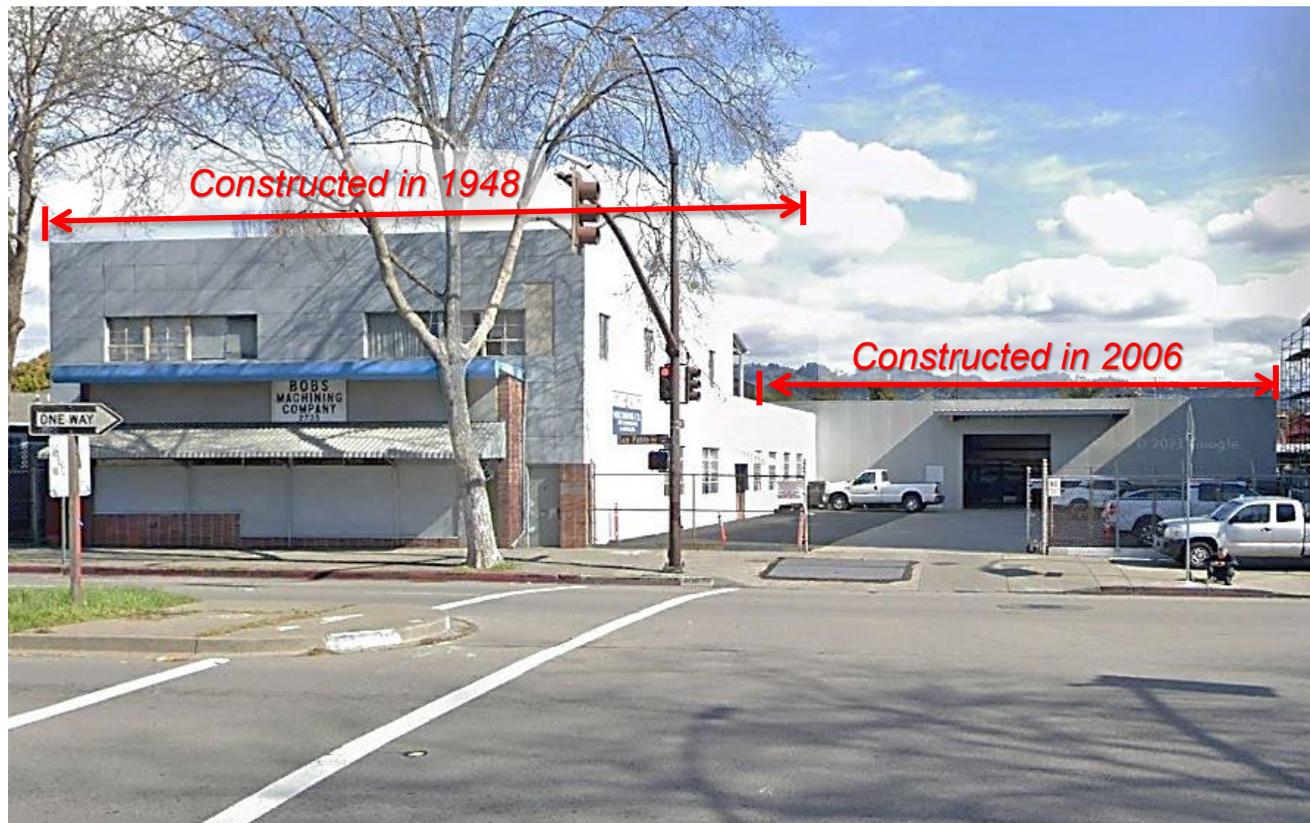


Figure 2: Subject Property, current site conditions (Google Maps, 2019; annotations added)



IV. Property Description

The historic resource evaluation (HRE) for the subject property, which consists of a CA Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) Form 523 (A/B/L), was completed by Page & Turnbull, Inc. in August 2023; please see Attachment 1 of this report. The following description derives from the information contained in the HRE, visual observation, as well as the City's land use archives and building permit records.

Parcel Description: The subject property is a quadrilateral-shaped flat parcel located in West Berkeley on the east side of San Pablo Avenue, south of Ward Street near the terminus of Grayson Street. Its address range spans 2733, 2735, and 2737, herein referred to as 2733 – 2737 San Pablo Avenue. The parcel is improved with a two-story mixed-use building (industrial, commercial, and residential) which was originally built in 1948 and added on to in 2006. A driveway from San Pablo Avenue leads to a surface parking lot located to the south of the 1948 portion of the building and in front (to the west) of the 2006 addition, which is enclosed at the property line with a chain-link fence.

Building Description: The subject property is developed with a mixed-use building originally built in 1948, including industrial, commercial, and residential uses in various parts of the building. The original portion of the building is approximately 7,717 square feet in size and two stories at its street frontage, with a sales room at the first floor and two residential apartments at the second floor. The building then steps down to a

single story towards the rear of the lot, which was used for storage and stock. In 2006, a 3,538 square foot, single-story concrete building addition was constructed connecting to the rear of the original building in a north-south orientation; the resulting building currently forms an L-shaped footprint. Both portions of the building are made of reinforced concrete. No architect is accredited with the 1948 building's original design and the contractor at that time is also unknown. The 2006 addition was designed by Roger J. Wilson, architect.

Due to its era of development and its architectural features, the 1948 portion of the building can be described as Mid-Century Modern style, featuring on its primary (front, street-facing) elevation a flat roof, metal panel façade cladding with Roman brick cladding accents, and steel-framed divided-lite ribbon windows. The secondary elevations feature simple, concrete exterior surfaces with steel-framed divided-lite windows. The 2006-addition was used as a machine shop and features faux-granite exterior wall panels, a roll-up metal door, and a horizontal flat roof canopy.

Early Site History & Parcel Development: The subject property was developed in 1948 for the Mall Tool Company as a commercial/light industrial facility with a residential component for the company's staff to reside on site. Mall Tool Company was a subsidiary of the Remington Arms Company that manufactured and sold tools for the firearms-based company. At the subject property, Mall Tool Company, later under the banner of Remington, sold and manufactured power tools. A longtime employee of the Mall Tool Co. was known to be an early residential tenant, with a handful of additional tenants known to occupy the property up until 1998, according to the research in the HRE.

The subject property was occupied by five commercial and light industrial business enterprises since its 1948 inception, as listed in the HRE:

- 1) Mall Tool Company, 1948-1958
- 2) Remington Arms Co.'s power tool division, 1958-1970
- 3) The F.B. Ridley Company, 1965 – 1984
- 4) The California State Highways Division, 1965-1984
- 5) Bob McGee's Machining Company Inc., c. 1995-2023

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context²: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff concludes that the period of *potential* significance for the building at 2733 - 2737 San Pablo Avenue would have been 1948, the year of its original construction. However, since the building is not identified as significant, no period of significance applies.

Owing to the subject building's commercial use and location on a prominent commercial corridor, this property is linked to a historic context that is best defined as economic development. This evaluation of the property's historical significance therefore analyzes the significance criteria within the themes of economic development as well as architectural merit.

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, Page & Turnbull, Inc. (historic consultant) has analyzed the building's extant features and any associated parties against the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources (CR) and 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 conclusion of Page & Turnbull, Inc.'s and staff's evaluations is discussed below.

The evaluation focuses on the 1948 portion of the building, since it is more than 40 years old; the 2006 portion is not evaluated because, at 18 years old, it is not near the age of historic maturity.

CR and BMC Criteria:

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

The HRE concludes that 2733 - 2737 San Pablo Avenue does not meet CR Criterion 1 because it was not found to be associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the heritage of California or the United States. In terms of historic context, development of the property would fall under the theme of economic development along the San Pablo corridor and West Berkeley industrial area. However, a study of its development history, ownership and occupancy

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).

records revealed no information linking this site to any events or singular episode of primary importance to Berkeley's history. It does not exhibit historical significance under the local or state criteria.

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

The subject property has been associated with five commercial and light industrial business enterprises since its 1948 inception, as listed in Section IV of this report. The HRE concludes that 2733 - 2737 San Pablo Avenue does not meet CR Criterion 2 because the particular outposts of these operations did not contribute to research, development, or large-scale manufacturing, and do not appear to have made a significant impact on local, state, or national history. The HRE also concludes that none of the owners or occupants associated with the property are of identifiable historical importance. With respect to cultural value, the consultant's research concludes that by the time this property was developed in 1948, it became a commonplace addition to the commercial and industrial uses in the area and does not represent any particular cultural value. As such, this property is not found to exhibit cultural significance for contributions to the movement or evolution of culture in Berkeley.

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

The original portion of the building on the site was built in 1948 with no known architect and by an unlisted builder. This portion of the building can be described as a Mid-Century Modern mixed-use commercial/light industrial and residential structure. The primary façade of the 1948 portion does contain some features characteristic of the Mid-Century Modern style, such as steel-framed ribbon windows, red Roman brick cladding, cantilevered overhangs, and metal façade panels. The secondary facades of the 1948 portion are less adorned and more utilitarian in their design, with concrete wall surfaces and steel-framed divided light windows.

The HRE concludes that the 2733 - 2737 San Pablo property does not represent a notable or full expression of Mid-Century Modern architecture and lacks the distinctive characteristics of design and workmanship to qualify under California Register Criterion 3 for architectural merit. Since it does not rise to a level of distinction, this property does not warrant consideration for local register designation for 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. The subject property does not appear to have potential to provide information important to the prehistory or history of the City of Berkeley, state, or nation; nor does it appear to embody construction, material types, or engineering practices that would provide important information with additional study.

National Register – BMC Criterion *National Register*

The subject property is not listed on the National Register and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

LPO Criteria:

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*:

- Contemporary to the nearest City Landmark buildings in age;
- An example of good architectural design;
- Comparable to the type/use, design or style of the nearby Landmarks; and
- Associated with events that are historically significant to the City of Berkeley.

For all of these reasons, Page & Turnbull, Inc. and staff conclude that the building is not eligible for national, state, or local register listing.

VI. Recommendation

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

Attachments:

1. California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Primary Record Form 523A/B/L, prepared by Page & Turnbull, Inc., dated August 2023.

Prepared by: Reina Kapadia, AICP, Senior Planner; rkapadia@berkeleyca.gov, (510) 981-7485

Reviewed by: Fatema Crane, Principal Planner/LPC Secretary; fcrane@berkeleyca.gov, (510) 981-7410

San F120State 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 14 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: _____

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

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 2022

*c. Address 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue City Berkeley Zip 94704

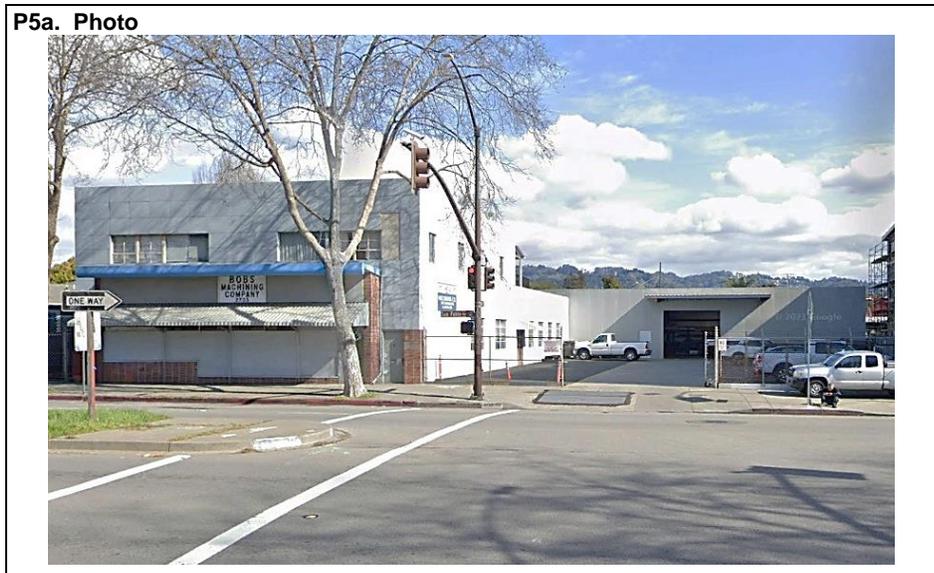
*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 54-1742-32

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)
 The parcel which contains 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue (APN 54-1742-32) is located west of downtown Berkeley on the east side of San Pablo Avenue between Ward Street and Oregon Street. The site contains a 1948 reinforced-concrete building with a 2006 reinforced-concrete addition that together form an L-shaped footprint (**Figure 1**). The interior of the L, at the southwest corner of the parcel, serves as a paved parking and storage area and is enclosed by a chain-link fence along the sidewalk. A concrete driveway extends from a chain link gate at the sidewalk along the north edge of the parcel to the northeast corner, providing access to openings and entrances on the north façade of the building. The east façade and south façade of the addition are built to within one foot of the property line.

The 1948 reinforced-concrete portion of the building was built by an unknown contractor for the Mall Tool Company. The 1948 portion of the building is two stories at its primary façade and drops to one story at its eastern half. The 2006 addition is also one-story tall. For the purpose of the following architectural description, the 1948 building and the 2006 addition will be described as one building. 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue features a flat built-up roof, with metal panel cladding and Roman brick cladding at the west façade, and a concrete exterior on all other façades. Typical fenestration consists of original steel-frame divided-lite windows in fixed, awning, and casement configurations. The building was occupied by various commercial, light industrial, and residential tenants throughout its history, and is currently occupied by Bob's Machining Company. (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 primary façade and interior lot, looking east, Google Streetview, 2023.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: historic
1948 (inspection card)

*P7. Owner and Address:
Robert D. McGee
2672 Reliez Valley Road
Martinez CA 94553

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

*P9. Date Recorded:
August 3, 2023

*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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*Date August 3, 2023 Continuation Update

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



Figure 1. Location of 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue, approximate subject parcel outlined in solid red. The 1948 building is outlined in dashed yellow, and the 2006 building is outlined in dashed red. Source: Google Earth, 2023, edited by Page & Turnbull.

The primary (west) façade is built to the property line. It features a centered projecting aluminum frame plate-glass storefront with Roman brick bulkheads and a fully glazed aluminum frame door—addressed as 2735—with rectangular metal panels above at the south end of the storefront. The projecting storefront is flanked by metal doors addressed 2733 on the north and 2737 on the south (**Figure 2 and Figure 3**). The storefront features a stamped metal awning with a metal frame mounted in front of the aluminum-frame transom windows, and above the awning is a stamped metal sign for the primary tenant, mounted on sheets of plywood covering an additional row of transom windows (**Figure 4**). A cantilevered metal overhang caps the projecting storefront and features a fascia panel with a rounded front. The second story features two symmetrical ribbon windows aligned above the projecting storefront. These windows consist of a fixed window that fills half of the opening with two four-lite awning sash windows over two two-lite fixed windows occupying the other half. This arrangement, with the large, fixed window towards the centerline of the building, is reflected across both ribbon windows (**Figure 5**). The primary façade is clad in Roman brick from its base to the top of the first-floor door frames and on the north and south sidewalls of the projecting storefront, with metal panel cladding on the rest of the façade.

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Figure 2: Detail view of the north storefront on the primary façade. Looking east.



Figure 3: Oblique view of the primary façade. Looking northeast.



Figure 4: Detail view of the entrance to the center storefront and rectangular panels above. Looking east.



Figure 5: View of the two ribbon windows on the second story of the primary façade. Looking east. Source: Google Streetview.

The north façade is accessed from the street by a concrete driveway that separates the north façade from the north property line and extends along the length of the parcel. The façade is one-story at its east side, and two-stories at its west side. The first story of the north façade, from east (left) to west (right), features a metal door and a rolling garage door (both within the north-facing wall of the addition), a row of five three-part steel windows, two two-part steel windows, and a tripartite window (all described below) (Figure 6 and Figure 9). Every window from the westernmost three-part window through the tripartite window are covered in steel grilles. The three-part windows consist of an upper and lower three-lite fixed sash and a six-lite awning sash in the middle, the two-part steel windows consist of an upper two-lite awning sash and a lower one-lite fixed sash, and the tripartite window consists of a central three-lite fixed sash flanked by three-lite casement sashes.

At the second story, at the center of the north façade is a non-original wood-frame exit door under a non-original shed roof with asphalt shingles at a non-original roof deck leading to a fire escape with tubular steel railings that leads to the concrete driveway. To the west of the door is a pair of steel-frame divided-lite casement windows, a set of two pairs of steel-frame divided-lite casement windows, and two separate pairs of steel-frame divided lite casement windows (Figure 10 and Figure 11).

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Figure 6: Oblique view of the east side of the north façade, at the 2006 addition. Looking southeast.



Figure 7: Oblique view of the north façade. Looking southwest.



Figure 8: Oblique view of the fire escape and two-part windows. Looking southeast.



Figure 9: Detail view of the tripartite window on the north façade. Looking south.



Figure 10: Oblique view of the second story fire escape on the north facade. Looking south.



Figure 11: Oblique view of the second story fenestration on the north facade. Looking southwest.

The rear (east) façade of the building, consisting of the east-facing wall of the addition, is built to within one foot of the property line and has no openings. The rear façade of the second story of the 1948 portion of the building features a non-original roof deck.

The south façade—including the south-facing wall of the 1948 portion of the building and the west-facing wall of the 2006 addition—faces the interior parking lot and storage yard. The south-facing wall of the 1948 portion of the building features, from DPR 523L

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west (left) to east (right), two sets of two three-part fixed and awning windows, a pair of replacement glazed doors under a stamped metal awning, and four sets of two three-part fixed and awning windows (**Figure 12**). The three-part windows on the original building consist of an upper and lower two-lite fixed window and a four-lite awning window in the middle (**Figure 14**). At the second story, from west (left) to east (right), are two pairs of divided-lite casement windows, a set of two pairs of divided-lite casement windows, and a single pair of divided-lite casement windows (**Figure 13**). To the east of the second story is a non-original roof deck with metal railings and a partial non-original asphalt shingle shed roof.

The west-facing wall of the addition extends south from the rear of the 1948 portion of the building and is visible from the public right-of-way. The west-facing wall of the addition features a metal door and rolling garage door underneath a flat stamped-metal awning (**Figure 15**). The south façade of the addition is built to within one foot of the property line and has no openings.



Figure 12: View of the south façade. Looking north.



Figure 13: Detail view of three-part windows on the south façade. Looking north.



Figure 14: Detail view of casement windows on second story of the south façade. Looking north.



Figure 15: View of the west façade of the projecting 2006 addition. Looking east.

Buildings within the surrounding blocks include early to mid-twentieth century single-family homes, multi-family residential buildings, and commercial buildings as well as several multi-story mixed-use developments completed in the 21st century (**Figure 16 through Figure 27**).

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Figure 16: Four story multi-use building south of subject property at 2747 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 17: Two-story commercial building south of subject property at 2819 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 18: One and two-story commercial buildings south of subject property at 2849-2871 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 19: Two-story commercial building south of subject property at 2949 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 20: Two-story mixed-use building south of subject property at 2820 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 21: One-story industrial building south of subject property at 2810 San Pablo Avenue.

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Figure 22: Two-story mixed-use building west of subject property at 2800 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 23: Four-story mixed-use building west of subject property at 2729 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 24: One-story commercial building north of subject property at 2730 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 25: Three-story medical building north of subject property at 2612 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 26: One-story commercial building north of subject property at 2609 San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 27: Two-story mixed-use building north of subject property at 2721 San Pablo Avenue.

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HRI# _____

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- B1. Historic name: 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue
- B2. Common name: 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue
- B3. Original Use: Mixed-use (commercial and residential)
- B4. Present use: Commercial/Light Industrial
- *B5. Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern
- *B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue was originally built in 1948 by an unknown contractor in the Mid-Century Modern style as a commercial building with apartments above (Figure 29 and Figure 31).¹ Prior to the building's construction, the subject parcel was undeveloped, and was used for billboards (Figure 28 and Figure 30). A one-story concrete addition was constructed to the east of the building in 2006 by the current owner.² (Refer to Continuation Sheet, page 9)

- *B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____
- *B8. Related Features: No _____ B9a. Architect: Not Listed b. Builder: Not Listed
- *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
Incorporation of Berkeley

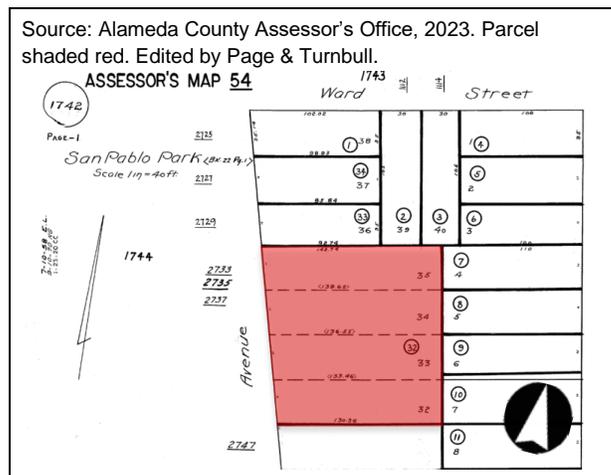
The development of Berkeley proceeded very slowly prior to the establishment of regular rail service between Berkeley and Oakland and San Francisco. In 1873, with the completion of the first buildings at the new campus of the University of California in Berkeley, several local investors formed the Berkeley Land & Town Improvement Association to spur development. This group organized land sales, built stores and wharves, and lobbied for a direct ferry connection to San Francisco. In 1874, the Berkeley Ferry & Railroad Company initiated regular service between San Francisco and Ocean View (now West Berkeley). Also that year, a horse-drawn transit line began operating along Telegraph Avenue between the areas that are now downtown Berkeley and Oakland.³ In 1878, the Town of Berkeley incorporated, encompassing both the bayside manufacturing settlement of Ocean View and the small academic village of Berkeley.⁴

Following Berkeley's incorporation, Shattuck Avenue was already well on its way to becoming the town's main street. This was mostly the result of Francis Kittredge Shattuck's successful efforts to convince the Central Pacific Railroad to run a spur line from Oakland through the middle of his mile-long land holdings located just west of the University of California campus. The spur line ran along Adeline Street and terminated in a station at Stanford Square (later renamed Shattuck Square). The blocks east of Shattuck Avenue contained an eclectic mix of uses and remained in a quasi-rural state for much longer than the land south and west of Shattuck. While Shattuck Avenue served as the main north-south transportation corridor in downtown Berkeley, University Avenue served as the east-west horsecar route, connecting the shoreline community of Ocean View with downtown and the campus. (Refer to Continuation Sheet, page 10)

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: August 3, 2023

(This space reserved for official comments.)



¹ 2735 San Pablo Inspection Card, on file at the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association
² UP#06-10000015, on file at the City of Berkeley Building and Safety Department.
³ Alan Cohen, *A History of Berkeley, From the Ground Up*, Archived on Archive.org, Accessed September 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20171014035000/http://historyofberkeley.org/chapters.html>
⁴ Cohen, *A History of Berkeley, From the Ground Up*.

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

Observed alterations not described in permit records are limited and include replacing the doors at the center of the south façade facing the interior parking and storage lot, and the addition of a roof deck at unknown dates.



Figure 28: Future site of 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue contained billboards, identified with the red arrow, in 1946. Source: Berkeley Historical Society.



Figure 29: 2733-2737 San Pablo, at the red arrow, 1949. Source: Berkeley Historical Society.

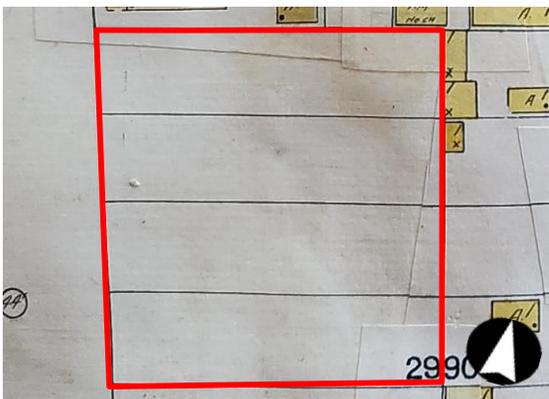


Figure 30: Detail from 1934 Sanborn Insurance Company Map for Berkeley. Future subject parcel outlined in red. Source: Berkeley Historical Society. Volume 2, Sheet 150.

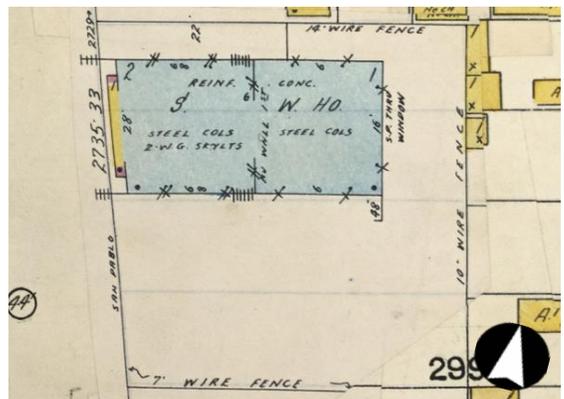


Figure 31: Detail from 1950 Sanborn Insurance Company Map for Berkeley. Source: San Francisco Public Library. Volume 2, Sheet 150.

Mid-Century Modern Architecture

Mid-Century Modern is a generalized term that defines a period of adaptation of the International style after World War II. The International style was part of the early 20th century Modern Movement that marked a major shift in architecture. Emphasizing functionalism and rationalism, the International Style was characterized by clear expression of structural forms, smooth wall surfaces, rectilinear shapes, lack of ornament, and extensive use of glass.⁵ While forms remain geometric in a Mid-Century Modern building, elements of texture, materiality, and color began to appear. Often, there is a variation of elements based on a region's climate and topography.

The resulting wide-ranging architecture from the 1940s and 1950s is broadly categorized as Mid-Century Modern and generally consists of less strict interpretations of the International style. The construction techniques that separate building structure from the envelope or skin, mass-produced materials, expansive glass walls, horizontal orientations, open floor plans, and integrated outdoor spaces became the hallmarks of Mid-Century Modern in California.⁶ Simultaneously, landscape architects were experimenting with these same modern materials and forms to further develop the outdoors as habitable room-like spaces and part of the casual, informal California lifestyle.

⁵ San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement*, January 12, 2011, page 174.

⁶ San Francisco Planning Department, page 121.

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While closely associated with postwar residential work, Mid-Century Modern lent itself to several different building types, including commercial, educational, civic, and religious buildings and campuses. Additional variants of Modern architectural design, including New Formalism and Brutalism, further modified the International style beyond Mid-Century Modern. Many cities in California experienced extensive commercial, residential, and institutional growth in the post-World War II period and many new buildings were designed in the Mid-Century Modern style – including buildings designed by renowned architects or burgeoning young architects, and more modest examples of the style executed by contractors and other builders and developers.

2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue exhibits some features of the Mid-Century Modern style through its use of Roman brick, ribbon windows, cantilevered overhangs, and metal panels on the primary façade. However, the use of these stylistic elements is limited to the primary façade, and the design is overall modest compared to more full expressions of the style elsewhere in Berkeley and the region.

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

Historic Context – City of Berkeley

Early Development of West Berkeley

The following overview of West Berkeley's early history is excerpted from the Historical and Architectural Evaluation of the Macaulay Foundry, five blocks west of the subject property at 811 Carleton Street, by Michael R. Corbett:

West Berkeley began its development as an industrial district in the 1850s when a wharf was built at the foot of what became Delaware Street adjacent to what, up until then, had been grazing land. This wharf and its successors would be used for decades to ship grain, cattle, produce and manufactured goods to San Francisco and around the bay. According to Berkeley historian Charles Wollenberg, for any kind of urban or industrial development at that time, "Access to the bay was crucial, as it was the region's chief transportation and communication route, linking outlying communities with San Francisco's urban core." About 1853, an inn was built a short distance inland on the Contra Costa Road, which became San Pablo Avenue – a link in the main route from Oakland to San Pablo Bay and the Carquinez Straits. This created a crossroads that, with its community of dwellings and industries, emerged as the settlement of Ocean View.

In 1873, the Berkeley Land and Town Improvement Association was established "to promote the development of West Berkeley." This organization laid out a street grid that would later be expanded, supported ferry service to San Francisco, and promoted the area for business, residences, and industry. The new transcontinental mainline of the Southern Pacific Railroad was built along Third Street in the new grid in 1877. With the potential for rail spurs, several new businesses located in the area in the 1870s and 1880s. West Berkeley "developed into a lively working class and agricultural community" with a mix of houses, scattered industries, and open farm land. When Ocean View and the area around the University of California joined as the City of Berkeley in 1878, the population of Ocean View was about 600.⁷

An electric trolley line began operation on San Pablo Avenue in 1891, as new industrial enterprises opened to the west of this thoroughfare.⁸

Early Twentieth Century History of Berkeley

At the turn of the twentieth century, a majority of West Berkeley's population consisted of foreign-born residents, including Finnish and German immigrants, who worked in the area's industries.⁹ Following the devastation that occurred in San Francisco from the 1906 earthquake and fires, industrial and residential growth accelerated as businesses and families relocated to East Bay cities and towns from San Francisco. Commercial and civic development continued through the 1920s. 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. In the 1920s, the blocks surrounding the subject building were occupied by residential uses, with slowly increasing density and infill concentrated along San Pablo Avenue, although the subject block itself was mostly undeveloped facing San Pablo Avenue until after World War II. By the end of the 1920s, 173 manufacturing businesses operated in West Berkeley, including national companies such as Colgate, Heinz, and Durkee Foods.¹⁰

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 businesses and residential neighborhoods in West Berkeley experienced more economic strain.

⁷ Michael Corbett, *Historical and Architectural Evaluation: The Macaulay Foundry 811 Carleton Street*. Prepared for the City of Berkeley Planning and Development Department, 2015. Quotes in Corbett's text are from Charles Wollenberg, *Berkeley, A City in History* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002), 19-20.

⁸ City of Berkeley, *West Berkeley Area Plan* (Berkeley, 1993), 117.

⁹ City of Berkeley, *West Berkeley Area Plan* (Berkeley, 1993), 118.

¹⁰ City of Berkeley, *West Berkeley Area Plan* (Berkeley, 1993), 119.

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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. By the 1950s, the subject block along San Pablo Avenue was beginning to fill with commercial developments.

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.¹¹

Ownership History

At the time the subject building was constructed in 1948 it was owned by the Mall Tool Company, a tool manufacturing and sales subsidiary of the primarily firearms-based Remington Arms Company. The Mall Tool Company sold and maintained power tools at the subject building, including chainsaws and gunpowder-actuated nail guns. Once the Mall Tool Company brand was discontinued and absorbed by the Remington Arms Company in 1958, Remington likely took over ownership of the building.¹² At some point in the 1990s, the building was purchased by its present owner, the Bob McGee Machining Company Inc.

Occupancy History

Known commercial tenants at the subject property include tool manufacturing and sales stores, and inspection and quality control offices. Known residential tenants of the apartments at 2733-2737 include few long-term tenants, and early in the building's history included at least one employee of the first-floor commercial tenant. All commercial tenants utilized 2735 San Pablo Avenue as their address, including tenants who occupied the building during the same time period. One residential tenant, uncovered through research, listed their address as 2733 San Pablo Avenue in 1950, while all other residential occupants since 1950 used the address 2737 San Pablo Avenue.

Table 3, below, lists documented businesses at 2735 San Pablo Avenue since 1948. **Table 4**, below, lists documented residents at 2733 and 2737 San Pablo Avenue since 1950, the first available directory after the building's construction. Records were assembled through research in Alameda County Directories and historic newspapers.

Table 3. Commercial Businesses at 2735 San Pablo Avenue		
Year(s) of Occupation	Business Name	Use
1948-1958	Mall Tool Co.	Commercial, light industrial
1958-1965	Remington Arms Co.	Commercial, light industrial
1965-1970	Remington Arms Co. The F. B. Ridley Company California State Highways Division	Commercial, light industrial Commercial Office
1970-1984	The F. B. Ridley Company California State Highways Division	Commercial Office
ca. 1995-2023	Bob McGee's Machining Company Inc.	Light industrial

¹¹ 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.

¹² "Mall Tool Dissolution," *Oakland Tribune*, October 13, 1958, 23.

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Table 4. Residential occupancy History at 2733 and 2737 San Pablo Avenue		
Year(s) of Occupation	Occupant Name	Occupation
1950	Walker C. Seligman (2733 San Pablo Avenue) Donald E. Tucker (2737 San Pablo Avenue)	Sales manager, coal distributor Sales manager, Mall Tool Co.
1965	T. Tator	Not listed
1970	Marion E. Stouffer	Not listed
1975-1980	Oda B. Allen	Not listed
1984-1994	Romeo Jones	Not listed
1994	Miki K. McGee	Not listed
1995-1998	Jeff McGee	Not listed

The first known tenants of 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue were the original owners, the Mall Tool Company. After the Mall Tool Company was absorbed by its parent company, Remington Arms, Remington continued conducting sales and maintenance of its tool products at the building. For a period in the 1960s, three occupants, the Remington Arms Company, the F. B. Ridley Company, and the California State Highways Division Materials and Research Department, all operated out of the building under the same address. The F. B. Ridley Company was a sales and distribution company for power tools, and eventually took over the Remington Arms tool sales operation at the building.

The California State Highways Division's Materials and Research Department conducted testing and research on better road and building materials at its Sacramento headquarters and laboratory, but maintained branch offices in Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Santa Maria, and at the subject building in Berkeley. While major research, development, and investigation tasks were carried out by the headquarters in Sacramento, branch laboratories were responsible for routine sampling, inspection, testing, and reporting on materials and construction in their regions, as well as educating and training engineers for work in other departments.¹³ At some point in the 1990s, the building was occupied by its present occupants, Bob McGee's Machining Company Inc.

The second-story apartments were occupied by numerous short-term tenants, most of whom appear to have only resided at the property for a few consecutive years. The sole long-term occupant was Romeo Jones, who lived at the subject property between ca. 1984 and 1994.

Evaluation

California Register Evaluation

The property at 2733-2737 San Pablo 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 State of California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD), issued September 2022, 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).¹⁴ The subject building is not listed as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Criterion 1 (Events)

2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events). The subject property is not associated with events which 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 1948 as a commercial and residential building, at a time when commercial and residential development in West Berkeley, including the blocks around 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue, had been slowly growing for many years. 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)

2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons). The subject building was constructed for the Mall Tool Company as a mixed-use building, and was occupied by a variety of commercial and residential tenants. Neither the Remington Arms Company's power tool division, nor its power tool subsidiary, the Mall Tool Company, appear to have made a significant impact on local, state, or national history. The location at the subject building was one of many locations that sold and maintained their products, but did not develop or manufacture them. The California State Highways Division's Materials and Research Department was a major part of the development of California after World War II, but the office at the subject building did not participate directly in the research or development of its parent department at their headquarters in Sacramento. The office at the subject building was one of several regional offices that served

¹³ F. N. Hveem, "Operations and Activities of Materials and Research Department," *California Highways Magazine*, May-June 1957, 10-19.

¹⁴ California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), Alameda County, updated September 2022.

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in a supporting regulatory, quality-control, and training role. No subsequent owners or occupants at 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue appear to have made a significant impact on local, state, or national history such that the building could be found significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture)

2733-2737 San Pablo 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. Completed in 1948, the building is a typical Mid-Century Modern style building designed to accommodate commercial and residential occupants. While the structure contains some interesting materials and details once common of buildings in that era, 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue lacks the full expression of character or unique examples of design or workmanship that would be expected of a significant building designed in the Mid-Century Modern style.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

2733-2737 San Pablo 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 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 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 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue does not appear to be eligible as a City of Berkeley Landmark. The subject building was constructed as a mixed-use building with spaces for commercial and residential tenants, and has one major addition completed by the current owner in 2006. The building does not appear to be an early or rare example of a Mid-Century Modern style commercial building 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. 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue was used for industrial and commercial uses during a time when this use was already a regular part of Berkeley life, and as such the building would not be eligible as a landmark for its cultural value. 2733-2737 San Pablo 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 San Pablo Avenue between Parker Street and Carlton Street lacks visual, architectural, or historic distinctiveness, cohesiveness, or significance in its mixture of commercial and multi-family residential buildings dating between the early 1900s and 2023. Therefore, 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue is not eligible as a City of Berkeley Structure of Merit.

Conclusion

The commercial building at 2733-2737 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, California, was built by an unknown contractor in 1948 for the Mall Tool Company. The building has been occupied by various residents and commercial businesses including light industrial, retail, and office uses through 2023. 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."¹⁵

¹⁵ 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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