



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  
OCTOBER 7, 2024

## 2100-2108 Milvia Street

**Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2023-0163) to demolish a three-story commercial building completed in 1960, and altered in 1997 (APN: 057-2022-017-01).**

### I. Application Basics

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

**B. Parties Involved:**

- Project Applicant Amir Massih  
4Terra Investments  
95 Federal Street, Suite D  
San Francisco, CA 94107
- Evaluator Mark Hulbert  
446 17<sup>th</sup> Street, #302  
Oakland, CA 94612
- Property Owner First Milvia LLC  
1030 Marina Village Parkway  
Alameda, CA 94501

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

## II. Background

On December 20, 2023, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish the existing three-story commercial building and adjacent parking lot, and to construct a new, 8-story, 208,740 square-foot, mixed-use building with 201 dwelling units and four live/work units. The application is eligible for streamlined review per Senate Bill 330.

The Use Permit application #ZP2023-0163 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 330<sup>1</sup>, 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, and can still forward comments regarding potential project conditions such as relocation, salvage, and/or photographic documentation to the Zoning Adjustments Board for consideration in its action on the application.

## III. Historical Resources

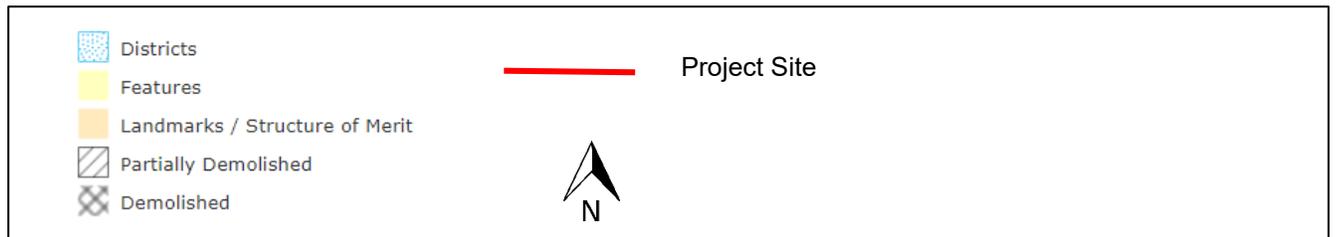
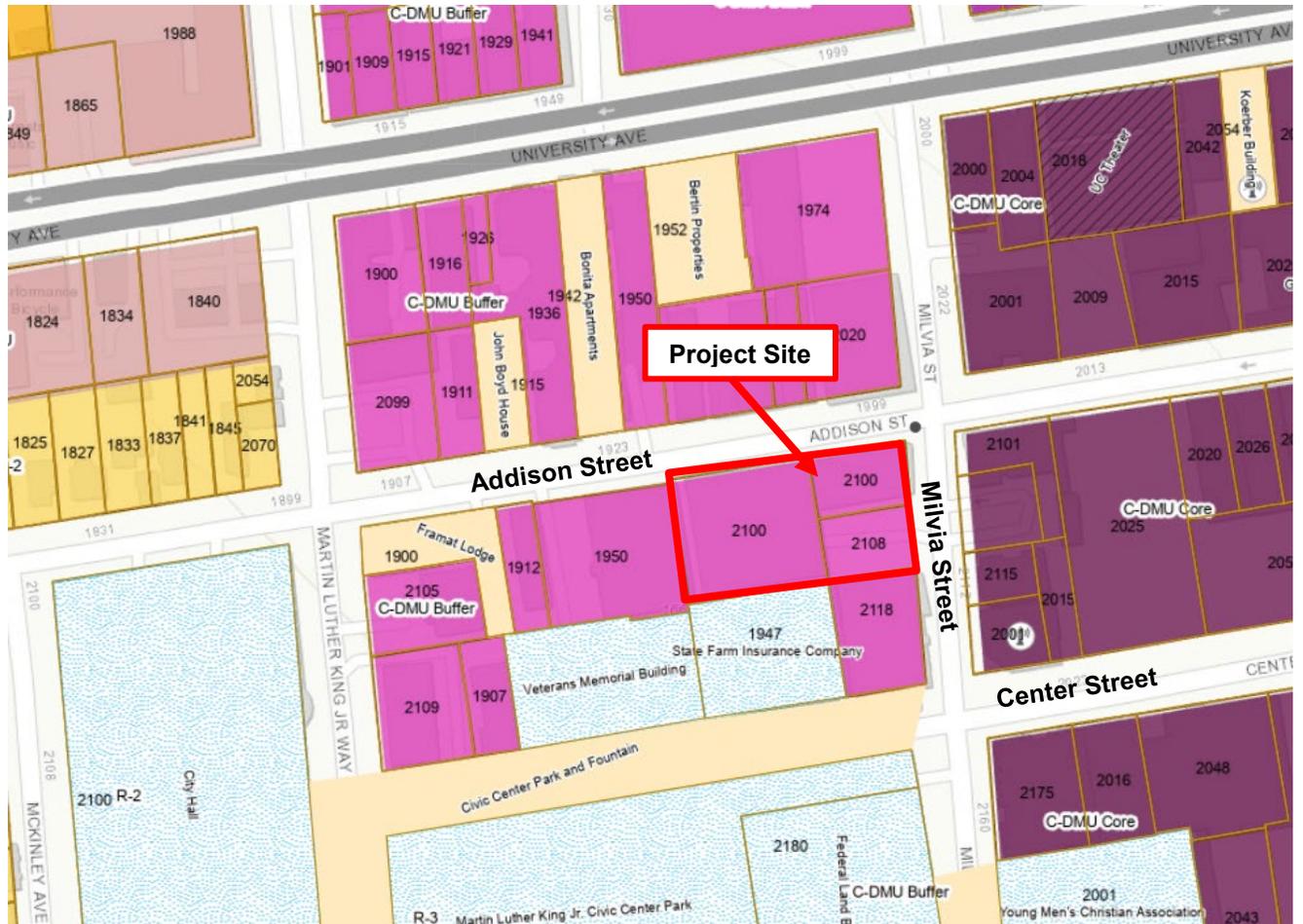
The subject building does not appear on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the State Historic Resources Inventory.

The subject property is directly adjacent to the State Farm Insurance Company building (1948) of the Civic Center Historic District. Other nearby City of Berkeley Landmarks/Structures of Merit include the Framat Lodge (1927), and the Bonita Apartments (1905) (see Figure 1).

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

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 2: Subject Property, entrance on Milvia Street, at the corner of Milvia and Addison Street, looking southwest, 1996 (Burns and Nettle Architects, 1996)**



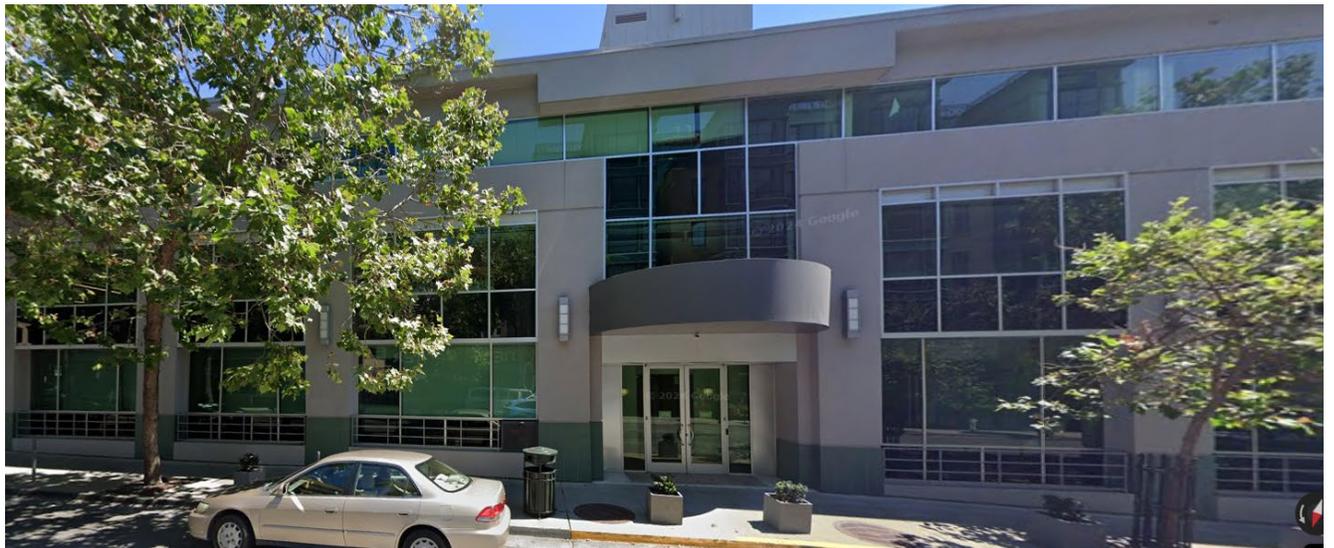
**Figure 3: Subject Property, Addison Street entrance/street-side frontage, looking east, 1996 (Burns and Nettle Architects, 1996)**



**Figure 4: Subject Property, current site conditions, corner of Milvia Street and Addison Street, looking southwest (staff, 2024)**



**Figure 5: Subject Property, current site conditions, entrance on Addison Street, north elevation (Google Street View, 2024)**



**Figure 6: Subject Property, current site conditions, primary façade on Milvia Street, east elevation**  
(Google Street View, 2022)



**Figure 7: Subject Property, current site conditions, gated parking lot and primary façade on Milvia Street, east elevation**  
(staff, 2024)



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

The following description derives from the information contained in the historic resource evaluation (HRE), as well as the City's land use archives and building permit records. The HRE was prepared by preservation architect Mark Hulbert on March 23, 2024; please see Attachment 1.

**Parcel Description:** The Use Permit project site is located in Downtown Berkeley, and consists of an approximately 27,000 square-foot L-shaped parcel with frontage on Milvia Street (primary) and Addison Street (secondary), and an adjacent approximately 7,000 square-foot rectangular parcel with frontage on Milvia Street. The subject building (2100 Milvia Street) is located on the L-shaped parcel, and the parking lot (2108 Milvia Street), is on the rectangular parcel. The entrance to the parking lot is gated (see Figure 7).

**Building Description:** The three-story flat-roofed concrete-frame commercial building is situated along the north (street side) and east (front) lot lines, with an L-shaped plan. Broad two-story pilasters frame aluminum-clad windows. On floors one and two dark green spandrel panels are located below rows of windows. The base of the pilasters is clad in green ceramic tile. The façade is clad in an Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) that resembles plaster. At the third floor, the EIFS cladding connects the pilasters, with a row of aluminum-clad windows above.

There is a rounded entry canopy over the entrance on the north elevation (Addison Street). At the northeast corner of the building, metal awnings are located above windows on the first floor of the north and east elevations. At the third floor of the east and south elevations, metal awnings are located above the windows.

An additional entrance is located on the east elevation near the gated parking lot. A rounded entry canopy is above the pedestrian entrance that leads to the building entrance. The gate at the parking lot is metal, and supported by three columns that match the columns on the building. Landscaping consisting of low plants and medium-sized trees is in front of the gate, and in an alcove to the right of the pedestrian entrance on Milvia Street. There is a series of square pots on the sidewalk containing landscaping along the Milvia Street and Addison Street frontages. The style of the building could be described as contemporary commercial.

A description of the building is provided in the HRE, Attachment 1 of this report.

**Early Site History & Parcel Development:** The building was constructed between 1958 and 1960, and designed by Walter E. Bearden of Bearden and Associates, developed by Associated Investment Company, and built by Bayshore Construction Company. Bearden had an office in Oakland, and was a member of the American Association of Architects in the 1960s and 1970s, but no other information could be located about him and his firm. The original address was 1960 Addison Street, and the first tenant was the United States Forest Service. Records show that the building was also used as office space for the United State Department of Agriculture. In 1983, the 2100 Milvia address was added to accommodate the R.O.I. Consulting firm, which used a corner entrance at the corner of Milvia Street and Addison Street (see Figure 2). The federal government offices continued to use the 1960 Addison entrance and address. There are currently four tenant spaces.

In 1997, the exterior was extensively altered for the tenant, Barra, a local software company. At the first floor, stone cladding was removed, and at the base of the second and third floors horizontal bands of brick were removed. The corner entry at Milvia and

Addison was removed, and replaced with windows, and a new entrance was added from the parking lot side of the building. A rectangular wooden awning over the Addison entrance was replaced with the current rounded entrance. The evaluator notes that the only visible surviving exterior elements are the brick-clad penthouse and the brick cladding at the west well. The original building appears to have been a Mid-Century Modern building, but due to the exterior alterations the building no longer retains the Mid-Century Modern style.<sup>2</sup>

## V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

**Historic Context<sup>3</sup>:** For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff concludes that the period of *potential* significance for the building would have been from 1958 until 1984, from when the building was originally constructed until 40 years prior to this study, in accordance with BMC Section 23.326.070(C). However, since the building is not identified as significant, no period of significance applies.

Owing to the subject building's type, commercial use, and location, this property is linked to a historic context that is best defined as commercial development. This evaluation of the property's historical significance analyzes the significance criteria within the theme of Berkeley's commercial development.

**Significance Criteria:** The subject property is evaluated based on the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC 3.24). The existing building is over 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. Because it is more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23C.08.050 requires that the building be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

In determining the potential significance of this building, the evaluator has analyzed the property's extant features and any associated parties against the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources (CR) and the LPO/BMC Chapter 3.24. The evaluation concentrates on possible associations with events (CR-1, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(2) and (B)(2)), persons (CR-2, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(4)), architectural design (CR-3, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(1)(a-c) and (B)(2)(a and c)), and information/education (CR-4, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(3)). The results of the consultant's and staff's evaluations are discussed below.

### **CR and BMC Criteria:**

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

The building is associated with the historical pattern of commercial development in Berkeley. However, a study of its construction history, ownership and occupancy records

---

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design Historic Context Statement (2011), p. 189-190.

<sup>3</sup> National Register Bulletin #15, Item V: How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context (2002); National Register Bulletin #16A. Section III: How to Complete the National Register Registration – Period of Significance (1997).

revealed no information linking this site to any events or singular episode of primary importance to Berkeley's history or economic development. Per National Register Bulletin 15, to be associated with historic events a property must be associated with events important to a historic context, and that association must be significant. The HRE concludes that the property does not meet CR Criterion 1 because it is not associated with significant historical events. Therefore, the property has not been found to hold historical significance to the City.

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

The property does not meet CR Criterion 2 because it was not found to be associated with any religious, cultural, governmental, social, and economic developments of the City. No organizations or property owners associated with the property during the historic period are of identifiable historical importance or found to have made notable or lasting contributions to their field. This property has not contributed to the movement or evolution of culture in Berkeley and, therefore, does not exhibit cultural significance.

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

The building has been modified and many of the original architectural features and materials have been altered or removed. The building's style was once Mid-Century Modern, with wide bands of bright red stacked Roman brick, and stone accents, but now is contemporary, with a more subdued green and white palette. The building no longer retains distinctive characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style, and instead looks like a standard, contemporary commercial building. Since the building no longer resembles a distinctive architectural style, the building does not possess architectural merit or contribute to the neighborhood fabric as an exceptional architectural example. Therefore, the subject property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and does not satisfy the criteria 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. Further, there have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigation for this parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it is not likely to yield archeological information.

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:

- The building has been greatly altered, and the building is not contemporary with or compatible in size, scale, style, materials, or design with a nearby Landmark;
- The extant architectural design is not distinctive;
- It is not associated with events that are historically significant to the City of Berkeley.

For all of these reasons, Hulbert and staff conclude that the 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 the property for consideration.

**Attachment:**

1. Historic Resource Evaluation for 2100 Milvia Street, prepared by Mark Hulbert of Preservation Architecture, 446 17th Street #302, Oakland, CA; dated March 23, 2024.

**Prepared by:** Allison Riemer, AICP, Associate Planner; ariemer@berkeleyca.gov, (510) 981-7433

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



March 23, 2024

**2100-2108 Milvia St., Berkeley  
Historic Resource Considerations**

The following addresses historical and historic architectural considerations regarding the extant commercial building at the southwest corner of Milvia and Addison streets in Berkeley, for the property owner's information, use and consultation with the City of Berkeley. The subject property consists of two parcels, the L-shaped corner building occupying one (APN 57-2022-17-1), the other the open paved lot (APN 57-2022-3-1) that lies in the crook of the L (figs.1-2).

The existing building was originally permitted and constructed as a new, 3-story office building in 1958-1959. However, the building exterior was comprehensively altered in 1996, which contemporary alterations are plain to see, so the building is essentially less than 30 years of age. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and specific to the criteria for potential inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NR) and California Register of Historical Resources (CR), built resources less than 50 years of age (typically 45 years of age for jurisdictional planning purposes) are generally not NR or CR eligible. While there is an allowance for the evaluation and listing of more recent resources, such resources must be of *exceptional* importance while it must also be shown that sufficient time has passed in order to understand potential historical importance.<sup>1</sup> As stated in NR evaluation criteria: "Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This consideration guards against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest..."<sup>2</sup>

Alternatively, as the older building structure underlying the existing building has been altered beyond recognition, an assessment of that original building would necessarily conclude that whatever historical potential the 1959 building may have had, inclusive of any historical associations, has been lost, thereby negating historical potential.

More directly, on the basis of its present exterior character, the 2100 Milvia St. building is essentially a 1996 building thus, in terms of design and construction, it is too recent to assess historical design potential while its contemporary design appears to be unexceptional, neither does the building convey any original associations. Consequently, the subject property and building do not qualify for historic resource evaluation under CEQA. Nonetheless, relevant historical and architectural factors are addressed below and by which to address historical potential relative to the City of Berkeley landmarks criteria.

**Summary History**

Per permit records, following the removal of a service station at 2100 Milvia in 1952 and 2 dwellings at 2106-08 Milvia in 1958, the 2100 Milvia St. building was originally permitted and constructed from 1958-59. No original drawings have been located, though a news article announcing the project included an illustration (fig.3).<sup>3</sup> The then new building's address was 1960 Addison St. and was developed by Associated Investment Co. with designer Bearden & Associates (Walter E. Bearden),

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Dept of the Interior, National Park Service; *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*; 1995, pp.41-43); and California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Series #6 - California Register and National Register: A Comparison*; n.d., p.3.

<sup>2</sup> *NR Bulletin 15*, p.41.

<sup>3</sup> *Oakland Tribune*, "New Berkeley Office Building to House Federal Agencies," 9 July 1958, p35.

engineer Toshi Ogawa, the Bayshore Construction Co. and for its tenant, the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service remained at 1960 Addison until c1996, prior to which a portion of the building had been demised for other tenants, which change precipitated the assignment of the additional address 2100 Milvia in 1983.

As noted, in 1996 the overall building was renovated, the existing exterior design replacing the original to the extent that the only visibly surviving exterior elements are the brick clad penthouse atop the building and brick cladding at the rear (west) wall.

The 1996 project was tenanted by a commercial company, Barra, and has since been tenanted by a range of other commercial users.

Per permit records, the range of owners include:

1958 Associated Development Co.  
1965 Tom Stead Corp.  
1983 Martin Investment Co.  
1987 Watt Investment Co.  
1996 SRM Associates  
1997 First Milvia LLC

Given the very recent origins of the existing 2100 Milvia building, the above information summarizes the full extent of its history. (Note: deed records have not been researched for this summary evaluation).

### **Summary Descriptions**

The pre-1996 building exterior had an exposed concrete frame with concrete columns and cultured stone walls at the ground floor, continuous red (Roman) brick spandrels, clear aluminum ribbon windows and continuous concrete fascia and roof eaves. In other words, it was architecturally a Mid-Century Modern building design.

The 1996 building exterior (figs.4-7) has scored plaster-like (“EIFS”) cladding with broad piers and spandrels that enframe window bays, including 2-story high windows at floors 1 and 2, its doors and windows anodized aluminum with green glass and dark green apron and spandrel panels. Vertical piers all land on ceramic tile bases. No structure is exposed while there are a range of projecting architectural embellishments such as portal-like elements at the upper story and metal canopies – including a rounded entry canopy on Addison. Within the open lot, its open-end monumentally gated, a trellised-arcade ends at a vertical aedicule within the reentrant corner.

Architecturally, the building at 2100 Milvia is a contemporary design, its very recent style thus far label-less.

A comparison of pre-1996 views of the building versus the extant building illustrates how the contemporary commercial design eliminated the original minimal and horizontal mid-century architectural character and materials (figs.8-11).

As noted above, as the building design is less than 30 years of age and without potential exceptional qualities or values, under CEQA, 2100 Milvia St. is not historic resource eligible.

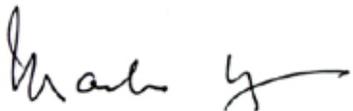
Under the City of Berkeley's *Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO)* and its Landmark/Structure of Merit criteria, there is no specific age threshold or criteria – though no resources of any such recent age have been so designated.

Per *LPO Landmark/Structure of Merit criteria (from BMC sec.3.24.110 Landmarks, historic districts and structures of merit--Designation--Criteria for consideration)*, the extant 1996 commercial building at 2100 Milvia St. is a contemporary mid-1990s commercial building which:

- Is not worth preserving for usefulness as an educational force (LPO Section A.3).
- Does not embody or express the history of Berkeley, Alameda County, etc. (LPO Section A.4).
- Is not a “first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region” (LPO Sec.A.1.a).
- Is not prototypical or outstanding, nor is it an individually notable work of architecture or construction (LPO Sec.A.1.b and A.1.c).
- Is not worthy of preservation as part of the neighborhood, block, street frontage, and as part of a group of buildings that includes landmarks (LPO Sec.B.1).
- Is not contemporary with a designated landmark within the neighborhood (LPO Sec.B.2.a1 and Sec.B.2b).
- Is not contemporary with an historic period or event of significance to the City (LPO Sec.B.2.a2).
- Is an indistinct example of contemporary architectural design (LPO Sec.B.2c).
- Has no identifiable historical significance to the City of Berkeley and/or to the neighborhood, etc. (LPO Sec.B.2d).

Consequently, the property and building at 2100-2108 Milvia St. is not potentially eligible as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit.

Signed:



Mark Hulbert  
Preservation Architect & Historic Resource Consultant

attached: figs.1-11 (pp.4-8)



Fig.1 – 2100-2108 Milvia St. (highlighted) - Aerial (Google Earth 2024, north is up)

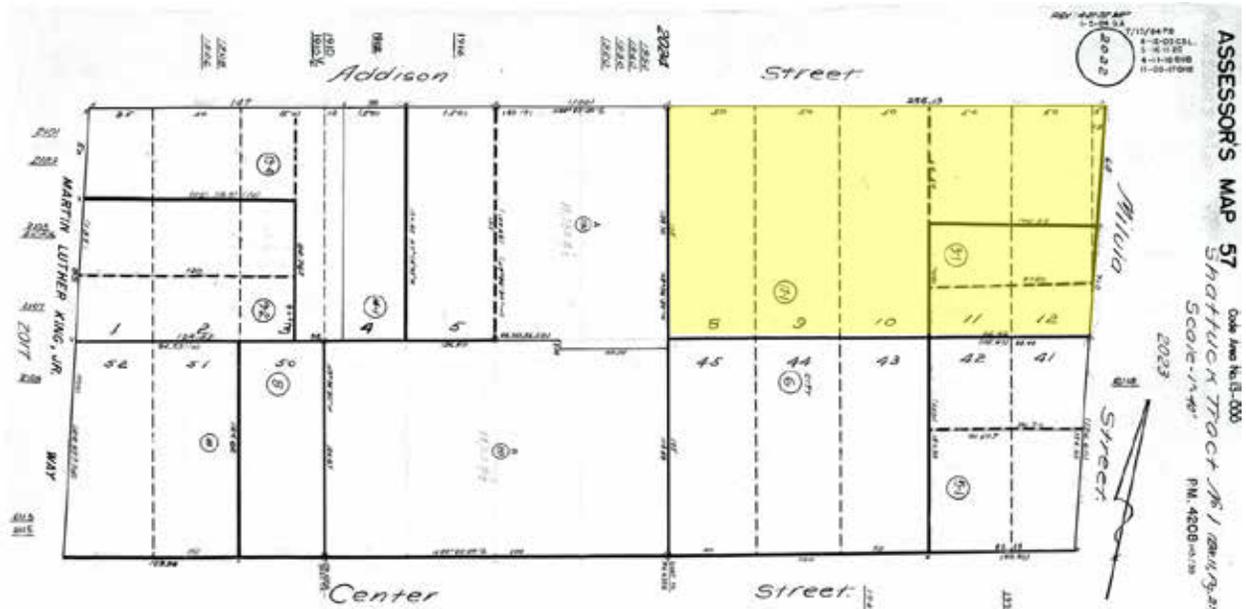


Fig.2 – 2100-2108 Milvia St. (highlighted) – Assessor's parcel map

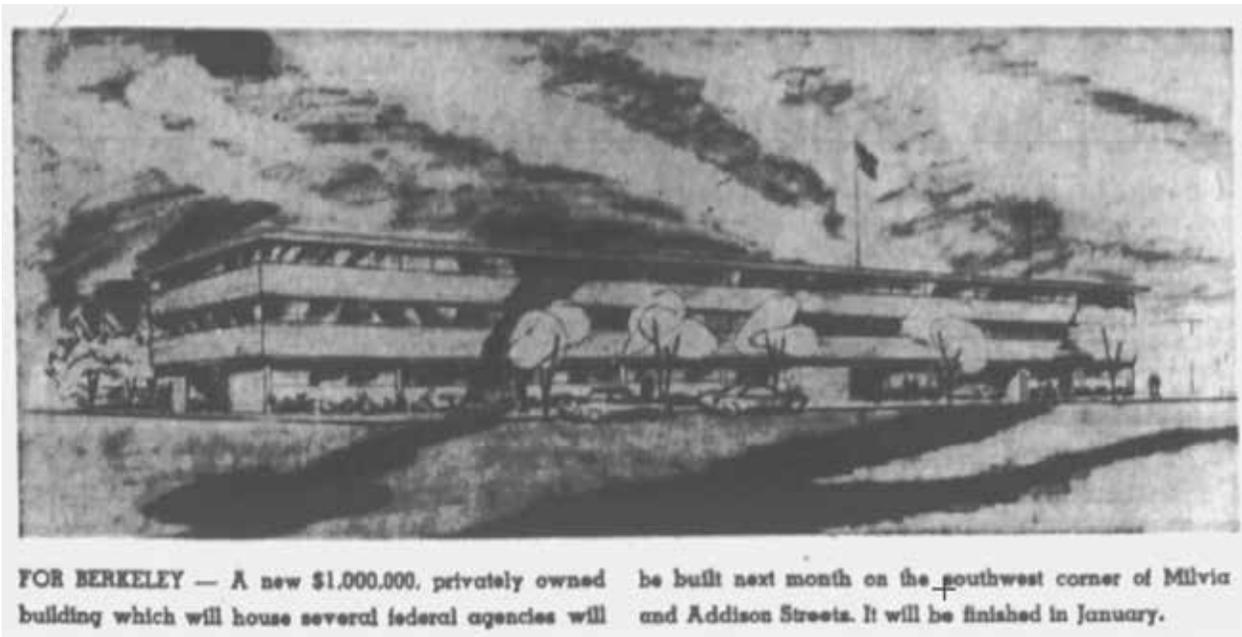


Fig.3 – 1960 Addison St. – from 1959 news article



Fig.4– 2100 Milvia St. – North front



Fig.5 – 2100 Milvia St. – East front



Fig.6 – 2100 Milvia St. – North front entry



Fig.7 – 2100 Milvia St. – Rear (west)



Figs.8-9 – 1960 Addison/2100 Milvia St. – c1996 (above) and 2024 (below)



Figs.10-11 – 1960 Addison/2100 Milvia St. – c1996 (above) and 2024 (below)