

23 June 2025

Re: 100 Berkeley Square Landmark Initiation

Dear fellow commissioners,

For your consideration is the landmark initiation of the 100 Berkeley Square building, a Late Moderne structure designed by architects John Hudspeth and Marshall Dean in 1940. Much like the Havens Apartments initiated at the May meeting, this building is easily viewed from the public right-of-way, represents a chapter of modern architecture's development, and is an area at high risk of redevelopment. Moreover, at the corner of Shattuck and Addison, this building is located in one of the busiest, most prominent corners of Downtown Berkeley with a BART entrance located immediately in front of it. Hosting multiple businesses (including Original Pollo, which itself is a downtown staple), the building continues to be activated by public use and is seen by thousands who walk past it daily.

In its current state, the building retains all of its signature features and its design is substantially preserved despite some deferred maintenance. The original windows, black tile, decorative Moderne details, and overhangs are all present. It is also part of a historic core of Downtown Berkeley. Given its block-to-block site on the Berkeley Triangle, it is prominently expressed on two corners, both of which consist entirely of designated landmarks. At the corner of Shattuck and Addison, it is surrounded by the Francis Kittredge building (1901, designated 1995), Kress Store (1933, designated 1981), Golden Sheaf Bakery building (1905, designated 1977), and the Shattuck Square building (1926, designated 1984). At the corner of Addison and Kala Bagai Way, it is surrounded by the Studio Building (1905, designated 1978), the Mason-McDuffie building (1928, designated 1985), and the Chase Building (1909, designated 2000). In addition to these landmarks which are within the most immediate eyeshot, there are at least a dozen additional landmarks in a three-block radius.

This being said, unlike many other landmarks, this structure sits within a grouping of designated buildings that makes it possible to visualize the architectural development of Berkeley's historic downtown, and its designation will complete what is essentially a historic district on these two corners. (It was, in fact, identified as a contributing structure in the Shattuck Avenue Historic Context Statement.) Unlike the many surrounding landmarks, its lack of landmark status places it at particular risk in a downtown that is rapidly being redeveloped. Although there are no current plans for this building's redevelopment nor does it appear there will be for the foreseeable future, the buildings immediately adjacent are slated for redevelopment and have come before LPC in the recent past for a demolition referral. Despite Downtown Berkeley's continuous redevelopment, the ironic thing is that if the building in question were to be replaced with a high-rise, it would look significantly out of place given the two surrounding corners which are entirely landmarks.

Although the landmark nomination will provide significantly more nuance, a very brief sketch of the building's history and architecture is as follows:

The Berkeley Square, a triangular shaped parcel wedged between Shattuck and Kala Bagai Way (Center St), was historically the transit center of Berkeley. Beginning in 1876, it was the terminus of the railroad into Berkeley, first with the Central Pacific Railroad, later with the

Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR), and even later with the Key System.¹ In 1908, the SPRR unveiled a stately train station on the site, a Beaux Arts designed completed by the SPRR engineer J.H. Wallace and SPRR architect D.J. Harrison. Although the SPRR station became a landmark in its own right, it was demolished only thirty years later when the railroad had lost significance to automobiles and land was at a higher premium in an expanding Berkeley. Upon the SPRR station's demolition in 1938, modern architecture had gained increasing popularity, mostly through the more popular styles of Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Streamline Moderne, and other varieties. Within four years, the entirety of the Berkeley Square was replaced with buildings of modern design, and it quite literally became an island of modernism in Downtown Berkeley. The first structure to be completed was the starkly Streamline Moderne "Call Me Joe" building (1938, demolished) located at the apex of the Berkeley Square and designed by John B. Anthony. This was followed by a set of commercial buildings with Zigzag Moderne detail (1939, pending demolition), and finally, the building in question (1940-41, standing) on the opposite end of the Berkeley Square.

In 1940, the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce announced plans for a new headquarters on the Berkeley Square to be designed by architects John Hudspeth (1912-1986) and Marshall Dean. The Chamber had previously been located in the penthouse office suite of the Wells Fargo Building (then known as the Chamber of Commerce Building). While little is currently known about Dean, Hudspeth was a graduate of Cal's architecture program and a local architect who practiced primarily in Late Moderne, and later, Mid-Century Modern styles. He designed mostly single-family residential works and commercial buildings in his early career, and later became specialized in school design. During World War Two, he worked extensively on the Alameda Shipyard, a complex noted regionally for its Streamline Moderne design.

For the new Berkeley Chamber of Commerce building, Hudspeth and Dean designed an adaptable structure in a Late Moderne style. Late Moderne, although commonly captured under the umbrella of Streamline Moderne, was a style that became popular in the interwar years, particularly after the 1937 *Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la vie Moderne*, which showcased designs that combined Surrealism, the theatricality of Art Deco, the organic impulses of Frank Lloyd Wright, and some of the fluidity of Streamline Moderne. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Late Moderne became a popular style for commercial architecture, designed by such figures as Paul R. Williams, Gilbert Rohde, Welton Becket, Herbert Burns, and Morris Lapidus.² It represented a transitional moment in modernism as the popular styles began to give way for the stricter modernism that followed World War Two (although popular sub-genres like the "Googie" style persisted).

Completed in 1941, the Chamber of Commerce building is a prime example of Late Moderne architecture, with ribbon band windows, Moderne ornamental detailing, cantilevered overhangs, and a form that emphasizes horizontality. Upon its completion, the Chamber of Commerce occupied the upstairs while the ground floor was utilized as a travel center, thereby continuing the block's transit heritage. Other commercial spaces on the ground floor were rented out to a selection of retail businesses. The only alterations to the building apparent in the early phases of this study include the expansion of one window, the removal of historic signage (including a vertical Greyhound neon sign), and the addition of a small air conditioning unit on the east facade.

¹ Daniella Thompson, "Berkeley Square: From Transport Hub to Urban Core," *Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association*, August 11, 2008, accessed June 23, 2025, https://berkeleyheritage.com/eastbay_then-now/berkeley_square.html.

² Steven Keylon, *The Design of Herbert W. Burns* (Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2018), 37-39.

While this brief summary of the building's history is primarily focused on its architecture, there is also much to be known about its connection to the Chamber of Commerce during these formative mid-century years of Berkeley's growth. Commissioner Finacom has volunteered to collaborate on the landmark nomination, which, given initiation, I am aiming to submit by early fall.

The reasons for landmarking this building are manifold: its proximity and relation to an existing historic core, its public exposure, its Late Moderne design, or its association with a history of transit and the Chamber of Commerce. I am hopeful that the commission sees this merit in landmarking building, its peeling paint aside.

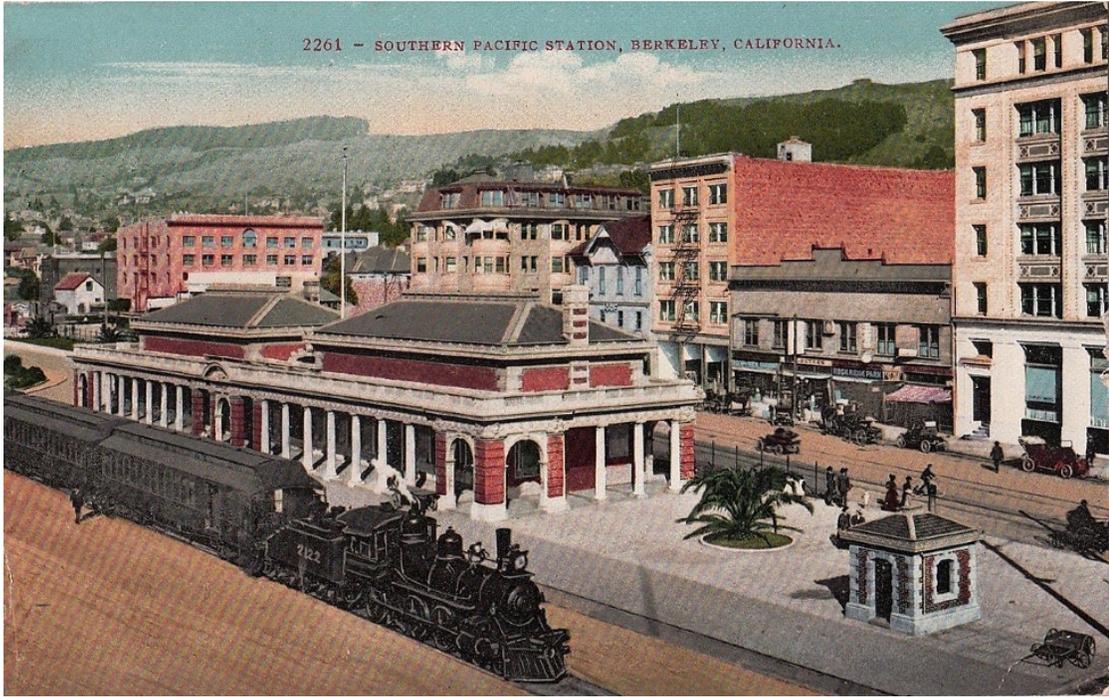
Regards,

Luke Leuschner

Name: 100 Berkeley Square Building (aka Chamber of Commerce Building)
Architects: John Hudspeth and Marshall Dean
Built: 1940-41

Addresses:
100 Berkeley Square
115 Berkeley Square
115 Kala Bagai Way
2100 Kala Bagai Way (primary, as indicated by City assessor map, although incorrect on map)
2115 Shattuck Avenue (address used on permits)

APNs: 57-2032-16 and 57-2032-15



Historic photo of the Southern Pacific Station on Berkeley Square, the present location of the 100 Berkeley Square Building. From eBay.



The "Call Me Joe" building by architect John B. Anthony, the first of a set Moderne buildings to be built on the Berkeley Square. Photo reproduced from BAHA.



100 Berkeley Square shortly after construction, ca. 1942. Photo reproduced from the Berkeley Historical Society.



100 Berkeley Square shortly after construction, ca. 1940s. Photo is apparently taken by Hudspeth himself, reproduced from the BAHA archives.

Oakland Tribune

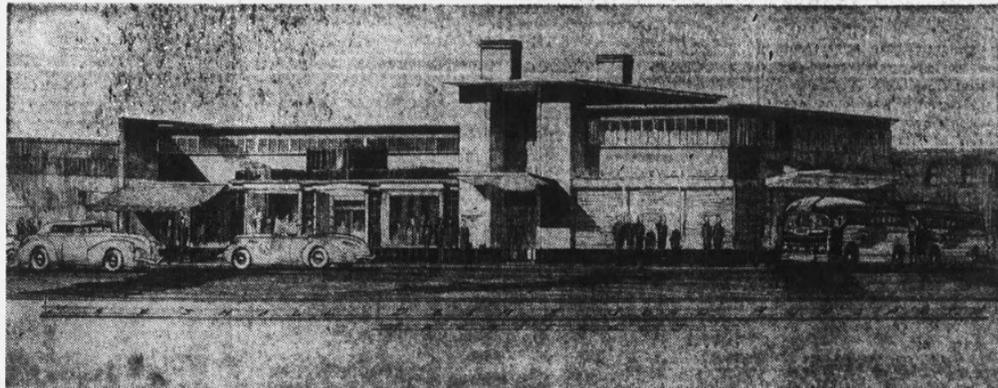
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OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1940

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HERE IS HOW IT WILL LOOK WHEN IT IS COMPLETED



Here is the architect's conception of what the new two-story Berkeley Chamber of Commerce building at Addison Street and Shattuck Avenue will look like when it is completed. Groundbreaking ceremonies will be held next Wednesday

with civic leaders in attendance. The new structure will occupy the remainder of the old Southern Pacific Shattuck Avenue station site. A travel bureau, women's wear shop and bus terminal will occupy the ground floor.

Boost in Speed Limit Is Urged

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 15.—(AP)—Police Chief Arthur C. Hohmann believes speed limits for automobiles should be lifted in daytime and placed at 60 miles an hour at night except in areas posted for lower speeds.

In a series of recommendations to the Peace Officers' Traffic Council, the chief suggested posting areas for lower limits on a basis of accident frequency and from a safety engineering standpoint. He also advocated elimination of distinctly colored police cars and specially uniformed officers, thus permitting plainclothesmen to serve in traffic patrols.

BERKELEY TO BREAK GROUND FOR CHAMBER HEADQUARTERS

BERKELEY, Nov. 15.—Ground-breaking ceremonies for Berkeley's new two-story Chamber of Commerce building, at Shattuck Avenue and Addison Street, will be held next Wednesday.

The new structure, which will occupy the balance of the old Southern Pacific Shattuck Avenue station site, will have frontage on three streets—Shattuck Avenue, Shattuck Avenue East and Addison Street.

Civic ceremonies attendant to the ground-breaking will be under the direction of Maurice G. Read, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and J. Delbert Sarber, vice-presi-

dent and general manager. Mayor Frank Gaines, City Manager Chester Fisk and other civic leaders will participate.

The Chamber will occupy the upper portion of the new building. A travel bureau and a women's wear shop will be located on the ground floor as well as a bus terminal.

Two Die in Fire

LEVELLAND, Tex., Nov. 15.—(AP)—Mrs. Lonnie E. Williams, 20, and her son, Mickie, 3, burned to death last night in the flames of a gasoline stove. Williams also was burned, but not critically.

'Dead Man' Sends Flowers

OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 15.—(AP)—Friends and relatives who sent flowers for the "funeral" of Lieut. Com. T. A. Nicholson, naval reserve, are going to be surprised. He's sending them flowers in return.

His daughter, a student at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., misunderstood a message about another death, telegraphed friends that her father had died, and flew home. Her father greeted her at the door.

Nicholson tired of receiving floral wreaths and asked florists please, send bright flowers instead. "But shucks, there was nothing for me to do but send them flowers, too, so everybody who sends me some gets a bouquet."

Announcement from the *Oakland Tribune*, 11/15/1940 showing Hudspeth and Dean's rendering of the building.

Present day photos, taken June 2025:





