



MEMORANDUM

To: Secretary Anne Burns and Members of Berkeley's Design Review Committee
Cc: Jay Pesci, Pyramid Hotel Group
From: Ed McFarlan and Matt Taecker
Date: August 6, 2015

Re: 2129 Shattuck: Design Elements and Refinements

The 2129 Shattuck team offers this discussion on key design elements to inform our dialogue on August 20 around design intentions and refinements. We believe that the design of building and open space is coalescing around the following fundamental design ideas, in thoughtful consideration of DRC comments heard June 18.

This memo does not discuss a very recent decision to increase hotel floors and loss of condominium floors. While this change will be introduced at the August 20 meeting, we believe that issues raised previously should remain our principal focus. These issues are discussed considered below.

Shattuck Streetwall

On the Shattuck side, the streetwall frames the street with a modern composition of openings that relate to historic context with vertical proportions. We have looked at and will present alternative façade expressions, but we remain confident that our original approach – when refined and well executed – will be the most appropriate for a vibrant yet context-sensitive downtown.

The building creates a strong connection to Berkeley's surrounding downtown building fabric by creating a 44' façade element along Shattuck. This urban façade element allow the building to maintain the cornice height of the more typically scaled buildings in the downtown. The architecture is expressed in a contextual way that engages the adjacent buildings along their respective streets.

The Shattuck Street façade maintains a cornice line that complements Shattuck Street corridor as a whole. It uses traditional yet modern materials and fenestration elements that are derived from the traditional setting but without imitating Shattuck's historic facades. It is both "modern," and part of Shattuck's historical fabric. It is important that the building bring something "new" to the Shattuck street experience.

In all of our alternatives, 2nd level parking is completely screened and integrated seamlessly within the design of the ground floor and 3rd floor "overlooks." Materials and detailing will ensure that cars and headlights are never seen from the street.

Center Street Streetwall

The Center Street façade is intended to be an active and energetic addition next to a new Berkeley Art Museum, a modernized BART Plaza, and “restaurant row.” We propose that the Center Street facade be lit at night to become a playful urban destination and urban icon in downtown Berkeley.

The streetwall along Center Street and Shattuck Avenue reaches to 37 feet, which is nearly the same height as “Games of Berkeley” on the southeast corner of Center and Shattuck. The street level facade will be comprised mostly of handset brick and follow a traditional rhythm of storefront.

On Center Street, we have explored and will present alternatives with more traditional expressions, such as by integrating the 2nd floor by using pilasters and panels. After review of these alternatives, however, we believe that our initial “art cornice” concept remains the most appropriate -- given Center Street’s importance for a more active downtown with a 24-hour presence. The facade design concept has been further developed to use translucent glass panels, materials, patterns, and artistic LED lighting

The conference level terrace features an “overlook” that is perched above the art cornice. Thus, the 2nd floor is integrated within the two primary streetwall elements: continuous active storefronts and visual connection with the conference level terrace. Parking will be completely screened and cars will never be seen from the street.

Corner Plaza

A corner plaza has been emphasized for pedestrian amenities, and as a “gateway” to north on Shattuck Avenue and east on Center Streets. Street level open space has been redesigned to provide a mini-plaza that is spatially defined and programmed for activity. Landscaping and furnishings frame the plaza. A coffee kiosk with movable café seating and bike share station generate activity.

Sidewalk Experience

The sidewalk north of the corner plaza is intended as an attractive pedestrian-friendly passageway. Most of the passageway is lined by a canopy of trees with landscaping and a bike sharing station (on one side), and traditionally proportioned storefronts (on the other side). Moving north, decorative treatments offer visual interest and mitigate the garage door and loading docks, needed to meet the project’s functional requirements.

Tower and Massing

Massing has been differentiated by distinguishing a more vertical “tower” from a more horizontal “shoulder.” Color is used to distinguish these two massing components. The differentiated massing will play an especially vital role in how the project will appear when seen from the north and east, and the building’s design has been refined to address these views.