

**CONTEXT: Civic Development & Architecture****Introduction**

Berkeley's Civic Center was an idea that took over four decades to realize, from the construction of the Old Town Hall in 1909 to the completion of Berkeley High School's Community Theater in 1950. The history of the area is a chronicle of the growth of the city, national and international political events, and architectural and planning trends over forty years. The city's purchase of the land and the pace of the construction of buildings were affected by the two world wars, the Great Depression, and local politics and economics. The style chosen for the buildings and Civic Center plan reflected important architectural movements, from the Beaux Arts Classicism of the Old Town Hall, to the City Beautiful Movement inspired Civic Center plan, to the Classic Moderne and Art Deco structures of the Depression and World War II eras.

The Civic Center is important as the site of the city's government, but the area also includes federal and regional government buildings as well as private institutions. The Berkeley Civic Center District was listed on the National Register in 1998 as well as the local register. In addition, many of the buildings have been individually recognized as City Landmarks.

**Original Town Hall**

In the early years, when Berkeley was a small but growing town, the board of trustees met in one of Francis K. Shattuck's stores on Shattuck Avenue near Addison Street.<sup>1</sup> The California Legislature granted the Town of Berkeley a municipal charter in 1878. In 1884 the City started planning for a new Town hall, and, in order to satisfy both east and west Berkeley communities, a city hall was constructed at Sacramento Street and University Avenue. The Town's Charter was adopted at this location in 1895.

In 1899 after ten years at the Sacramento Street and University Avenue site, east Berkeley was successful in lobbying to have the Town Hall relocated to the east side of the city and its current location. Only five years later, in 1904, that building was destroyed by fire.<sup>2</sup> The board of trustees formed a temporary town hall in rooms formerly occupied by the library at the northwest corner of Shattuck Avenue and Allston Way.<sup>3</sup> In 1900 Berkeleyans approved a bond to build a new public high school at its present site, and the cornerstone was laid 23 February 1901. (This building was



Image 43: Berkeley's second City Hall constructed in 1909.



Image 44: A current view of the 1909 City Hall Building (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 45: A view of some of the Beaux Arts details of the 1909 City Hall Building (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

demolished in 1934.)<sup>4</sup> On 12 November 1906 a bond issues was passed for funding the construction of a new town hall.<sup>5</sup>

### A New Town Hall

As Berkeley's commercial areas developed and the population grew, so did the need and desire for public buildings. At the time urban design and public architecture throughout the United States were strongly influenced by the City Beautiful Movement. The movement was started in reaction to the nation's dirty, crowded, and disorganized urban centers and was centered on the belief that aesthetically pleasing and more architecturally uniform cities would create more healthful and productive communities. The movement advocated the beautification of cities through the construction of grand, Classical public buildings and imposing civic centers, and formally designed urban plans and landscapes. The movement was inspired by the White City at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The White City's design relied on the planning and architectural principles espoused by the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the preeminent architectural school of the day located in Paris. Through uniform heights and building materials, Classical architectural elements, symmetrical facades, and axial plans, the buildings of the White City were unified as a harmonious whole.

In 1898 the University of California held an international competition sponsored by Phoebe A. Hearst to redesign its campus plan and buildings. Emile Bénard, a Parisian, won the competition with a Classical and axial design for the campus. John Galen Howard was commissioned with carrying out Bénard's plan. Both Bénard and Howard were trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Classical architecture and planning principles. It is not surprising that when the City decided to build a new town hall, it followed the lead of the University and selected Beaux Arts trained architects John Bakewell and Arthur Brown, Jr. The building was completed in 1909, and it was hoped that the building would serve as the anchor of a Civic Center.<sup>6</sup> John Bakewell and Arthur Brown, Jr. both graduated from the University of California in the 1890s and then went on to study at the Ecole. The Berkeley Town Hall was one of the first projects of their new partnership. The firm's design for the building was based on the Town Hall at Tours, France designed in 1901 by Arthur Brown's professor at the Ecole, Victor Laloux.<sup>7</sup> Bakewell and Brown's other projects included the San Francisco City Hall and San Francisco Opera House. The same year the Town Hall was completed, Berkeley was designated a city rather than a town.

## YMCA

By 1910, the year after the City Hall was completed, \$175,00 had been raised by public subscription for a Young Men's Christian Association building. The building was designed by Benjamin G. McDougall and was constructed at the northeast corner of Milvia Street and Allston Way at the southeast corner of the future Civic Center.<sup>8</sup> The Berkeley YMCA chapter had been founded in 1903 by Rosa Shattuck, wife of Francis Kittredge Shattuck.<sup>9</sup> Like the City Hall, the YMCA was designed with Classical ornamentation and a symmetrical façade.

The 1911 Sanborn map showed that despite the developing plans for a grand civic center, aside from the new City Hall and YMCA, the area was sparsely developed. At the site of the future park, there was an apartment building, "merchants" building, and garage. Center Street was still dominated by the F.W. Foss Lumber Company, hardly the public function or building type the City Beautiful planners envisioned. In addition, the high school did not yet occupy the full width of the block between Grove and Milvia Streets; the 1901 building shared the block with several residences and Bay Cities Telephone Company.

## Post Office

The Post Office was the next of the Civic Center buildings to be constructed. The building was authorized in 1910 but not completed until 1915. Oscar Wenderoth from the Treasury Department Supervising Architect's Office designed the building as an adaptation of Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital in Florence in the Renaissance Revival style. The Classical building was designed in keeping with City Beautiful ideals, intended to "educate and develop the public tastes and eventually elevate it to a higher plane."<sup>10</sup> Several decades later in 1936 and 1937, Suzanne Scheuer painted a mural in the interior of the building as part of the Treasury Relief Project, a Depression-era program.<sup>11</sup>

## The Civic Center Concept

Daniel Burnham, the Director of Works for the Columbian Exposition, was commissioned to design a plan for San Francisco's Civic Center just before the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.<sup>12</sup> In 1914 and 1915 Berkeley City officials commissioned master plans for their city's Civic Center. Planners Lewis P. Hobart and Charles H. Cheney designed a formal plan in 1914 with City Hall at the head of



Image 46: A historic view of the YWCA building in Berkeley's Civic Center.

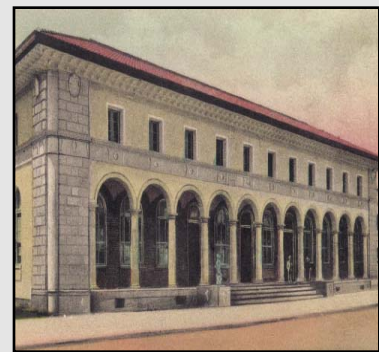


Image 47: A historic view of Berkeley's Post Office.



Image 48: A historic view of Berkeley's Veterans Building.



Image 49: The Old City Hall Annex at 1835 Allston Way by James Plachek of 1925.

a civic square surrounded by impressive public buildings. Plans for a Berkeley Civic Center were also developed for the 1915 "Report on a City Plan for Oakland and Berkeley" prepared by city planner Werner Hegemann. Hegemann's plans called for an elaborate park covering an entire block surrounded by a uniform and stylistically unified set of civic buildings. The city did not own the land to complete either of the plans, but the idea of public buildings surrounding a central square guided the development of the Civic Center for the next several decades until the square was completed in 1941.<sup>13</sup> In keeping with City Beautiful Movement principles, the plans were intended to transform the disjointed area into a well-organized and aesthetically appealing group of harmonious civic building surrounding a central park.<sup>14</sup> It was hoped that a new Civic Center would link downtown with City Hall.<sup>15</sup>

### Veterans Memorial

World War I proved to be one of the first in a line of setbacks that temporarily halted the further development of the Civic Center. Appropriately, the first building to be constructed in the area after the end of World War I was the Veterans Memorial Building. Funding for the structure was made possible by a law passed by the State Legislature that allowed counties to include a certain portion in their tax rate for construction and maintenance of war veterans memorial buildings. The City of Berkeley bought the land for the new structure in August 1926, and the building was dedicated in 1928. The building was designed in the Classic Moderne style by Alameda County Architect Henry H. Meyers, his daughter Mildred Meyers, and George R. Kinkhardt. Meyers designed ten veterans buildings during his tenure.<sup>16</sup>

### City Hall Annex

The City Hall Annex was designed by James W. Plachek and built in 1925 east of City Hall. Although functionally part of the Civic Center, it is not visible from Civic Center Park.

### Berkeley High School

The next building to be constructed as part of the Civic Center complex was the Berkeley High School Academic Building designed by William C. Hays, built in 1920. In 1937 the community planned to expand the high school to include science and math laboratories and a performing arts facility. Berkeley residents had a long tradition of amateur theatrical performances, but lacked a facility for the

performing arts. The decision was made to merge the two needs, and make the school a community center.<sup>17</sup> Four buildings were constructed or remodeled in the Art Deco style: the Shop Building, the Science Building, the Little Theater (Florence Schwimley Little Theater), and the Berkeley High School Community Theater. The buildings were designed by regional architects Henry H. Gutterson and William Corlett, Senior. Jacques Schnier and Robert Howard carved bas-relief sculpture into the exterior walls.<sup>18</sup>

Stylistically, the buildings of the High School departed from the Classicism of the City Hall, YMCA, and Veterans Memorial buildings. However, the High School buildings were compatible with the existing buildings in several ways. The new school buildings were on axis with the Veterans Memorial Building across what would become the park. The High School buildings were three separate structures but together formed an overall symmetrical composition on axis with the Veterans Memorial Building. The High School buildings were reinforced concrete construction covered in cream-colored stucco similar to the other buildings. By December 1941, the almost circular steel frame of the theater was nearly complete when the U.S. entered World War II. Construction halted leaving the frame unfinished, earning the structure the nickname the birdcage. Construction did not resume until 1949. The Berkeley High Community Theater was finally dedicated 5 June 1950, twelve years after architects were hired to complete plan.<sup>19</sup>

### Hall of Justice

The Hall of Justice (more commonly known as the police station) was also designed by James W. Plachek and was completed in 1939.

### Civic Center Park

Sanborn maps indicated that in 1929 the City had not purchased all the land for the central square, and the result was an unusual juxtaposition of grand public buildings surrounding a lumberyard, auto repair shop, single-family residences, and apartment buildings. City parks were seen as essential for cities and towns by advocates such as UC Berkeley Professor John Gregg. As President of the Park Commission in 1918 Gregg stated:

Leading writers and other authorities of modern municipal development are united in the opinion that no town or city can be considered properly equipped without adequate parking facilities. All agree that



Image 50: Civic Center Park.



Image 51: The Federal Land Bank at 2180 Milvia Street is a component of the Civic Center (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

parcs not only add to the beauty of a community and to the pleasure of living in it, but are exceedingly important factors in developing the health, morality, intelligence and business prosperity of its citizens.<sup>20</sup>

Although it was one of the last elements of the Civic Center to be developed, the Civic Center Park was an essential and, literally, a central component of the Civic Center Plan. A central open space was mentioned in both Hegemann and Hobart and Cheney plans in the 1910s but was not realized until 1940. That year bonds for \$125,000 were finally allotted for the park. The project attracted notable local designers; architects Henry Gutterson, Bernard Maybeck, and Julia Morgan and Landscape Design Professor John Gregg were involved. Civic leaders and local organizations all contributed to the project through the donation of funds, a flagpole, benches, trees, and playground equipment. The park was one of the last park projects undertaken by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which assisted with construction.<sup>21</sup> In 1942 the park was finally completed. Appropriate for a nation at war, the park was dedicated Memorial Day 1942, with patriotic pageantry and ceremonies. The Civic Center Park included features such as: a Civic Center fountain, a fountain terrace, Christmas Tree Terrace, large open lawn area, shuffle board court, playground, and flag pole.

### Federal Land Bank

The University of California, Berkeley was established as a land grant college and as a result was a center for agricultural education and research programs in the state. The Federal Land Bank was established in Berkeley in 1917 and was one of twelve regional locations in the United States. The institution first occupied a building at 2223 Fulton Street. Berkeley's role as an agricultural center intensified during the Great Depression. One of Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs included facilities at universities, such as University of California, Berkeley, to educate farmers on more efficient farming methods. The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 required the Farm Administration to refinance farm mortgages through the Federal Land Banks in order to help farmers "reestablish themselves."<sup>22</sup> It was not surprising that Berkeley, with its history of agricultural education and New Deal farm programs, was chosen as the location of the Federal Land Bank regional headquarters.

The City sold the land it owned at the eastern end of the block between Center Street and Allston Way on Milvia Street to the bank

and then used the funds to purchase the remainder of the block for the Civic Center Park.<sup>23</sup> James W. Plachek, the architect of Berkeley Public Library and City Hall Addition, was commissioned to design the Federal Land Bank building. The bank was designed in the WPA Moderne style with strong Art Deco elements and was completed in 1938. Interestingly, although the east elevation (facing Milvia Street) is the primary facade, the west elevation (facing the park) has often been considered more striking and architecturally interesting because of its twin stair/elevator towers with zig-zag design. Like the other buildings of the Civic Center area, the bank building was symmetrical and covered with a light-colored cement wash. The bank completed the east/west axis of the Civic Center plan in line with the Old Town Hall. The building became Berkeley's new City Hall in 1977 and is now called the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Building.<sup>24</sup>

### State Farm Building

The State Farm Insurance Company often built its offices in close proximity to the Federal Land Banks, their largest client. Not surprisingly, in Berkeley they chose to build their offices on Center Street across from the Federal Land Bank. The company selected James W. Plachek, the architect of the Federal Land Bank. The building was completed in 1948. Like the other buildings of the Civic Center, the building was symmetrical with Classically influenced details, although in a Moderne style.

### Alameda County Courthouse

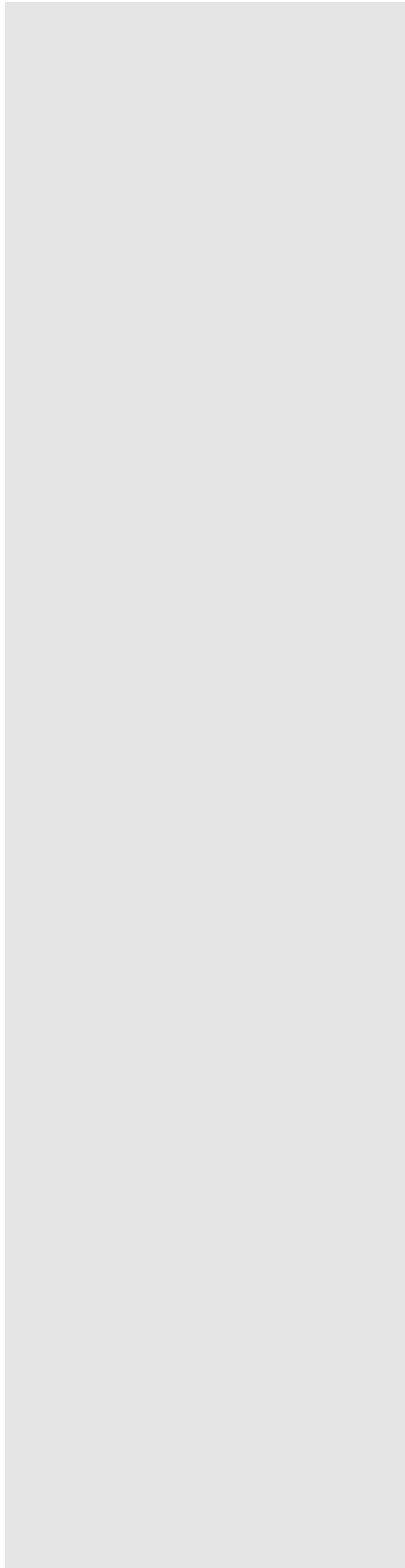
The Alameda County Court House was completed in 1959 at the northwest corner of the Civic Center. The governmental function of the building was in keeping with character of the area, but the architecture departed from the symmetrical buildings with Classically inspired elements. The building was designed by John Hudspeth in the International style with bands of windows and an asymmetrical entry. The building was not listed as a noncontributor to the Civic Center District because of its architectural style and because the building was not yet fifty years of age. However, the building appears to contribute to the district's significance as a political and social center and should be reevaluated as a district contributor when it reaches the fifty-year age mark.



Image 52: The State Farm Building at 1947 Center Street (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 53: The Alameda County Courthouse at 2120 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Berkeley's Civic Center was conceived in the 1910s as group of harmonious buildings designed around a public square, built as a means of fostering good citizenship and public-minded behavior. By 1950 the City realized a formal axially planned Civic Center with Classical buildings surrounding a central park. Although some of the building uses have shifted, the area has continuously served as the governmental heart of the city and as a site for social, political, and cultural gatherings such as holiday celebrations, festivals, musical events, a farmers market, and dramatic performances.

#### **Extant Resources Relating to the Civic Center Context**

The Civic Center is both a local and National Register Historic District with a number of contributing buildings including City Hall, the Veterans Building, The YMCA, the Post Office, and others. Many of these are strong examples of the Beaux Arts tradition of City Planning and Architecture.

#### **Important Persons**

A number of important persons are associated with this context including, but not limited to:

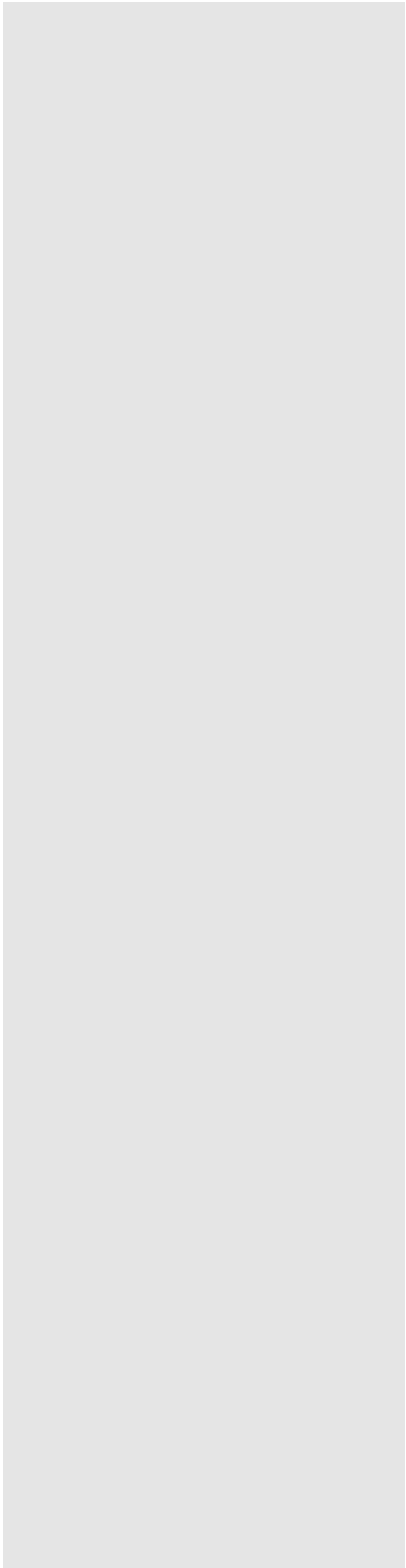
John Bakewell  
Arthur Brown, Jr.  
Benjamin G. McDougall  
Henry H. Meyers  
Mildred Meyers  
George R. Kinkhardt  
William C. Hays  
James W. Plachek  
John Hudspeth



**Endnotes: Civic Development & Architecture**

- <sup>1</sup> Mary Johnson, "The City of Berkeley: A History from the First American Settlers to the Present Date" (Manuscript on file at the History Room of the Central Berkeley Public Library), 15.
- <sup>2</sup> George A. Pettitt, *A History of Berkeley* (Berkeley, CA: Alameda County Historical Society, [1976?]), 26.
- <sup>3</sup> Johnson, 16.
- <sup>4</sup> Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny, *Berkeley Landmarks* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1994) 72.
- <sup>5</sup> Johnson, 16.
- <sup>6</sup> *A History of Berkeley: An Exhibit Commemorating the Centennial of the City of Berkeley* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Art Center, 1978) 31.
- <sup>7</sup> Cerny, 68.
- <sup>8</sup> George A. Pettitt, *Berkeley: the Town and Gown of It* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1973) 145.
- <sup>9</sup> Cerny, 89.
- <sup>10</sup> Cerny, 91.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Susan Cerny, "Berkeley Civic Center District National Register Nomination" (2 March 1998) 8.4.
- <sup>13</sup> "'City Beautiful': A 1914 Vision of the Civic Center" (*The Independent and Gazette*, 26 September 1979) 3
- <sup>14</sup> Cerny, "Berkeley Civic Center District National Register Nomination," 8.4.
- <sup>15</sup> Cerny, *Berkeley Landmarks*, 69.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, 72.
- <sup>17</sup> Cerny, "Berkeley Civic Center District National Register Nomination," 8.6.
- <sup>18</sup> Cerny, *Berkeley Landmarks*, 70.
- <sup>19</sup> Cerny, "Berkeley Civic Center District National Register Nomination," 7.7.
- <sup>20</sup> Steve Finacom, "Landmark Application Supplement Description, History, and Significance, Berkeley's Civic Center Park" (Draft for Commission, 27 August 1997) 17.
- <sup>21</sup> Cerny, "Berkeley Civic Center District National Register Nomination," 8.5.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid..
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Robert Bernhardt, *The Buildings of Berkeley* (Oakland, CA: Forest Hill Press, 1991), 86.

CIVIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE



**CONTEXT: Residential Development and Architecture**

Berkeley's downtown is bordered by several residential neighborhoods. The edges of several of these neighborhoods are included in the Downtown Plan boundaries. However, it is important to note that these areas are part of larger neighborhoods, the entirety of which were not evaluated as part of the Downtown Plan. Within the project boundaries, there are three main residential areas: one is located north of University Avenue and is focused on Hearst Avenue and Berkeley Way (the downtown north residential area); a second is the area south of the downtown west of Shattuck Avenue surrounding Haste Street and Milvia Street (the downtown southwest residential area); and finally, a third area south of the downtown east of Shattuck Avenue surrounding Fulton Street and Haste Street (the downtown southeast residential area). Residences are sprinkled elsewhere in the downtown area and around the Civic Center, but the following discussion addresses the three clusters of residences rather than individual structures.

Residential development in Downtown Berkeley is diverse, the result of over a century of growth. Residences range from Victorian single-family dwellings, to post-earthquake shingled boxes, to 1960s multi-story apartment blocks. The earliest residences in Berkeley consisted of scattered country houses constructed in the 1860s and 1870s, isolated from the surrounding communities by distance and poor roads. The situation completely changed in 1876 when the Central Pacific (later the Southern Pacific) Railroad extended a spur line from Oakland along Adeline Street and Shattuck Avenue terminating at Stanford Square (now Shattuck Square and Berkeley Square).<sup>1</sup> Berkeley's development as a town and residential area was almost instantaneous, and the Town of Berkeley was incorporated in 1878. That year a developer's map touted the convenience of travel from Berkeley's neighborhoods to San Francisco, ostensibly to promote Berkeley as a convenient place of residence for those working in their city: "Only three blocks from the Railroad Station, and within 45 minutes of San Francisco."<sup>2</sup> An 1888 map of the downtown showed that the area had been divided into numerous tracts of land; North of University Avenue there were the Hardy, College, Clapp, and Villa Lots tracts. From University Avenue south to Dwight Way, the project area included the edge of the large McGee tract, and parts of the B.L.T. Lassin and Barker Tracts.<sup>3</sup>

By the early 1890s most of the blocks in the downtown residential areas had been divided into various individual lots. Most were the standard rectangular, residential lots with the narrow side facing



Image 54: Allston Way, Berkeley, CA, 1888 (source: *Berkeley Public Library*).

August 2007



Image 55: Berkeley panorama, 1905 (source: *Berkeley Public Library*).

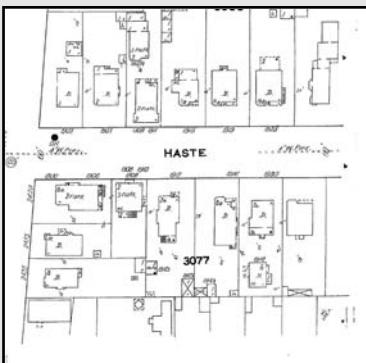


Image 56: 1911 Sanborn Map showing Haste Street between Milvia Street and Grove Street where multiple buildings were constructed with similar footprints (source: *Sanborn Map Company*).

the street. Interestingly, although lot sizes were standard within a single block, they varied between blocks.<sup>4</sup> By the time of the 1894 Sanborn Map many of the residential lots had been built out, but a few remained undeveloped. Most residences were small to medium single-family dwellings from one to two stories. In contrast to land use patterns today, University Avenue was primarily residential with a small commercial section at the intersection of University and Shattuck Avenues.<sup>5</sup>

On 18 April 1906 the San Francisco Bay Area was rocked by a strong earthquake. Many buildings in San Francisco were damaged and many more in that city were destroyed by the subsequent fire. San Francisco residents took refuge in nearby cities like Berkeley. About 20,000 San Franciscans became permanent Berkeley residents. The 1906 influx resulted in a corresponding construction and housing boom. Not surprisingly, by the time of the 1911 Sanborn Map, most residential lots in the vicinity of the downtown were filled. Some lots had been further subdivided resulting in more dense residential development. For the first time apartments and buildings with multiple flats were constructed near the downtown mostly in the north residential section.<sup>6</sup> There were other changes in residential construction in Berkeley. In the nineteenth century, residences within the project area all had unique footprints, but the 1911 map shows multiple properties with identical footprints suggesting they may have been built by a developer, based on the same design. In addition, setbacks (the distance from the façade of the residences and the street) were more standardized. Much of University Avenue remained residential.<sup>7</sup>

In 1920 a comprehensive zoning measure was passed dividing Berkeley into seven types of land-use districts.<sup>8</sup> Class-I districts included single-family dwellings, churches, railroad stations, flats, apartments, tenements, lodgings, hotels, and dormitories. Most of the downtown area was not zoned residential with the exception of the three residential areas described above.<sup>9</sup>

Berkeley continued to grow in the 1920s and by the time of the 1929 Sanborn Map, the population increase was evident in higher density development. By 1929 in the downtown north residential area, some single-family residences had been replaced with two-story apartment buildings. The economic pressures of the Depression also caused a change in the density of the downtown residential areas. Throughout the country during the Depression, many families saw a decrease in income and could no longer afford their houses. The result of these two factors was that many of the large single-family residences

in Berkeley's downtown area were modified to become rooming houses or flats, accommodating multi-family occupancy. On some streets such as University Avenue and Kittredge Street, which had transitioned from residential to commercial, first floor storefronts were added in front of residences.<sup>10</sup>

In 1940 the 1920 zoning map was updated, but the districts within the downtown remained the same.<sup>11</sup> Although zoning had not changed, residential density had; by 1950 nearly every residential lot within the study area was filled. In addition, many new apartment buildings had been constructed. For example, in the downtown southeast residential area, there were five four-unit apartment buildings. Similarly, many single-family residences had been divided into multiple units. World War II-era worker housing had been constructed at 2145 Dwight Way and 2007 Milvia Street. In the 1960s density in the downtown residential areas further increased with the construction of large-scale multi-story apartment buildings.

Many talented contractors and craftsmen were employed to execute residential buildings in Berkeley. More research should be undertaken in the future to identify these individuals and link them to specific projects. Additionally, there were likely many residential developers working in Berkeley. Further research is also necessary with regard to these individuals and companies to determine their significance within the residential architectural context of Berkeley.

### Residential Architectural Styles

Few single-family residences within the project area were architect designed.<sup>12</sup> Several apartment buildings were designed by architects, such as William Wharff and Walter H. Ratcliff, whose projects also included commercial and civic buildings in Berkeley.<sup>13</sup> In the late nineteenth century, residential designs were often adapted from standard designs found in magazines or pattern books.<sup>14</sup>

Residential building types in Downtown Berkeley are diverse with large single-family residences, apartment buildings, small cottages, duplexes, and flats. Within each of these building types there are representative examples of most major residential architectural styles popular between 1880 and 1950. While the downtown has more Victorian era (Queen Anne, Stick, Eastlake, and Folk Victorian) and Classical Revival houses than any other styles, there are also a number of Shingle Style, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Revival-style houses. Regardless of style, most of the residential buildings within the neighborhood are of wood-frame construction.

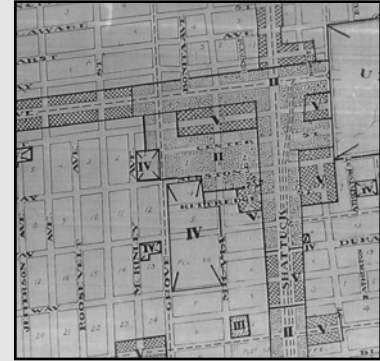


Image 57: Berkeley Zoning Map from 1920 showing districts (source: "City Zoning Map of Berkeley").



Image 58: 2029 Durant Avenue is an example of an Italianate residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 59: 1940 Channing Way is an example of a Victorian residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

Using McAlesters' *A Field Guide to American Houses* and *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* (see Bibliography) as tools, the survey team developed a discussion of the primary residential styles present within the project area. Representative examples of each style illustrate this discussion. These lists are not intended to be exhaustive. In California, and the west in general, architectural styles often appeared locally later than in the rest of the nation, particularly the eastern states.

### Italianate 1820-1900

The Italianate style stemmed partially from the fanciful revival styles of the Picturesque Movement in England. It was common in the United States from 1850 through the 1890s. Usually constructed of wood, this style was an adaptation and sometimes an exaggeration of Italian Renaissance detailing. Tall, narrow windows that were commonly arched, many with elaborate window crowns, embellished the facades of these houses. Wooden quoins were frequently used to imitate masonry corner blocks. Many Italianate houses had a square cupola or tower. There are few examples of this style in the downtown area. Italianate residences often include:

- asymmetrical façade;
- low-pitch hipped roof;
- wide overhanging eaves;
- decorative brackets or consoles; and
- segmental window heads.

*An example of an Italianate-style residence in Berkeley is:*

- 2029 Durant Avenue

### Victorian Era Styles

#### *Queen Anne, Stick, Eastlake, and Folk Victorian*

Victorian is an overview term, the validity of which is much debated. Deriving from the long reign of Great Britain's Queen Victoria (1837 to 1901), this "style" had several variations based on the architectural trends during this period. In America rapid industrialization during the period 1860 to 1910 brought drastic changes in house design and construction. Mass production of building components expanded as quickly as the railroad that transported the items across state lines. The low cost and easy availability of these decorative and structural components made their success inevitable. These developments in architecture labeled "The Victorian" can be seen in almost every

community in the United States. The following architectural derivatives of Victorian period architecture became popular.

### Queen Anne 1880-1910

Within the survey area there are numerous Queen Anne style houses. This style was named and popularized by a group of English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw. One of the first American houses of this style was in Newport Rhode Island, in 1874. The expanding railroad system in the United States helped to popularize this style as pre-made architectural details were conveniently available from pattern books.

The identifying features consist of a steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, usually with a dominant front-facing gable, patterned shingles, and cutaway bay windows. These design details were used to avoid a smooth-walled appearance or give the building an asymmetrical appearance. A partial or full porch along the front facade wrapping around one or both sides of the house was common. Queen Anne houses often had very distinctive patterns of decoration, such as spindle work, lace-like brackets, Palladian windows, incised ornament, roof cresting, or decorative stone. Most Queen Anne-style residences were constructed as single-family dwellings.

*Queen Anne residences often include:*

- irregular plan;
- asymmetrical façade;
- complex roof forms with front-facing gable;
- variety of materials and textures;
- bay windows;
- turned or carved wood ornament;
- turrets or towers; and
- decorative shingle patterns.

*Examples of Queen Anne-style residences in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 1920 Haste Street
- 1940 Channing Way
- 2430 Fulton Street
- 2415 Fulton Street
- 1934 Haste Street



Image 60: 2430 Fulton Street is an example of a Queen Anne residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 61: 2415 Fulton Street is an example of a Queen Anne residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 62: 1934 Haste Street is an example of a Queen Anne residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 63: 2409 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way is an example of a Stick residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 64: 2411 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way is an example of a Stick residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

### Stick Style 1880-1910

Victorian-era pattern books frequently featured Stick Style houses. Many surviving houses of this type exist in Northern California where rapid growth and abundance of lumber favored wood-frame construction. These houses usually have a gabled roof with a steep pitch and cross gables. The gables commonly have decorative trusses at the apex, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafter ends. Wooden wall cladding such as shingles or boards, interrupted by patterns of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal boards or stick work, as it was called, were the defining elements of the style. There was often a raised wall surface for emphasis, and many porches included diagonal or curved braces. The Stick style developed different idioms in the variety of regions within the United States. Stick-style residences often include:

- cross gables;
- decorative trusses;
- exposed rafter ends;
- studs visible on the exterior; and
- corner braces with pendants.

*Examples of Stick style-residences in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 2409 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
- 2411 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way

### Eastlake 1880-1900

Many Eastlake houses can also be classified as Stick or Queen Anne style. However, one particular ornament - the curved, highly ornate, cutout bracket - was highly popular and is the identifying element of the Eastlake style. Other identifiers include spindle-like supports for porches or roof overhangs often resembling table legs, and other decorative elements borrowed from furniture design including knob-like features and motifs consisting of circular cutouts or perforations.

The name derives from that of Charles Lock Eastlake, son of a painter, who was himself an English architect and furniture designer. His two publications *A History of the Gothic Revival* and *Hints on Household Taste* made him famous in Great Britain. The books offered designs for woodcuts intended for use in furniture design. Charles Eastlake was vehemently opposed to the application of his decorative ideas to architecture, even rejecting it publicly in print. However, the style became immensely popular in the United States,



especially in California and the West. Eastlake-style houses often include:

- asymmetrical façade;
- highly ornate cut out brackets;
- carved panels;
- ornate carved and turned bargeboards in gable ends;
- spindles in porch brackets and balusters; and
- turned balustrades.

*An example of an Eastlake-style residence in Downtown Berkeley is:*

- 2009 Berkeley Way

### **Folk Victorian or Victorian Vernacular 1860-1910**

This style is basically a scaled down version of Queen Anne and Stick styles. Simple vernacular forms, often different in various regions of the country, made this style eclectic and difficult to define. Scaled down Victorian decorative elements are applied to simple vernacular houses in that region. The details can reflect the Queen Anne, Italianate, Stick, or Eastlake styles. In many cases, the ornament is applied to the porch or gable. The facade is usually symmetrical and cornice-line brackets are common. These add-on details were also made possible by an expanding railroad and mail ordering systems. Typical features of Victorian Vernacular residences include:

- symmetrical façade;
- spindle work on porches;
- flat jigsaw trim;
- pointed gables; and
- pointed arch windows.

*An example of a Victorian Vernacular-style residence in Berkeley is:*

- 1915 Addison Street

### **Shingle Style 1880-1920**

This style emerged in New England during the 1880s. H. H. Richardson, a New England architect, and the Boston firm of McKim, Mead and White executed many houses emulating this tradition. Typically, the lower story of the house was constructed



Image 65: 2009 Berkeley Way is an example of an Eastlake residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 66: 1915 Addison Street is an example of a Victorian Vernacular residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 67: 2038 Bancroft Way is an example of a Shingle residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 68: 2127 Channing Way is an example of a Shingle residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

of masonry or covered in horizontal wood siding, while generally, the upper stories were covered with painted or unpainted dark wood shingles.

Large houses with various rambling rooflines were typical of the Shingle style. Several heavy chimneys often accompanied the numerous shapes of the roofline. Other architectural features common to the Shingle style include eyelid dormers, Palladian windows, leaded glass windows, some sort of turret or tower, segmental bays, and large verandahs or porches. The style had an overall horizontal emphasis and was a departure from the busy colors and textures of the Queen Anne style. Perhaps the quintessential Shingle style house in the United States was the W. G. Low House in Bristol, Rhode Island completed in 1887 and designed by McKim, Mead and White.

One of the first architects to work with the style in California was San Francisco's Willis Polk. The style spread to Southern California and by 1888, James and Merritt Reid had designed and were supervising construction of the Hotel del Coronado near San Diego. This large resort hotel was one of the most extensive buildings of this style on the West Coast.

The Shingle style has a special significance in Berkeley; between 1895 and 1915 Berkeley developed a distinctive version of the Shingle style. The buildings were unpainted wood and were meant to express the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Naturalist and Berkeley resident Charles Keeler published *The Simple Home*, in 1904. The Shingle style house was further advocated by the Hillside Club, an organization founded by the wives of noted architects, Bernard Maybeck, Almeric Coxhead, John Galen Howard, Oscar Maurer, Charles Keeler, and developer Frank M. Wilson to, "encourage artistic homes built of materials complementing the natural beauty of the Berkeley Hills."<sup>15</sup>

Although the style often reached its fullest expression in houses in the Berkeley Hills, its influence was also seen downtown. In the downtown residential neighborhoods, unpainted brown shingles were often applied to the American foursquare house type (also known as a Classic Box for its cube-like massing), and Classical ornament was often used. The house type became known as the "Berkeley Brown Shingle."<sup>16</sup>

In 1906 the San Francisco earthquake and fire caused many residents to flee that city, relocating in Berkeley. As a result, a major construction boom ensued in Berkeley, especially in

residential architecture. Because this construction boom coincided with the popularity of the brown Shingle-style house, the result was a large number of these residences in Berkeley. Typical features of Shingle-style residences in Downtown Berkeley include:

- horizontal massing (except Foursquare residence);
- unpainted shingle cladding;
- shallow eaves;
- leaded glass windows;
- towers;
- segmental bays;
- large verandahs or porches; and
- multi-lite sashes.

*Examples of Shingle or “Berkeley Brown Shingle” style residences in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 2038 Bancroft Way
- 2127 Channing Way
- 2017 Durant Avenue
- 2236 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
- 1930 Walnut Street

### **Classically-Inspired Colonial Revival 1895-1910**

Classical Revival is a wide-ranging term encompassing Colonial Revival and Edwardian styles. The style drew its beginnings from an interest in the houses of early European settlers on the East Coast. The style sought to copy those forms developed in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina, and other areas of early American settlement. Particular interest was paid to the houses of Virginia’s Colonial Williamsburg. An overall emphasis was placed on the use of Classical elements. These buildings usually have an accentuated front door, with a decorative pediment, supported by pilasters. Commonly overhead fanlights or sidelights mark the entry design. These facades are almost always symmetrical with balanced windows and doors. The use of Palladian windows was also a frequent occurrence with this style. The Colonial Revival can also refer to the architecture of early Spanish and Mexican settlers in California (see Spanish Revival style). In Berkeley Classically-Inspired Colonial Revival elements were often applied to brown wood shingled houses (see Shingle style) or the American Foursquare, also known as the Classic Box. These houses have rectangular massing, and a square, hipped or pyramidal roof.<sup>17</sup>



Image 69: 2017 Durant Avenue is an example of a Shingle residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 70: 2236 Martin Luther King is an example of a Shingle residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 71: 1930 Walnut Street is an example of a Shingle residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 72: 2126 Bancroft Way is an example of a Spanish Revival residence in Downtown Berkeley (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 73: 2000 Dwight Way (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

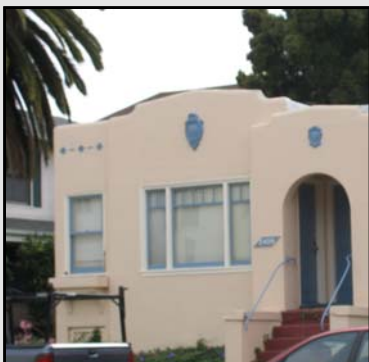


Image 74: 2409 Milvia Street (source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

Typical features of these residences in Downtown Berkeley include:

- symmetrical facades;
- Ionic or Corinthian columns, engaged columns, and pilasters;
- entablatures;
- fanlights and sidelights at the entry;
- dentil ranges;
- modillions; and
- Palladian style windows.

*Examples of Classically-Inspired Colonial Revival-style residences in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 1905 Berkeley Way
- 1907 Center Street
- 2035 Channing Way
- 2418 Fulton Street
- 2138 Kittredge Street

#### **Spanish Revival Traditions:**

#### **Mission / Mediterranean / Spanish Colonial 1900-1930**

The California Mission, Mediterranean Revival, and Spanish Colonial styles blend the architecture of the Mediterranean, Italian and Spanish traditions, with the architecture of the California Missions. The buildings of this style were intended to be copies of these early Spanish and Mexican forms. The style suited the warm California climate and became a favorite building idiom in the 1920s. Popularized by such Southern California architects as Wallace Neff and Reginald Johnson, the style basically had two centers, Pasadena and Santa Barbara, however the style was frequently used in Northern California, including Berkeley. Innumerable houses were built in California of this style and though the designs drew on non-American sources, this revival style is definitely an American creation. Typical features of Spanish Revival tradition residences include:

- red clay tile roofs;
- use of balconies and balconets;
- smooth-stuccoed exterior walls usually painted white;
- arched openings;
- colorful tile work; and
- exposed heavy beams.

*Examples of Spanish Revival tradition residences in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 2126 Bancroft Way
- 1912 Berkeley Way
- 2000 Dwight Way
- 2030 Dwight Way
- 2409 Milvia Street

### **Craftsman 1890-1930**

California architects and builders embraced the Arts and Crafts tradition that had taken hold of England, Europe, and much of the Eastern United States. Proponents of this tradition included such noted architectural personalities as the Boston firm of Cram & Goodhue, New England's H. H. Richardson and his development of the Shingle style, Philadelphia's Wilson Eyre, Chicago's Frank Lloyd Wright, New York State's Gustav Stickley, and on the West Coast, Pasadena's Greene brothers. In Berkeley Bernard Maybeck, Ernest Coxhead, and naturalist Charles Keeler promoted the style (see the Shingle style). The Craftsman tradition featured simple handcrafted materials. The movement embodied every aspect of residential design from furniture to the "bucolic setting" of one's yard to the art pottery and wallpaper that decorated house interiors. Popular literature, examples of which include, *The Craftsman*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Bungalow Magazine* and *House Beautiful*, distributed the movement's ideals to the middle class. The Arts and Crafts had broad boundaries that were further defined by regional tastes and interests.

In California, the movement became ingrained in middle-class neighborhoods in the form of the bungalow. The bungalow is really a building type with some houses stylistically reflecting California's Mission tradition, others incorporated features of the Shingle style, while others employed Middle Eastern and Asian influences. California's warm climate made the bungalow even more popular. The California bungalow was usually a one-story, detached house. However, variations on this norm included bungalow courts (several houses or units around a courtyard) and houses with an inhabitable attic called an "upper room." Consistent features of the plans include an entrance directly into the living room with no parlor and a large kitchen. Many had sleeping porches, breakfast nooks, and inglenooks (or fireplace seats). Bungalows were usually constructed on small lots. Many two-story houses were designed with certain



Image 75: 2131 Channing Way  
(source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 76: 2037 Hearst Avenue  
(source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).



Image 77: 1915 Bonita Avenue  
(source: Nick Perry for ARG, August 2006).

bungalow features, such as the large front porch and plan. Typical features of the Craftsman bungalow include:

- gabled roofs;
- dormer windows;
- wide porches;
- overhanging eaves;
- shingles or stucco cladding; and
- exposed rafters, purlins, and ridge beams.

*Examples of Craftsman-style bungalows in Downtown Berkeley include:*

- 2131 Channing Way
- 2037 Hearst Avenue

#### **Art Deco 1920 to 1940**

The Art Deco style is noted for its overall verticality, smooth wall surfaces (usually stucco) and use of zigzags, chevrons, and other stylized and geometric motifs. The Art Deco was an Americanization of the French Art Nouveau movement. The style was sometimes used for apartment buildings or flats, but very rarely for single-family residences. Typical features of Art Deco multi-family residences include:

- accentuated vertical elements;
- smooth wall surfaces;
- zigzag ornamentation (chevrons);
- stylized and geometric motifs;
- decorative parapets; and
- ornamental window and door surrounds.

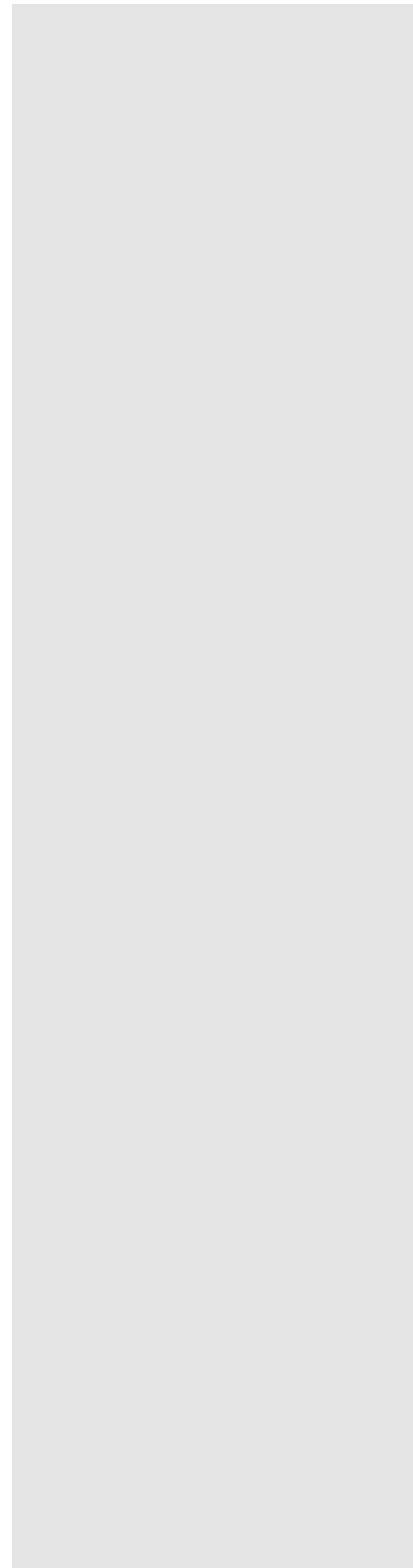
*An example of an Art Deco-style, multi-family residence in Berkeley is:*

- 1915 Bonita Avenue

#### **Extant Resources Relating to Residential Context**

Berkeley's downtown residential neighborhoods include a rich variety of building types and styles. All are indicative of the economic and cultural forces at work at the time they were built. Queen Anne cottages reflect the period of residential construction that followed the arrival of the Southern Pacific railroad line and

the connection of Berkeley with surrounding cities. The numerous Berkeley Brown Shingle boxes are indicative of the popularity and importance of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Berkeley and the influx of San Francisco refugees after the 1906 earthquake. The post World War II expansion of University of California, Berkeley's student population resulted in the construction of large apartment building to house the students in the 1960s. Together, the buildings of the downtown neighborhoods represent over a century of growth and change. Representative examples are noted after each style discussion.



**Endnotes: Residential Development & Architecture**

<sup>1</sup> George A. Pettitt, *A History of Berkeley* (Berkeley, CA: Alameda County Historical Society, [1976?]) 21.

<sup>2</sup> “Auction Sale of Berkeley Real Estate . . .” Map. (Woodward & Taggart, real estate auctioneers, 1878).

<sup>3</sup> “Map of the City of Oakland: Berkeley, Oakland & Brooklyn Townships and Alameda.” Map. (Oakland, CA: Gaskill and Vandercook, real estate agents, [1888]).

<sup>4</sup> E.S. Moore, “Birdseye View of Berkeley, Cal. 1891.” Map. (Irwin and Johnson, real estate agents, 1891).

<sup>5</sup> Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps of Berkeley, 1894*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1911.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *A History of Berkeley*, 32.

<sup>9</sup> “City of Berkeley Zone Map.” Map. ([Berkeley, CA?: s.n.], 1920).

<sup>10</sup> Sanborn Map, 1929.

<sup>11</sup> “City of Berkeley Zone Map.” Map. ([Berkeley, CA?: s.n.], Revised 1940).

<sup>12</sup> George A. Pettitt, *Berkeley: the Town and Gown of It* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1973) 173-174.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on these architects, see the Commercial Development Context.

<sup>14</sup> Pettitt, 174.

<sup>15</sup> Cerny, Susan, “The Brown Shingle Home: A Distinctive Berkeley Feature.” *Berkeley Daily Planet: Berkeley Observed, Looking Back, Seeing Ahead*. [Berkeley, CA: s.n., 2002].

<sup>16</sup> Robert, Bernhardt. *The Buildings of Berkeley* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association: Oakland, CA: Forest Hill Press, 1971) 47.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Cerny, *Berkeley Daily Planet: Berkeley Observed, Looking Back, Seeing Ahead*. [Berkeley, CA: s.n., 2002].