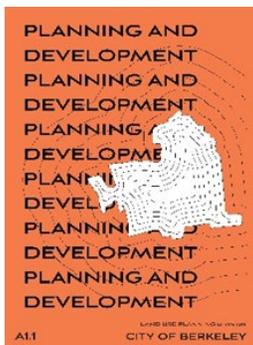


App #ZP2024-0181, ZP2024-0182

September 4, 2025

Demolition Referral for Use Permits at 2029-2039 University Avenue



Quick Facts	Project Description:
<p>Applicant: Laconia Development, LLC</p> <p>Property Owner: Mohammad E. & Kokab S. Talai Trust, & Mans Kashani Et Al.</p>	<p>The applicant is seeking a demolition referral for Use Permits #ZP2024-0181 and #ZP2024-0182 to demolish one commercial building located at 2029-2039 University Avenue.</p>
<p>Project Address: 2029-2039 University Avenue</p> <p>GP Land Use: Commercial</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Permits Requested:</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Zoning: C-DMU Outer Core</p> <p>Historic District: No</p> <p>CEQA: Class 32 In-Fill Development Projects</p> <p>Submittal Date: December 19, 2024</p> <p>Date Deemed Complete: May 22, 2025</p> <p>Project Planner: Niloufar Karimzadegan</p> <p>Prepared By: JulieAnn Murphy, Antonette Hrycyk (Rincon)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Recommendation:</p> <p>Consider the evaluation and take no action.</p>

ZONING MAP

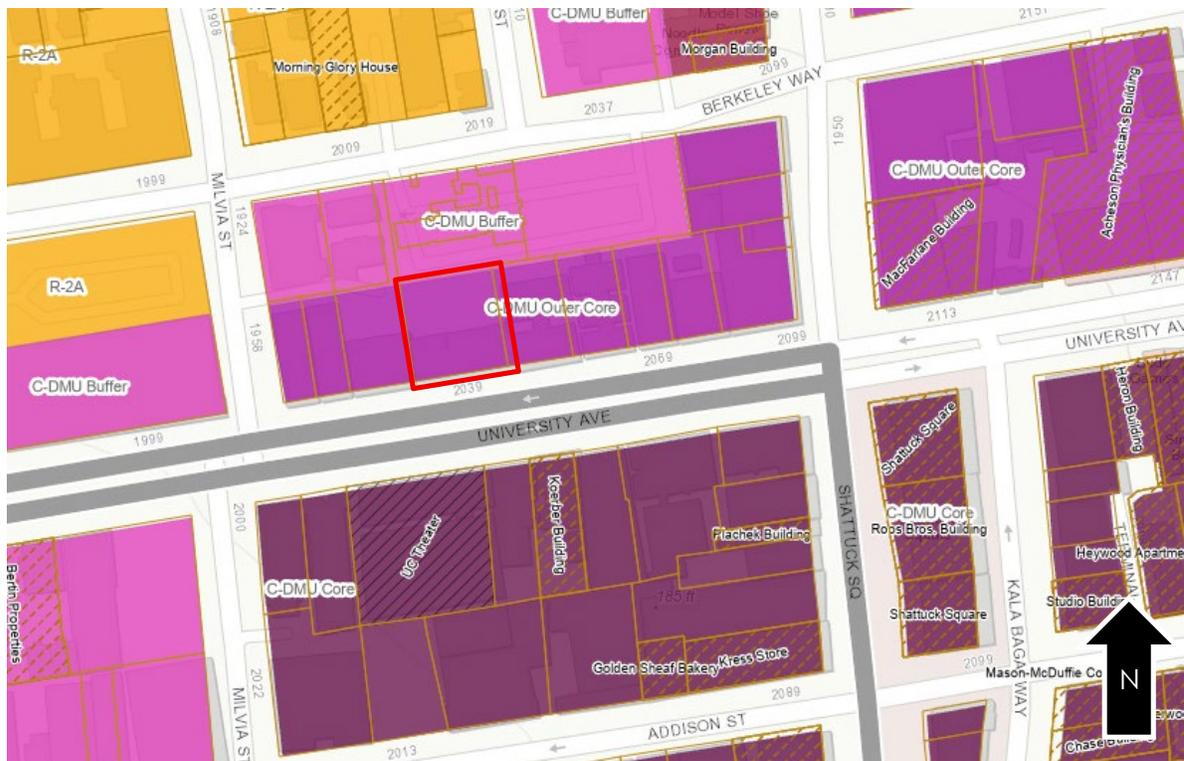


Figure 1: Vicinity and Zoning Districts Map

Comparison of Adjacent Properties			
Vicinity	GP Land Use	Zoning	Current Use
North	Medium Density Residential	CMU-DMU-Buffer	Commercial
South	Downtown	CMU-DMU-Core	Commercial
East	Downtown	CMU-DMU-Outer Core	Commercial
West	Downtown	CMU-DMU-Outer Core	Commercial

AERIAL

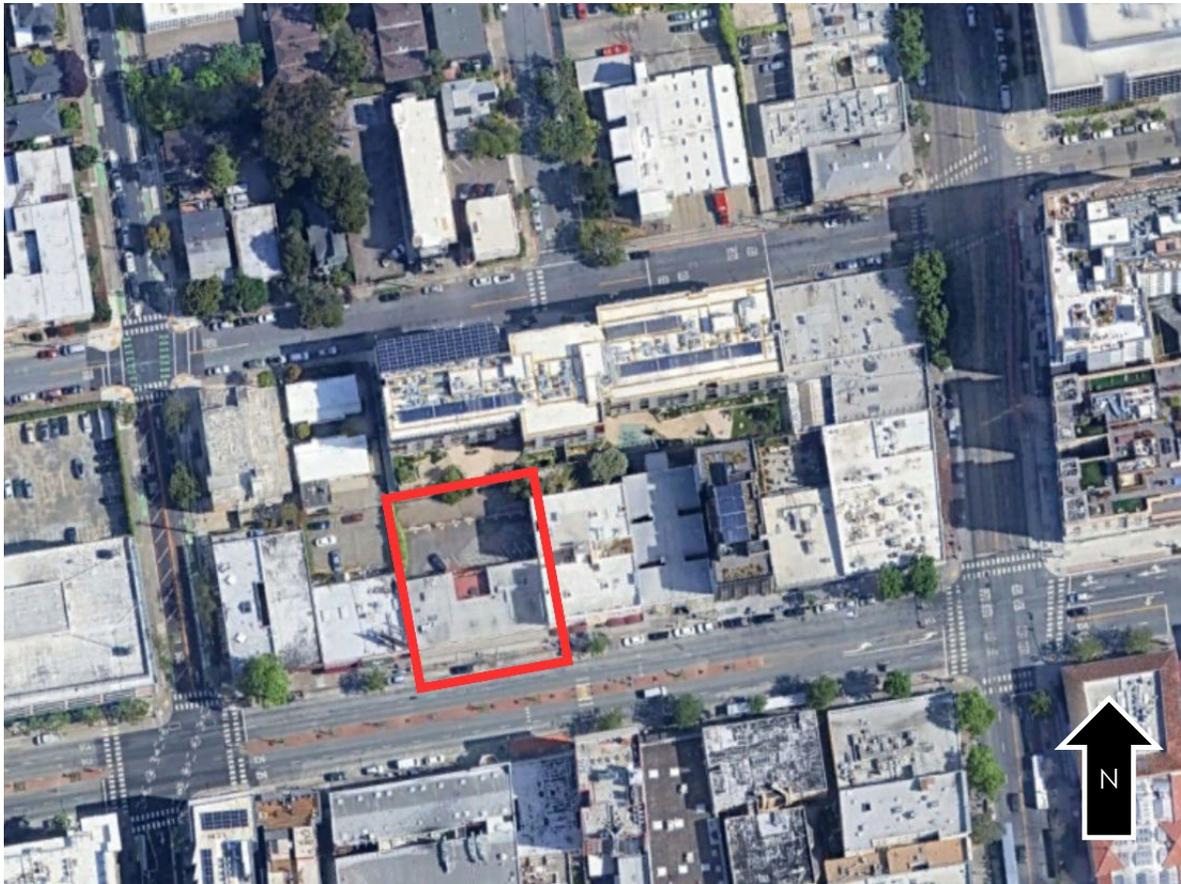


Figure 2: Aerial Image (Source: GoogleEarth 2025)

STREET ELEVATION



Figure 3: Primary (south) elevation, view northeast (Source: Left Coast Architectural History)

BACKGROUND

Subject Site

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue is a two-story commercial building and detached garage located on the north side of University Avenue, between Milvia Street and Shattuck Avenue, in downtown Berkeley. The commercial building is located in the front (south) of the rectangular parcel with no setback from the sidewalk and spans the lot from east to west. An asphalt paved surface parking lot at the rear of the building separates it from a one-story garage that spans the north side of the lot (Figure 2). The property is located within the commercial core of downtown and is surrounded by commercial uses to all sides. Addresses associated with the property include 2029 University, 2031 University, 2033 University, 2035 University, 2037 University, and 2039 University Avenue.

The building has a rectangular plan with a flat roof, box cornice and smooth stucco cladding with Roman brick veneer. Fenestration consists of aluminum frame windows, plate glass windows, storefront window assemblies, and sliding vinyl/vinyl-clad aluminum sash windows. The building's first story is comprised of commercial storefronts while the

second story contains office space. The first story is organized into six bays. The westernmost bay features a roll-up metal door with a recessed storefront entry. This entry features a fully glazed door which provides access to the building's second floor. The five other bays each feature a commercial storefront with distinctly angled entries that appear to be original. A projecting box canopy spans the entire length of the primary (south) elevation, separating the first and second stories. This canopy has a paneled fascia which contains signage and molding at the edge. The second story is clad in smooth stucco with projecting pilasters clad with Roman brick. This story features replacement vinyl or vinyl-clad aluminum sash sliding windows which generally correlate to the first story bays, with one small double hung window on the western side of this elevation. Two continuous projecting trim courses span this story at the sill and header of the windows.

The rear (north) elevation faces the surface parking lot and is clad entirely in stucco. The first story is comprised of secondary entrances for commercial spaces in addition to a large opening which corresponds to the garage door on the primary elevation. This elevation features an exterior staircase which provides access to a recessed deck and sliding glass doors which lead to the second-floor office space. The east and west facades abut neighboring buildings and are not generally visible. The property also features a garage building at the rear of the lot. This garage is clad in brick veneer with a flat roof and ten single-car garage openings and no windows on the side and rear elevations.

The building has some characteristics of the Art Moderne style, such as its basic horizontality, boxy massing, flat roofline, flat canopy, and simple cornice. Other elements described, such as its smooth stucco exterior, Roman brick veneer, and angled commercial entries are more typical of midcentury design.

Site History

The subject property was purchased by Jessie S. Williamson and her adult children, Harry B. and Melvin Williamson and Bernice (Williamson) Ellis in 1940. Harry B. Williamson was the owner of the Williamson Property Company and served as the property manager during his residence at the subject property from ca. 1943-1990.

The building and garage at 2029-2039 University Avenue were constructed in stages from 1943 to 1951 by the Williamson Property Company. The first improvement on the site was a reinforced concrete retaining wall along the rear (north) property line, constructed in July 1943. In August 1943, the wall was integrated into the construction of the extant, brick-clad garage. The two-story commercial building was constructed in January of 1951 during a period of rapid development along University Avenue. As constructed, it included five small shop spaces on the first floor with a residential unit on the second floor. The second floor was used as a residence until 1990 and by 1995, the second floor was converted to office space. In 1995, the present entrance and stairs to the second story were constructed within the westernmost shop space. The same year, the second floor's office space and commercial areas were remodeled.

The second story residence was initially occupied by Harry B. Williamson, the owner of the property, along with his wife, Helen Williamson, and a son and nephew. Research confirms

the Williamsons resided there until 1963, though it is likely Harry Williamson continued to reside at the subject property until his death in 1990. Henry Williamson owned the subject property from 1943 until his death in 1990, when it was inherited by heirs to his estate. By 2000, the property was owned by K&K Properties and/or P.K. Properties.

The building’s ground floor commercial spaces numbered as 2031, 2033, 2035, 2037, and 2039 University Avenue were occupied by several commercial tenants, as is typical of the building type. The commercial tenant occupancy history of the five associated addresses is summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Known Commercial Tenants

Address	Business	Years Occupied
2031 University Ave.	Louise Prince Violins	1951
	Berkeley Violin Center	1951-1980
	Ifshin Violines	1980-2008
	Nail Image Salon	2008-2011
	J.V. Nail Salon	2011-present
2033 University Ave.	W.J. Milligan Imports	1951-1957, likely longer
	Fantasy T-Shirt	2001 -ca. 2022
	Babette Café	2022
	Honey T.V.	2022-present
2035 University Ave.	Preview Maternity Shop	1951-1968
	Dorthé Maternity	1968-?
	Office Supplies Retailer	1990-1993
	Dalys Hou Yee Best	1993-2007
	Mirage Imports	2007-2010
	Llhasa Salon	2010-present
2037 University Ave.	R.E. Geddes & Co.	1951-1964
	Summit Realty	1964-1983
	World Center of Travel	1997-2000
	Tibetan and Himalayan store	2000
	Second Hand Hustle	2000-present
2039 University Ave	Hoo Chon & Co. (branch)	1951-1965
	Electronic business	1966-ca. 1977
	Warehouse space	ca.1977-1980
	Berkeley Shade Co.	1980-present

The Williamson Property Company (original owners/developers)

Original owner Jessie Williamson's 1948 obituary notes that she was married to Luther Williamson, a “pioneer real estate man in the East Bay” (*San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1948). He and his sons founded the Williamson Property Company in the 1920s, which

developed and managed properties throughout Berkeley, including commercial buildings, hotels, apartment houses, residential properties, and the UC Theater (Berkeley Landmark #408). Jessie Williamson and her children operated the Williamson Property Company after Luther's passing in 1936 ("Woman GOP Leader Fails to Leave Will," *Oakland Tribune*, 6 August 1948). When Jessie Williamson died in 1948, the family business was carried on by her sons. The 1950 census lists Harry B. Williamson as the proprietor of a property management company, and Melvin Williamson as the proprietor of a contracting firm; both aspects of the Williamson Property Company. Bernice was employed as a social worker but appears to have owned a share of the family business. Harry Williamson's 1990 obituary noted his continued work in property development and management and historic building restoration ("Harry B. Williamson, noted Berkeley developer, contractor," *Oakland Tribune*, 16 September 1990).

ANALYSIS

Project Scope

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 City of Berkeley (COB) Landmarks and Historic Districts in the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (BMC Chapter 3), which are relatively specific and appear to align with the California Register of Historical Resources. 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.

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 development site does not feature a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit though there are several in the vicinity (see Figure 4).

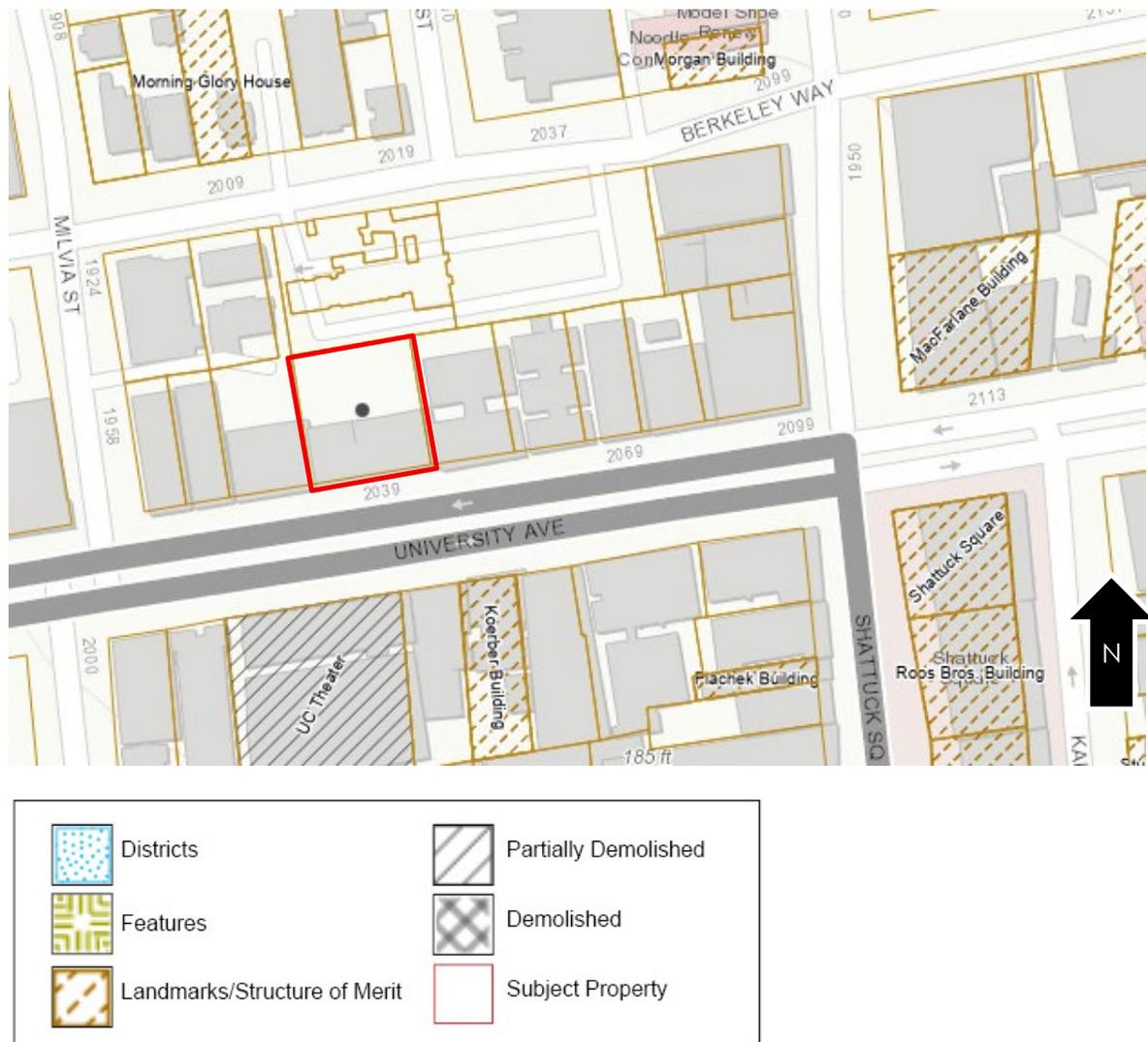


Figure 4: Vicinity Map showing Nearby City Landmarks and Structures of Merit

Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context²: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff concludes that since the building is not identified as significant, no period of significance applies.

Owing to the subject property's commercial use and location in a neighborhood with diverse building types, it is a mid-20th century commercial style building and is linked to a historic context related to commercial development, particularly of University Avenue and downtown Berkeley. The building's historic context also includes its architectural design, a mid-century commercial building with some minor elements of the Art Moderne style. The Art Moderne style, popular in the 1930s, was an early Modern style which drew inspiration from the industrial design of ships, airplanes, and automobiles. Common design features include curved corners, glass block windows, limited external decoration, flat roofs, and horizontal grooves running the length of the building which were known as speedlines. The style's popularity fell drastically with the advent of the Great Depression in 1939.³

The subject property was built by an unknown builder and architect, though likely was constructed by the Williamson Property Company.

Significance Criteria: The subject property has been evaluated based on the criteria of the 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 on the California Register of Historical Resources. Because it is more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23.326.070(C) requires that it be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

In determining the potential significance of this property, Caitlin Hibma of Left Coast Architectural History 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 result of Caitlin Hibma and staff's evaluation are discussed below.

CR and BMC Criteria:

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

The HRE concludes that the building at 2029-2039 University Avenue does not meet CR Criterion 1 because it was not found to be associated with any events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history. The property was constructed in 1951 as a commercial space with a second story with a residential unit, at a

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).

³ Virginia Savage McAlester, "Modernistic 1920-1940," in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2022, 580-585.

time when several other commercial buildings were being constructed in the vicinity and was typical of the transitional urban development pattern. It does not uniquely represent a significant phase of commercial development of Berkeley or a business type important to Berkeley's history. It is, therefore, not eligible for listing in the California Register or local register.

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

The HRE concludes that 2029-2039 University Avenue does not meet CR Criterion 2 because it is not associated with any individuals that have made significant contributions to our history. The property was owned by the Williamson Property Company and, subsequently, the Williamson family throughout the historic period and into the 1990s. Matriarch Jessie Williamson was active in politics and social causes, but her activities do not relate to the subject property or her involvement with the family business. Harry B. Williamson and his family occupied a second floor apartment in the building for a time.

While the Williamsons appeared to be active real estate developers in Berkeley, there are numerous properties that are better associated with the Williamson name. Both the U.C. Theater and the Nash Hotel, adjacent and across the street from the subject property, were Williamson projects and are more recognizable examples of their work and influence. At the same time the building at 2029-2039 University Avenue was being constructed, the Williamsons were developing a large U-Save supermarket in Downtown Berkeley, located on the west side of present-day Martin Luther King Jr. Way at University Avenue, which got extensive press, while the subject property got little. The Williamsons do not appear to rise to the level of influence that would qualify them as important historical figures and the subject property is also not strongly representative of their real estate development work. Later owning parties were property management companies without specific individuals identified with them. Likewise, most of the tenant businesses at the property did not have specific names associated with them. For those that did, those individuals were simply local small business owners, without significant influence or accomplishments to their names. It was not associated with significant cultural, religious, social, or economic events that helped shape Berkeley, and therefore, does not exhibit cultural significance. It is, therefore, not eligible for listing in the California Register or local register.

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

The building at 2029-2039 University Avenue was constructed as a common post-World War II commercial building with some elements of the Art Moderne style, such as its horizontality and simple cornice, however extant decorative features are minimal and the building does not include character defining features of the style. Therefore, the building cannot be considered a prime example of the Art Moderne style, nor is it an exceptional or unique example of a post-World War II commercial building. Additionally, the building was subject to substantial renovations in the early 1990s which removed original materials and elements of the original design. It is not the first, last, only or most significant example of a two-story commercial building in Berkeley or the East Bay. As an architectural example, it

does not contribute exceptional value to the neighborhood fabric. It is, therefore, not eligible for listing in the California Register or local register.

Information – CR Criterion 4/BMC Criterion for *Educational Value*

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. Furthermore, no available archival information suggests the property, a two-story commercial building, is worth preserving for its usefulness as an educational resource or site.

National Register – BMC Criterion for National Register

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

LPO Structure of Merit Criteria:

As a potential Structure of Merit (BMC Section 3.24.110.B, Paragraph 2), the subject property does not appear worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, block, or street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks. Each of the four criterion for Structure of Merit (SOM) are considered below.

BMC Section 3.24.110B(a) - *Contemporaneous with City Landmarks*

The age of the building 2029-2039 University Avenue, built in 1951 with an associated garage constructed in 1943, is located within the vicinity of the Berkeley City Landmarks of the UC Theater (1916) and the Koerber Building (1923), located south of the subject property, across University Avenue. The subject building has no historical or historic architectural associations to or compatibility with any identified historic resources in the direct vicinity

BMC Section 3.24.110B(b) – *Compatibility with City Landmarks*

The building at 2029-2039 University Avenue, a two-story commercial building, is not compatible in size, scale, materials, or design with the adjacent UC Theater, an early 20th century theater with decorative terra cotta elements, nor is it compatible with the adjacent Koerber Building, a six-story brick building with a Beaux-Arts style terra cotta façade.

BMC Section 3.24.110B(c) – *Good Design*

The building at 2029-2039 University Avenue is a modest example of a commercial building with some Art Moderne elements. It is, therefore, not a good example of architectural design.

BMC Section 3.24.110B(d) – *Historical Significance*

The subject property does not appear to have been associated with significant historical events or patterns, or to have historical significance to the block, neighborhood, or city.

Recommendation

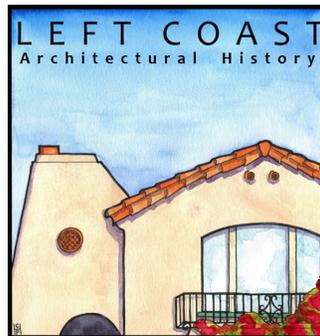
Take No Action. Staff recommends that the Commission consider the extent to which the building meets (or does not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit and then **Take No Action** to initiate it for consideration.

Environmental Review

The review of the demolition and potential initiation of the property by LPC are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3) for Review Exemptions.

Attachments

1. Historic Resource Evaluation prepared by Left Coast Architectural History, dated November 6, 2024.



P.O. Box 70415, Richmond, CA. 94807 • (415) 745-1906 • caitlin@leftcoastarchitecturalhistory.com

6 November 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

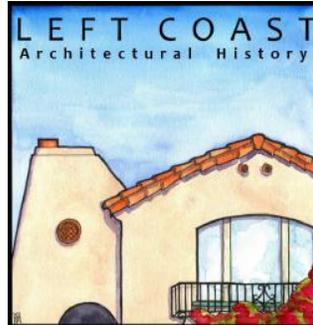
Left Coast Architectural History authored a Historic Resource Evaluation of the property at 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley in October 2023. This letter is to confirm that the report is still valid as of November 2024 and that none of the findings or determinations have changed in the interim.

As always, Left Coast Architectural History is happy to answer questions or provide additional information, if needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caitlin Paige Hibma". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Caitlin Hibma
Principal/Architectural Historian
Left Coast Architectural History



P.O. Box 70415, Richmond, CA. 94807 • (415) 745-1906 • caitlin@leftcoastarchitecturalhistory.com

18 October 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Left Coast Architectural History has completed a Historic Resource Evaluation of the property at 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley. The attached California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms present a physical description of the property, a record of its history, and evaluation according to California Register of Historical Resources significance and integrity criteria, and City of Berkeley Landmark and Structure of Merit criteria.

The study found that the Art Moderne style commercial building and utilitarian garage on the property date to 1951 and 1943, respectively, and were constructed by the Williamson Property Company. The Williamson family, in association with their property management company, owned the property for much of its history. The property has been occupied by many small local businesses, but does not appear to have any significant associations with historically important events or noteworthy historical figures. The property does not exhibit high architectural merit nor associations with important architects or builders. These points are elaborated upon in detail on the attached forms.

The evaluation concludes that the property is not historically significant at either the local or State level and therefore does not qualify as a historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Left Coast Architectural History is happy to answer questions or provide additional assistance, as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caitlin Paige Hibma". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caitlin Hibma
Principal/Architectural Historian
Left Coast Architectural History

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMARY RECORD	Primary # HRI # Trinomial NRHP Status Code
Other Listings Review Code	Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 16

*Resource Name or #: 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

P1. Other Identifier: n/a

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County: Alameda

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Oakland West, Calif.

Date: 2015

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; M.D.

B.M.

c. Address: 2029-2039 University Avenue

City: Berkeley

Zip: 94704

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

APN: 57-2053-8-1

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue sits on a rectangular parcel on the north side of University Avenue, between Milvia Street and Shattuck Avenue. Topography in the area is flat and the parcel is fronted by a public sidewalk. A two-story commercial building sits at the front of the lot with no setback from the sidewalk (south lot line) and spans the lot from east to west lot lines. At the rear of the building is an asphalt paved surface parking lot that spans the parcel east to west, while a one-story garage spans the rear of the lot and sits at the north lot line.

Commercial Building

The Art Moderne style commercial building at the front of the lot is two stories, has a rectangular plan, and is capped by a flat roof. The exterior walls are clad primarily with smooth stucco, while Roman brick veneer clads the first story (Cont.)

*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 (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



*P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

South facade, looking northeast; Sept. 2023

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic

Prehistoric Both

1951; *Berkeley Daily Gazette*

*P7. Owner and Address:

Laconia Development, LLC
 1980 N. Broadway, Suite 350
 Walnut Creek, CA. 94596

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Left Coast Architectural History
 PO Box 70415
 Richmond, CA. 94807

*P9. Date Recorded: Oct. 2023

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: 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):

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD	Primary # HRI#
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Page 2 of 16

*NRHP Status Code 6Z

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

- B1. Historic Name:** None
B2. Common Name: None
B3. Original Use: commercial, residential **B4. Present Use:** commercial
***B5. Architectural Style:** Art Moderne
***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 Garage constructed 1943. Commercial building constructed 1951. (See alterations chart on Continuation Sheets for additional construction history.)
- *B7. Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** n/a **Original Location:** n/a
***B8. Related Features:** None
- B9a. Architect:** None **b. Builder:** Williamson Property Company
***B10. Significance: Theme:** None **Area:** Downtown Berkeley
Period of Significance: None **Property Type:** Commercial **Applicable Criteria:** None
 (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

In June 1940, the subject property was purchased by the Williamson family, consisting of Jessie S. Williamson and her adult children; Harry B. and Melvin Williamson, and Bernice (Williamson) Ellis. Jessie Williamson's 1948 obituary notes that she was married to Luther Williamson, "pioneer real estate man in the East Bay." (*San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1948) He and his sons founded the Williamson Property Company in the 1920s, which developed and managed properties throughout Berkeley (many along University Avenue), including commercial buildings, hotels, apartment houses, and the U.C. Theater (across the street from the subject property), as well as many smaller business and residential properties. Jessie Williamson and her children operated the Williamson Property Company after Luther's passing in 1936. ("Woman GOP Leader Fails to Leave Will," *Oakland Tribune*, 6 August 1948) On her own account, Jessie Williamson twice served as the California committeewoman to the Republican National Convention (1944 and 1948), and served on the State social welfare board to which she was appointed in 1943 by Governor Earl Warren. She was president of the San Francisco District of the California Federation of Women's Clubs and sat on the Berkeley Recreation Commission. (*San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1948.)

When Jessie Williamson died in 1948, the family business was carried on by her sons. The 1950 census lists Harry B. Williamson as the proprietor of a property management company, and Melvin Williamson as the proprietor of a contracting firm; both aspects of the Williamson Property Company. Bernice was employed as a social worker, but appears to have owned a share of the family business. Harry Williamson's 1990 obituary noted his continued work in property development and management and also noted that he restored historic buildings; renovating the Nash, Stark, University, and Camponelli hotels (the first located next door to the subject property). ("Harry B. Williamson, noted Berkeley developer, contractor," *Oakland Tribune*, 16 September 1990.) (Continued)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)
 HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

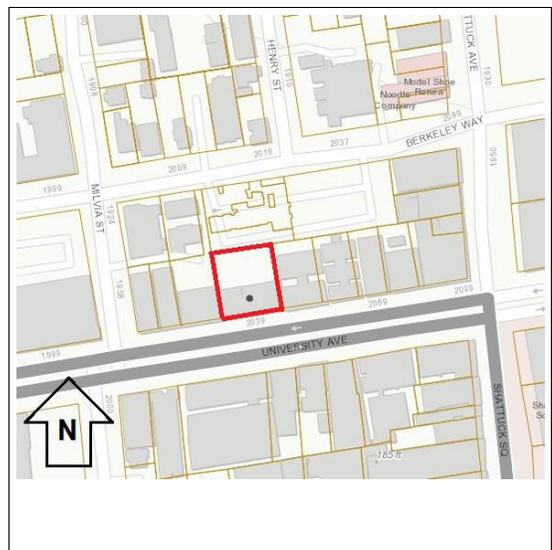
***B12. References:**
 (See parenthetical citations within text and on last Continuation Sheet)

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

***Date of Evaluation:** October 2023

(This space reserved for official comments.)



State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 3 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation Update

P3a. Description: (continued)

of the front (south) facade. The primary window types are aluminum frame, plate glass, storefront assemblies; and sliding vinyl or vinyl-clad aluminum sashes.

The primary facade faces south onto University Avenue. The first story is clad with Roman brick veneer and is organized into six structural bays. The leftmost bay is dominated by a vehicular entrance with a roll-up metal door. The five bays to the right each feature storefronts. The second bay from the left features a recessed, fully glazed, aluminum frame entry assembly on its left side that provides access to a stairwell to the second story. On the right is a narrow storefront assembly set at a slight angle that features an aluminum frame, plate glass display window and a fully glazed aluminum door with a transom sash above. All of the other storefronts are more distinctly angled with the right side more recessed than the left. Each storefront features a two-part, plate glass, aluminum frame display window on the left and a fully-glazed aluminum door topped by a large transom sash on the right. A projecting box canopy spans the facade between the first and second stories. It has a paneled fascia that bears painted signage and has a slightly corbelled molding at the top edge.

The second story of the primary facade is clad with smooth stucco, but has projecting pilasters clad with Roman brick at either side. It features six, horizontally-oriented, vinyl or vinyl-clad aluminum sash, sliding windows that are somewhat regularly spaced across the facade and generally correlate to the structural bays below. A seventh small, vertically oriented, double hung window is located to the left of the rightmost window. Continuous bands of projecting trim span the facade at the sill and headers of the windows. The leftmost and rightmost windows have three-part sliding sashes, while the windows in between have two sliding sashes. The facade terminates in a flat roofline with a simple box cornice.

The rear facade faces north onto the property's parking lot and is clad entirely with stucco. The first story features rear entrances that correspond to each of the ground floor shop spaces and have solid doors. At the far right side of the rear facade is the opening of a vehicular drive-through that corresponds to the garage entrance on the primary facade. Near the center of the first story, an exterior stair that parallels the facade, accesses a recessed deck at the second story. Within the deck there are multiple sets of sliding glass doors and at each end of the main facade are sliding, vinyl or vinyl-clad aluminum sash windows.

The east and west facades abut neighboring buildings and are not visible, except where the west facade rises slightly above the roofline of the neighboring building. There, it consists of an unfinished and unfenestrated concrete block wall surface.

Garage

The garage building at the rear of the lot is one story and has a long narrow rectangular plan. It is clad with brick veneer and topped by a flat roof. Ten single-car garage openings are regularly spaced along the southern facade. Side and rear facades appear to be unfenestrated and unadorned, as they abut neighboring buildings and site walls.

B10. Significance: (continued)

The subject parcel went by the address of 2031 University Avenue at the time the Williamsons purchased it, and prior to 1943 was occupied primarily by a surface parking lot. (1950 Sanborn map) In July 1943, Harry B. Williamson had a reinforced concrete retaining wall constructed along the rear (north) property line and the following month, integrated the retaining wall into the construction of the current brick-clad, concrete garage building that spans the rear of the lot. (Building permits 54420 and 54612, BAHA archives.) The 1950 Sanborn map illustrates this garage and labels it as an "auto repair" facility. The address for the property is given as 2035 University Avenue on the Sanborn map. From 1947 into 1950, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* ran advertisements for a business called Zane's located at 2035 University Avenue, which dealt in used automobile sales.

On 2 January 1951, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* reported that a building permit had been issued for construction of a store and apartment building at 2035 University Avenue, to cost \$40,000. As constructed, it included five small shop spaces on the first floor and a residential unit on the second. A newspaper article reporting on rapid development along University Avenue noted that the building "houses five firms in the most efficient manner, utilizing existing frontage to the best advantage of each company. It adds a pleasing new face to the avenue." The article listed the first retail tenants of the building as Louis Prince Violins (2031 University), W.J. Milligan Imports (2033 University), the Preview Maternity Shop (2035 University), R.E. Geddes & Co. realty (2037 University), and Hoo Chong & Co. (2039 University).

The second floor apartment was initially occupied as a residence by Harry B. and Helen Williamson, and their teenage son and nephew. Newspapers note several parties, dances, and club meetings that the Williamsons held at their home from 1951 to at least 1963. It is not known when the Williamsons vacated the second floor apartment, but it was later used as offices. Harry Williamson lived until 1990 and it is conceivable that he resided in the apartment until then, while the change in use appears to have happened sometime prior to 1995. At that time the current entry and stairs to the upper story were inserted within the building's westernmost shop space and the second floor offices and commercial areas (noted to be existing) were remodeled. (Building permit 95-942) It is unknown where the primary entry to the second floor was located prior to 1995, but the rear exterior stair may have been used to access the upstairs unit.

State of California — The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
 HRI#
 Trinomial

Page 4 of 16

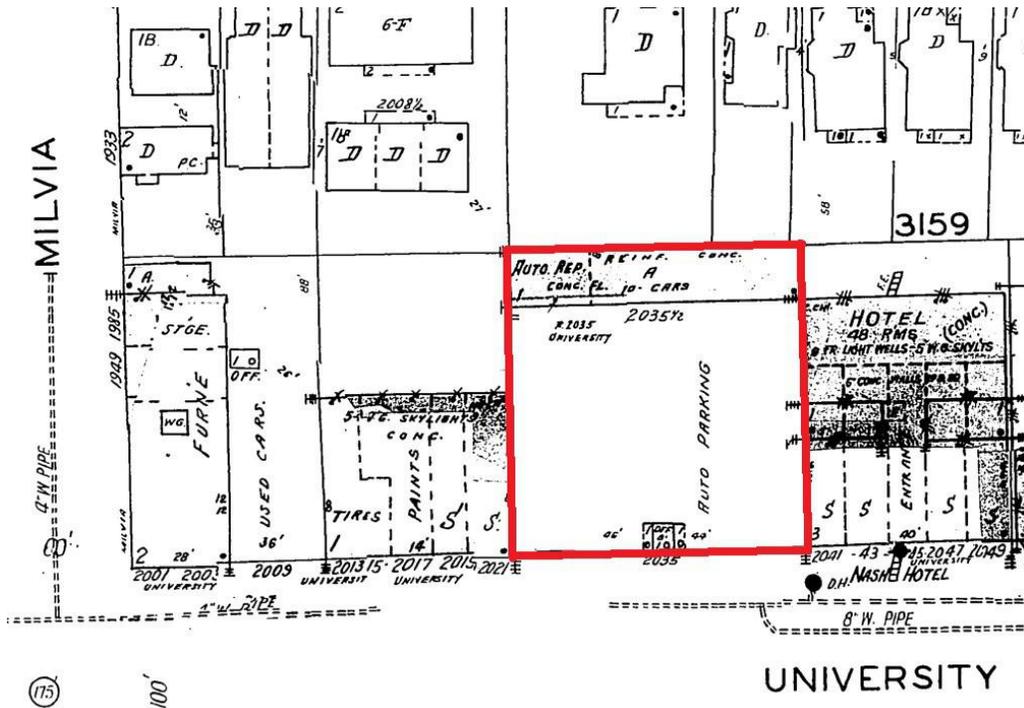
*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)



Insurance map. Subject property outlined in red.

1950 Sanborn Fire

In the space addressed 2031 University, Louis Prince Violins quickly became the Berkeley Violin Center during 1951, but may have been the same business under two different names. It specialized in the sale and repair of violins and other stringed instruments. Newspapers indicate that the business was put up for sale in 1969, and link it to business owner Mary Bettencourt. Bettencourt's name continued to be associated with the business in later years, however; so she appears to have retracted the sale offer and stayed in business until about 1980. The following year, newspaper ads place Ifshin Violins at 2031 University Avenue. The identical, and unusual, business type suggests that Mary Bettencourt sold her established violin business, which became Ifshin Violins. Ifshin Violins remained in the shop until 2008 and is now located in El Cerrito. (Ifshinviolins.net) The shop space was then occupied by Nail Image salon until 2011, and J.V. Nail salon from that time to the present. (City of Berkeley Planning records)

W.J. Milligan Imports, located at 2033 University, was mentioned briefly in newspapers in connection with a lawsuit in 1955, but remained at the subject address until at least 1957, when newspapers reported that the store had been robbed. (*Oakland Tribune*, 16 March 1955. *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 14 January 1957.) The business likely stayed at the address after that, although it is unknown for how long. The next tenant is not known until 2001, when Fantasy T-Shirt, a shirt silkscreening business, moved into the shop. Babette Cafe was briefly present around 2022, and the shop now houses Honey T.V., a t-shirt and accessories shop. (City of Berkeley Planning records)

Preview Maternity Shop was frequently advertised in newspapers during its tenancy in the shop at 2035 University Avenue. It remained until 1968 and in 1969, the same shop space was occupied by Dorothé Maternity, suggesting a name change or buy-out, but a continuation of the same business type. It is unknown how long Dorothé Maternity remained in the shop. From 1990 to 1993, the space was occupied by an office supplies retailer. It then became Dalys Hou Yee Best clothing, toys, and gifts store. In 2007, Mirage Imports, a clothing, jewelry, gifts, and tobacco shop, occupied the storefront. Lhasa Salon moved into the space in 2010 and remains today. (City of Berkeley Planning records)

R.E. Geddes & Co. was a real estate agency that was present at 2037 University until 1964. After that time, there continued to be a real estate agency in the same shop space, although it was called Summit Realty, again suggesting a name change or buy-out. Summit Realty remained until at least 1983. In 1976, there was some mention in newspapers of a Hufbauer Gallery at the same address, but only briefly and it does not seem to have displaced the realty office; the two operations may have shared the space.

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	Primary # HRI# Trinomial
---	---

Page 5 of 16 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
 *Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)

World Travel Center of California, a travel agency, was located in the space until 1997, and was followed by two successor travel agencies that may have been related. In 2000, a Tibetan and Himalayan jewelry and clothing store moved into the storefront and the shop is now occupied by Second Hand Hustle. (City of Berkeley Planning records)

Hoo Chong & Co. was an Asian gifts, furnishings and antiques shop. The establishment at 2039 University Avenue was a branch of a business that had been established in Downtown Berkeley for many years previously, according to its grand opening advertisement. It remained at the property until 1965. In 1966, a business dealing with electronics occupied the space and there is mention in newspapers of a warehouse use in 1977. In 1980, Berkeley Shade Co. opened in the space and remains today, selling window shades and coverings. (City of Berkeley Planning records)

As noted, Harry B. Williamson died 1990 and owned the property until that time. It was then inherited by the “heirs of the estate of Harry B. Williamson,” as noted on a 1995 Planning Department record. By the 2000s, the property was owned by K&K Properties and/or P.K. Properties. These appear to be property management companies with little information available regarding their operations.

Architectural Style

The commercial building at 2029-2039 University Avenue is an example of the Art Moderne style. The Art Moderne style was popular primarily in the 1930s and 1940s, making the subject building a very late example. The style was applied to a wide variety of building types, from residences to industrial buildings. It was characterized by overall asymmetry and a horizontal emphasis, flat roofs, horizontal groupings of windows, smooth wall surfaces (usually stucco) with horizontal bands of raised or incised trim (known as “speedlines”), flat canopies, railings with horizontal members, rounded corners, and geometric details. Corner windows and glass block were common, as were porthole windows, which made direct reference to the transportation-related industrial design of cars, ships, trains, and airplanes that inspired the style. Sometimes referred to as Streamline Moderne, it drew on the influences of the motor age and the evolution of streamline design that increased air stream efficiency around moving vehicles, but also had an appealing and strikingly modern aesthetics.

The building at 2029-2039 University Avenue has basic, but not overly expressive, characteristics of the Art Moderne style, including basic horizontality, boxy massing, a flat roof and roofline, a flat canopy spanning the primary facade (although a later alteration, it may have replicated an earlier version), horizontally oriented second-story windows unified by continuous trim along top and bottom, and a simple box cornice. The siding is partially smooth stucco, but also includes Roman brick veneer, which is not typical of the Art Moderne style, but is a notable Midcentury building material and does have a fine-grain horizontal emphasis. Likewise, although the angled storefront bays are not typically Art Moderne, they are modernistic and fit the overall aesthetic. The building qualifies as an Art Moderne style design, but is a simple, late example and, therefore, not considered to be a prime example of the style.

The garage at the rear of the lot is strictly utilitarian and demonstrates no specific architectural style.

Architects & Builders

No original building permit or other records were found that identify an architect, designer, or builder associated with the main building at 2029-2039 University Avenue. The building permit for the garage at the rear of the lot indicates that Harry B. Williamson was the builder. Based on the fact that the Williamson Property Company appears to have included a contracting/building division, as well as property management services, it seems likely that the building was designed and constructed in-house, by staff of the Williamson Property Company.

Alterations

The following building permits and other records are on file with the City of Berkeley Department of Planning & Development and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. They provide documentation of the property's development over time:

Date	Permit #	Description of Work
07/13/43	54420	Reinforced concrete retaining wall built at rear of lot.
08/20/43	54612	One-story garage constructed spanning rear of lot (earlier retaining wall became back and side walls of garage).
04/11/51	69287	“Shadelite” marquee installed over stores.
05/23/95	95-942	Modify existing retail space at 2031 University (westernmost storefront) to provide an entry lobby and stair to 2029 University (upper floor). Remodel existing offices, commercial areas, and restrooms at 2029 University.

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	Primary # HRI# Trinomial
---	---

Page 6 of 16 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
 *Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)		
01/26/96	96-204	Modify the existing canopy. Number of signs is limited to one sign on the face of new canopy and one hanging sign, etc.

Additional observations:

- Windows replaced at second story of primary and rear facade. Original material unknown, replaced with vinyl or vinyl-clad aluminum sliding sashes. Date unknown, possibly 1980s based on material.
- Roll-up metal garage door installed at drive-through. Likely open or with wood door originally. Date unknown.
- Transom windows above some storefront entries modified. Single fixed lites replaced with louvers, fan insert, or sliding sash in three instances. Date unknown.

California Register Evaluation

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more criteria relating to historically significant events, people, architects or architectural merit, or information potential. The following provides an evaluation of the historic significance of 2029-2039 University Avenue:

Criterion 1 (Event): *Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.*

No specific events of historical importance are known to have occurred at the property. As a primarily commercial property located in Downtown Berkeley, the property fits the general, organic patterns of development in the area, which echoed patterns that occurred throughout the Bay Area. Built in 1951, the property is a relative late-comer to the Downtown environment, however, and simply reflects a Midcentury surge in development, spurred by economic prosperity following World War II. Aside from some initial residential use on the second story, the property served primarily modest retail functions throughout its history and into the present day. It does not stand out as noteworthy within the development or continuing history of Berkeley's Downtown.

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 (Persons): *Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.*

The property was owned by the Williamson Property Company and, subsequently, the Williamson family throughout the historic period and into the 1990s. Matriarch Jessie Williamson was active in politics and social causes, but her activities do not relate to the subject property or her involvement with the family business. Harry B. Williamson and his family occupied a second floor apartment in the building for a time. While the Williamsons appeared to be prominent and active real state developers in Berkeley, there are numerous properties that are better associated with the Williamson name. Both the U.C. Theater and the Nash Hotel, adjacent and across the street from the subject property, were Williamson projects and have greater name recognition. At the same time the building at 2029-2039 University Avenue was being constructed, the Williamsons were developing a large U-Save supermarket in Downtown Berkeley, which got extensive press, while the subject property got little. The Williamsons do not appear to rise to the level of influence that would qualify them as important historical figures and the subject property is also not a strongly representative of their real estate development work. Later owning parties were property management companies without specific individuals identified with them. Likewise, most of the tenant businesses at the property did not have specific names associated with them. For those that did, those individuals were simply local small business owners, without significant influence or accomplishments to their names.

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture): *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.*

The building at 2029-2039 University Avenue was designed as a Art Moderne commercial building. It exhibits basic, but not overly expressive, characteristics of the style, including basic horizontality, boxy massing, a flat roof and roofline, a flat canopy spanning the primary facade (although a later alteration), horizontally oriented second-story windows unified by continuous trim along top and bottom, and a simple box cornice. The siding is partially smooth stucco, but also includes Roman brick veneer, which is not typical of the Art Moderne style, but is a notable Midcentury building material and does have a somewhat fine-grain horizontal emphasis. Likewise, although the angled storefront bays are not typically Art Moderne, they are modernistic and fit the overall aesthetic. The building qualifies as an Art Moderne style design, but is a simple and late example and, therefore, not considered to be a prime example of the style. The garage at the rear is utilitarian and does not exhibit any particular style.

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	Primary # HRI# Trinomial
---	---

Page 7 of 16 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)

Neither building appears to have been architect designed, but were likely designed and constructed by staff of the Williamson Property Company.

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential): *Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.*

Criterion 4 is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, Criterion 4 typically relates to rare construction types, of which 2029-2039 University Avenue is not an example.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 4.

Berkeley Landmark Evaluation

Berkeley Landmarks are designated historical resources within the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Landmarks if they meet one or more of five criteria similar to those used for the California Register, but which elaborate on areas of significance. The following provides an evaluation of the historic significance of 2029-2039 University Avenue according to local significance criteria:

1. Architectural Merit:

a-c. Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region; Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or examples of the more notable works of the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder; Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.

The property does not hold the status of first, last, or only of its type or style in the region, nor is it a significant or outstanding example of its type or style. The main building is a basic and not overly expressive example of the Art Moderne style and is not considered to be a prime example. The garage at the rear is utilitarian and does not exhibit any particular style. Neither building appears to have been architect designed, but were likely designed and constructed by staff of the Williamson Property Company. Thus, the property does not appear to have the high architectural merit or association with a master architect or builder that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the City

Neither the construction of the buildings at 2029-2039 University Avenue, nor their subsequent ownership, occupancy, and use history, were influenced by religious, cultural, governmental, social, or economic events or developments in the area. The building was built and primarily used for commercial purposes and housed small local businesses. Although economic activity was the building's most obvious cultural contribution, it does not appear to have been associated with any significant movements or events within Berkeley's economic history.

3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue does not appear to have any use as an educational tool. The building and garage are modest commercial and utilitarian structures that do not convey noteworthy patterns of use or strong relationships to important aspects of neighborhood or city history. The property does not have any potential to convey lessons on history, as it is not associated with any important events nor is it physically illustrative of the lives, work, or activities of its owners/tenants. It therefore does not appear to have the high educational value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military.

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue generally reflects the organic commercial growth of Downtown Berkeley, but dates to the mid-twentieth century, so is late to that context. It does not have any strong associations outside of general development patterns in the neighborhood. Neither the construction of the main building or garage, nor their later history, was influenced by specific social, cultural, economic, political, religious, or military events or developments in the area. No specific events of significance occurred at the property; therefore, it does not appear to have the high historic value that would qualify it as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	Primary # HRI# Trinomial
---	---

Page 8 of 16 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore does not qualify as a Berkeley Landmark under this criterion.

Berkeley Structure of Merit

Berkeley Structures of Merit are designated historical resources within the City of Berkeley. Resources may be designated as Structures of Merit if they meet general and/or specific criteria. An evaluation follows:

1. General criteria shall be architectural merit and/or cultural, educational, or historic interest or value. If upon assessment of a structure, the commission finds that the structure does not currently meet the criteria as set out for a landmark, but it is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings which includes landmarks, that structure may be designated a structure of merit.

As assessed under Berkeley Landmark criteria, the property at 2029-2039 University Avenue does not possess great architectural merit or cultural, educational, or historic value. It is a common element of Berkeley's mid-twentieth century commercial development and is not an outstanding or noteworthy example thereof. Visual observation of buildings around the property does not indicate any historically significant cohesive or thematically representative grouping within which the buildings at 2029-2039 University Avenue would play a meaningful role. Therefore, the property does not appear to qualify as a Structure of Merit under the General Criteria.

Specific Criteria

a. The age of the structure is contemporary with (1) a designated landmark within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings, or (2) an historic period or event of significance to the City, or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

There are no Berkeley Landmarks of Structures of Merit on the same block as the 2029-2039 University Avenue; however, there are approximately a dozen on surrounding blocks and many others throughout Downtown Berkeley. Among the dozen closest to the subject property, construction dates range from 1886 to 1933, meaning that none are contemporary with the 1951 building at 2029-2039 University Avenue. The property is not otherwise associated with any major event or historic period specific to Downtown or citywide history.

b. The structure is compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with a designated landmark structure within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

Among the dozen Landmarks closest to the subject property, a number take the form of one to two story commercial blocks of similar size and scale as the subject property, but differ widely in style and overall design. The size and scale, as well as materials, are common to countless Downtown commercial buildings and so do not place the subject property and the similar Landmarks in any unique or definable category of their own. The Art Moderne architecture of the subject property sets it firmly apart from any Landmarks which are in earlier and more ornate styles, ranging from Victorian to Art Deco.

c. The structure is a good example of architectural design.

The main building is a basic and not overly expressive example of the Art Moderne style and is not considered to be a prime example. The garage at the rear is utilitarian and does not exhibit any particular style. Neither building appears to have been architect designed, but were likely designed and constructed by staff of the Williamson Property Company.

d. The structure has historical significance to the City and/or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.

The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue reflects the organic commercial growth of Downtown Berkeley in the mid-twentieth century, but does not have any strong associations outside of general development patterns in the neighborhood. Neither the construction of the main building or garage, nor their later history, was influenced by noteworthy social, cultural, economic, political, religious, or military events or developments in the area.

Integrity

In order to qualify for historic designation, a property must possess significance under the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity. The property at 2029-2039 University Avenue does not appear to possess the historic significance necessary to qualify for designation; therefore, an analysis of its integrity is not required.

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUATION SHEET	HRI# Trinomial	Primary #
---	-------------------	-----------

Page 9 of 16 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA
*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History *Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

B10. Significance: (continued)

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, the property at 2029-2039 University Avenue does not appear to be eligible for listing the California Register of Historical Resources or as a City of Berkeley Landmark or Structure of Merit. Therefore, it does not qualify as a historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Sources

- Ancestry.com: census and other vital records
- Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association: block files, building permits, Ormsby Donough collection, Sanborn maps
- City of Berkeley Planning & Development Department records
- McAlester, Virginia & Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003)
- NETR Online, Historic Aerials
- NewspaperArchive.com
- Newspapers.com
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map archives via ProQuest and HIG
- University of California Riverside, California Digital Newspaper Collection
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State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 10 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation Update

Historic Images:



1958 aerial photograph. Subject property indicated by arrow.
(U.C. Santa Barbara Library)



1965 aerial photograph. Subject property indicated by arrow.
(U.C. Santa Barbara Library)

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 11 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation

Update

Historic Images:



1984 aerial photograph. Subject property indicated by arrow.
(U.C. Santa Barbara Library)

Current Images:



Primary (south) facade, looking northeast from University Ave.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 12 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation

Update

Current Images:



Primary (south) facade, looking northwest from University Ave.



View along first story, south facade, looking east from University Ave. sidewalk.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 13 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation

Update

Current Images:



Vehicular entrance, left side of first story, south facade.



2031 University Ave. storefront, including entrance to upper unit at left (2029 University Ave.)

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 14 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023 Continuation Update

Current Images:



2033 University Ave. storefront.



2035 University Ave. storefront.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 15 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation

Update

Current Images:



2037 University Ave. storefront.



2039 University Ave. storefront.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 16 of 16

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 2029-2039 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA

*Recorded by: Caitlin Hibma/Left Coast Architectural History

*Date: Oct. 2023

Continuation

Update

Current Images:



Detail of second story.



View north through drive-through at portion of rear garage