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5. HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN

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STRATEGIC STATEMENT

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Berkeley has one of the few examples of a pre-World War II downtown of its size in California. Our Downtown has an exemplary and vital heritage of historic buildings in a wide variety of architectural styles and scales. Pieces of Downtown remain much as they were in the 1930s. The scale, massing, and visual character of many historic buildings remain intact. Downtown buildings also relate to streets in traditional urban ways, with commercial ground floors fronting directly onto the public sidewalk, rather than being set back to accommodate automobile parking as occurred in many communities. Downtown Berkeley was also fortunate to escape much of the redevelopment that affected many California cities during the 1960s and 1970s, although some significant demolition and characterless construction occurred. (For additional background on historic resources in Downtown, see Appendix #.)

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While Downtown's historic assets are significant, Downtown is an incomplete cityscape (see Figure HD-1: Historic Resources, Noteworthy Buildings, and Potential Development Opportunity Sites). Downtown has many underused and nondescript properties, and it needs many public improvements. New development can bring many benefits, including new residents, affordable housing, environmental sustainability, and a renewed sense of vitality. The character of new development must be carefully considered through the lens of urban design.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

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This chapter seeks to harmonize and balance the twin goals of preserving and enhancing historic resources, and encouraging new and complementary development. It is fundamental to this Plan that, with appropriate design guidelines and regulations, both goals can be achieved and complement each other. Modern architects are challenged by and their buildings are enhanced in responding to historic contexts. And through continued care and investment, historic buildings will continue to contribute continuity and character to Downtown's changing yet principled cityscape.

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Preservation planning and the utilization of historic resources are critical in the following ways:

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- Studies show that historic preservation is good for the economy and for property values.

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- Berkeley can capitalize on Downtown's potential for cultural tourism by celebrating its historic character through civic improvements, and on-going programs and activities.

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- Older buildings tend to offer distinctive retail spaces with taller ceiling heights and deeper retail space. .

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- Older buildings provide much of Berkeley's most affordable and most family-friendly housing.

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- Conserving existing buildings can be part of a "green" strategy, as preservation and rehabilitation use fewer natural resources and less "embodied" energy than new construction, and keep demolition waste out of landfills.

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- Preservation helps retain a community's distinct character and creates a tie with the past that establishes community and builds roots. The tangible presence of historic buildings and places speaks of other times and enables us to chart paths to the present and future.

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- 2666 Urban design policies help assure appropriate new development and also have important benefits:
- 2667 – New construction can fill the gaps within our historic Downtown, heal the scars posed by
- 2668 unsightly properties, and strengthen and help energize the cityscape.
- 2669 – New construction, and the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, give needed
- 2670 scope for the exercise of design talents and creativity.
- 2671 – New construction, and the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, encourage
- 2672 new ideas such as energy-saving designs or innovative construction techniques.
- 2673 – New construction, and the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, can provide
- 2674 needed new housing.
- 2675 – Urban design guides and stimulates new developments that are necessary for revitalization
- 2676 and evolution of Downtown’s economy and cultural uses.
- 2677 – Urban design employs public improvements to complement private development and
- 2678 enhanced urban environment for our enjoyment.

2679 **DOWNTOWN SUBAREAS AND CONTEXTUAL DESIGN**

2680 The cityscape of the Downtown Area Plan is complex. It contains numerous and diverse subareas.

2681 Some of them have a strong visual identity, and these involve noticeable concentrations of historic

2682 buildings. Downtown’s most important historic subarea generally includes the buildings along

2683 Shattuck Avenue from about University Avenue to Durant. Despite some unfortunate remodelings,

2684 this “main street” has retained its basic visual character (see Figure HD-1, "Historic Resources,

2685 Noteworthy Buildings and Potential Development Opportunity Sites.") Another particularly important

2686 historic subarea is the Civic Center Historic District. The Landmarks Preservation Commission may in

2687 future determine additional subareas to be historically significant, including residential areas.

2688 Other parts of Downtown contain fewer historic buildings and lack a strong visual identity. Substantial

2689 demolition and rebuilding has occurred since 1950 along many side streets, where parking lots and

2690 other underutilized sites interrupt the urban fabric.

2691 A balanced urban design strategy should include both preservation and infill development, and should

2692 include:

- 2693 a) conserving the character of subareas that have a strong historic character, while recognizing that
- 2694 sensitive infill development and appropriate intensification of designated Landmarks can occur;
- 2695 and
- 2696 b) channeling much of Downtown’s new development into sections now lacking a strong visual
- 2697 identity.

2698 To help accomplish those aims, two distinct regulatory approaches to preservation and design are

2699 needed: one for subareas that have a strong historic character, and one for Downtown development

2700 outside those subareas.

2701 For the strongly historic subareas, the Downtown Design Guidelines should be strengthened to better
2702 protect and reinforce the overall character of the subarea.. The Landmarks Preservation Commission
2703 should evaluate subareas to determine whether any additional areas would qualify as a Historic
2704 District. Recent years' additions to the Berkeley Main Library and the Francis K. Shattuck Building (at
2705 2100 Shattuck) illustrate some ways that design can both respect and enhance the Central Shattuck
2706 subarea.

2707 For subareas without historic character, the existing design review and landmarking processes should
2708 be used to protect individual historic buildings and the general Downtown cityscape, while allowing for
2709 a lively variety of good architecture. For all areas, the Downtown Design Guidelines should be
2710 amended and applied to address ways to attract demographic diversity, encourage economically
2711 viable retail space, provide on-site open space, mitigate impacts from parking garages, promote
2712 public safety and promote resource-efficiency and sustainable practices. (see Goal HD-4).

2713 The answer to “what should a new building look like?” will vary from place to place. In subareas
2714 where historic resources are concentrated, designers should pay special attention to the context,
2715 including the adjacent properties and the subarea as a whole. For instance, along Shattuck from
2716 University to Durant where many historic buildings are located, a contextual approach might include
2717 building up to the sidewalk, maintaining continuous storefronts, continuing dominant rhythms for
2718 structural bays or bay windows, and continuing dominant cornice lines. While contextual design can
2719 be perceived as limiting, solutions can be highly creative.

2720 **URBAN DESIGN THROUGH ZONING STANDARDS AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**

2721 The urban design objectives should inform zoning regulations. Building-height, step-back and setback
2722 controls are especially important so as to encourage building design that is sensitive to historic
2723 contexts, but also Downtown’s “main street” traditions in general. Consideration should also be given
2724 to new “character-based” zoning provisions that spell out desirable and measurable urban design
2725 outcomes. These provisions can help address some essential ways that buildings should face streets
2726 to make streets more active, safe and attractive.

2727 Improvements to Downtown’s public realm of streets and open spaces are also vital. Public
2728 improvements should actively support solutions that are appropriate to the context in which they
2729 occur, while also maintaining design continuity for some ubiquitous features such as street lighting
2730 (see “Streetscapes and Open Space” Chapter).

2731 As the owner of developable land in Downtown, the University should also support urban design
2732 objectives through its development, to the joint benefit of town and gown. UC development should be
2733 integrated closely and sensitively into the traditional urban fabric of Downtown. At the same time, it
2734 should include suitable landscape features that relate Downtown to the main campus and Ohlone
2735 Greenway.

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GOALS, POLICIES & ACTIONS

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GOAL HD-1: CONSERVE DOWNTOWN’S HISTORIC RESOURCES AND UNIQUE CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE.

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Policy HD-1.1: Historic Buildings & Sites. Preserve historic buildings and sites of Downtown and encourage their adaptive reuse and intensification where appropriate.¹

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a) Retain Landmarks and Structures of Merit in Downtown. Designate, where appropriate, additional properties as Landmarks or Structures of Merit.

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b) When evaluating potential modifications, adaptive reuse or intensification of designated or sufficiently documented² historic resources, in addition to applying the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, exterior building modifications should also be evaluated for conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.” Where applicable, the Secretary of Interior’s “Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,” should also be applied. At a minimum, historic facades should be maintained and/or rehabilitated and the scale and character of additions should be compatible with the historic building.

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c) For the most common practices and alterations, compile reference materials to describe appropriate maintenance and façade improvements, and where additional information can be obtained. These materials should be compiled with community participation. Make reference materials available to property owners, contractors and architects.

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d) Allow flexibility in parking and other standards, such as exemption from on-site open space requirements, when such buildings are substantially and appropriately preserved or restored as part of a development project. Review and, if necessary, revise standards that may discourage historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. Identify potential sources of financing, tax relief (such as through the Mills Act), grants, and a full range of other incentives and resources for historic preservation, such as those relating to accessibility and seismic upgrading. Provide this information to owners of historic resources. (See ES-4.8, LU-3.3, AC-3.6 and OS-3.1.)

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e) Complete a historic resources survey for Downtown with information on significant building and site attributes, such as: building age, dates of alterations and/or additions, architect and/or

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¹ Additional analysis will be needed to determine with certainty the merit of resources that were noted as “Contributing” (and in some cases noted as “Significant”) in the 1990 Plan but that have not been designated as Landmarks or Structures of Merit, or documented as historic resources. Ongoing efforts and analysis may elevate some of these to be designated Landmarks or Structures of Merit. Other undesignated properties that were noted as “Contributing” or “Significant” in the 1990 Plan may be deemed to be not historic after evaluation required under CEQA and vetting through local procedures.

² Documentation should be sufficient for analysis under CEQA.

2765 builder, architectural integrity, building height. Also cite historic registrations and/or designations,
2766 and classifications from prior surveys and previously adopted plans. Update this survey as
2767 construction or demolition occurs. Use the historic resources survey as an additional tool for
2768 evaluating resources that may qualify as a Landmark or Structure of Merit, especially those called
2769 out as historic or potentially historic in previous plans and surveys.

2770 **Policy HD-1.2: Repairs and Alterations.** When substantial repairs or alterations are proposed for
2771 buildings over 40 years old, the City will encourage the restoration and repair of any lost or damaged
2772 historic features when feasible and appropriate.

2773 a) Evaluate and, if needed, strengthen recommendations relating to substantial alterations
2774 contained within the Downtown Design Guidelines.

2775 b) Encourage property owners, developers, and other stakeholders to use archives and other
2776 resources to guide appropriate restorations and repairs. Support the maintenance of and
2777 encourage public access to archives that offer information on older Downtown buildings.

2778 **Policy HD-1.3: Public Awareness.** Enhance citizen awareness of Downtown's architectural heritage
2779 and of its unique historic circumstances.

2780 a) Use public communications to promote Downtown's history and architectural heritage. Refer
2781 users of the City's web pages to materials of interest at the City's libraries.

2782 b) Refine Downtown's "Historic Context Statements" (prepared in 2007) for the use and enjoyment
2783 of a general audience. Make it available at a nominal price. In this publication, use the historic
2784 resources database and add maps to describe Downtown's historic contexts.

2785 c) Work with the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) to update and expand its
2786 "Downtown Walking Tour" brochure. Encourage distribution of this brochure by the Downtown
2787 Berkeley Association, the Berkeley Convention and Visitors Bureau, UC Berkeley, and other
2788 organizations.

2789 d) Promote the use of plaques, signage, murals, and other ways to increase citizen awareness of
2790 Downtown's history.

2791 e) Encourage artists who are invited to install art in Downtown to refer to Downtown's historic
2792 features and events.

2793 **Policy HD-1.4: Residential Character.** Conserve the scale of residential-only neighborhoods within
2794 the Downtown Area, and reduce development pressures that lead to the loss of older buildings that
2795 contribute to the overall character of these neighborhoods (see LU-6.1 and LU-6.2).

2796 **GOAL HD-2: ENHANCE AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER IN DOWNTOWN, SUCH AS**
2797 **CLUSTERS OF HISTORIC RESOURCES.****Policy HD-2.1: Special Subareas.** Identify areas with
2798 special character that might be highlighted with streetscape improvements and other public and
2799 private design features.

2800 a) Recognize subareas having a unique and/or historic character in the Streets & Open Space
2801 Improvements Plan (see OS-1.1 and OS-1.2), by recommending street and open space
2802 improvements that reinforce the character of these subareas -- while also encouraging overall
2803 design continuity for some features throughout Downtown.

2804 **Policy HD-2.2: Historic Subareas.** Protect and reinforce the character of discrete subareas where
2805 historic resources are concentrated, while also recognizing that sensitive change may occur within
2806 such subareas. Make sure that within subareas where historic resources are concentrated, building
2807 alterations, new construction and public improvements are designed with particular concern for
2808 compatibility with their surroundings.

2809 a) Evaluate and, if needed, strengthen the existing Downtown Design Guidelines to encourage
2810 designs that are contextual to subareas where historic resources are concentrated (see HD-3.1
2811 AND HD-4.1). Use available survey findings to inform this process (see HD-1.1).

2812 b) The Landmarks Preservation Commission may designate one or more historic subareas as
2813 Historic Districts (in addition to the present Civic Center Historic District and Berkeley High School
2814 Campus' placement on the National Register of Historic Places), and in accordance with the twin
2815 goals of preserving historic structures and encouraging new, compatible and complementary
2816 development.

2817 – If a Historic District is to be created, it should be accompanied by the creation of development
2818 guidelines acknowledging the importance of continued growth, increasing building densities,
2819 and design creativity.

2820 – Use available historic survey findings to help support the preparation of documentation and
2821 the analysis for possible Historic District designation(s) by the Landmarks Preservation
2822 Commission.

2823 – Consideration should be given to the creation of a Shattuck Avenue Historic District that
2824 would generally include the buildings along Shattuck Avenue between University Avenue and
2825 Durant Avenue.

2826 – Use criteria pertaining to historic district designations in Berkeley's Landmark Preservation
2827 Ordinance (LPO) and applicable guidelines in the National Register Bulletin "How to Apply
2828 the National Register Criteria for Evaluation."

2829 **GOAL HD-3: PROVIDE CONTINUITY AND HARMONY BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW IN**
2830 **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.**

2831 **Policy HD-3.1: Contextual Design.** To promote continuity between old and new, new construction
2832 and building alterations should meet streets and public spaces in contextual ways that frame streets
2833 with building streetwalls and create a pedestrian-oriented public realm.

2834 a) Review and, if needed, strengthen the Downtown Design Guidelines to further encourage
2835 continuity and harmony between old and new construction. Promote ways to complement
2836 Downtown's historic context through: materials, cadence/modulation, color, fenestration & entry
2837 patterns, cornice lines, massing, roof form, building "build-to lines," and other appropriate
2838 architectural devices.

2839 b) Consider new and/or revised Zoning standards and Design Guidelines that will help support and
2840 maintain Downtown's traditional main-street character. Specifically, modify the Zoning provisions
2841 and Design Guidelines to better address continuity and relationships between buildings (see HD-
2842 4.1).

2843 c) Amend the Downtown Design Guidelines to address how taller buildings can be made compatible
2844 with Downtown's context and historic resources (see HD-4.1).

2845 **Policy HD-3.2: Continued Variety.** Recognizing, building height, massing and scale, allow for
2846 continued variety that respects Downtown's context.

2847 a) The review of development proposals, and resulting refinements, should consider Downtown's
2848 traditional context, respecting Downtown's historic resources, while also considering policies
2849 relating to DAP building height and envelope provisions (see LU-1.1).

2850 **GOAL HD-4: IMPROVE THE VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF DOWNTOWN, WITH**
2851 **AN EMPHASIS ON PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE ACTIVE, SAFE AND VISUALLY**
2852 **ENGAGING. ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE NEW DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN.**

2853 **Policy HD-4.1: Pedestrian-Oriented Design.** Improve the pedestrian experience and the aesthetic
2854 quality of Downtown's environments through the appropriate design of new construction and building
2855 alterations that promote` active, interesting, and pleasing streetscapes, open space, and street-level
2856 commercial spaces. Encourage street-level entrances and facades that contribute to the pedestrian
2857 environment. In commercial areas, buildings should generally maintain the urban tradition of no
2858 street-level setbacks from the street.

2859 a) Continue to apply the existing Downtown Design Guidelines for new development and building
2860 alterations, but strengthen them to:

2861 – include contextual provisions specific to where historic resources are concentrated (see HD-
2862 2.2);

2863 – help attract a variety of people to live Downtown through the design of appropriate multi-
2864 family housing;

2865 – encourage economically viable and physically adequate retail spaces (see ED-1.2);

2866 – better guide the design of on-site open space, including publicly accessible courtyards,
2867 plazas, and midblock walkways, and the inclusion of ecological site features (see OS-3.1);

2868 – address the design and adequacy of open space for residents;

2869 – mitigate potential impacts of parking garages on streets and publicly accessible open spaces
2870 (see AC-3.6 and ED-1.2);

- 2871 – provide adequate lighting and safety features in garages, in bus shelters and at bicycle
2872 parking;
- 2873 – promote resource-efficient design and emerging sustainability practices (see ES-4.1 through
2874 4.8); and
- 2875 – encourage on-site greenery and ecologically beneficial features (see OS-3.1).

- 2876 o) Consider new and/or revised development standards that will help promote active, interesting and
2877 pleasing pedestrian environments. Specifically, modify the zoning code to better address issues
2878 of continuity, compatibility, sustainability, and the special existing qualities of Downtown, such as:
2879 frequent building entrances, street-level transparency/windows, on-site open space, etc.
2880 Emphasize measurable standards that are easy to understand and apply. Zoning provisions
2881 should be developed with extensive input from the public.

- 2882 p) Evaluate and improve public signage to reduce visual clutter, and at the same time improve
2883 signage that helps visitors navigate Downtown (See ED-1.10 and 1.11).

- 2884 q) Encourage outdoor dining, street fairs, and similar limited private use of public spaces (See ED-
2885 2.1).

- 2886 r) Establish new and enhance existing publicly accessible convenience facilities such as restrooms,
2887 drinking fountains, and other amenities (See OS 4.5 and ED-2.2).

- 2888 **Policy HD–4.2: Adverse Impacts.** Design and locate new buildings to avoid significant adverse
2889 solar- or wind-related impacts on important public open spaces. Also provide for adequate natural
2890 light in residential units through appropriate building form (see HC-2.1).

- 2891 a) Strengthen the Downtown Design Guidelines to provide guidance on how solar access and wind
2892 impacts should be analyzed and addressed, for both public open spaces and residential units.

- 2893 b) For taller buildings, use solar- and wind-simulation facilities to evaluate and refine design
2894 alternatives, such as facilities at PG&E's Energy Center and UC Berkeley's College of
2895 Environmental Design.

- 2896 **Policy HD-4.3: Urban Open Spaces.** Create, enhance and maintain streets, plazas, midblock open
2897 spaces, and other urban open spaces to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase the
2898 number of people who will use Downtown. The design of streets and open spaces should
2899 complement the character of Downtown as a whole and the character of nearby architecture,
2900 especially in subareas with concentrations of historic resources (see HD-2.1, HD-2.2, OS-3.1, and
2901 OS-1.2).

- 2902 **Policy HD-4.4: Design Creativity and Excellence.** Support design creativity during development
2903 review and in the resulting construction, and continue Berkeley's tradition of architectural excellence.
2904 All new construction and building alterations should be of the highest quality.

- 2905 a) Strengthen the existing Downtown Design Guidelines to:
2906 – further promote excellence in design;

- 2907 – encourage visually interesting buildings;
- 2908 – promote appropriate methods for intensification and adaptive reuse (see HD-1.1);
- 2909 – encourage architectural and site features that use durable materials and are detailed to be long-lasting (see ES-4.6).
- 2911 s) Promote and, where appropriate, require buildings that have resource-efficient design and emerging sustainable design practices (see ES-4.1 and 4.2).

2913 **GOAL HD-5: ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN DOWNTOWN**
 2914 **AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.**

2915 **Policy HD-5.1: Appropriate Buildings.** Within the Downtown Area, strongly encourage the
 2916 University to design buildings that are appropriate to Downtown, and make all streets abutting
 2917 University property pedestrian-friendly, such as would be required of any Downtown developer.
 2918 Along street frontages of University buildings within Downtown, the ground floor should be
 2919 pedestrian-friendly, have windows and entrances, and avoid blank walls. Encourage active street-
 2920 level uses. Provide retail uses along Shattuck Avenue and the north side of University Avenue (see
 2921 LU-1.1 and LU-5.1).

- 2922 a) Encourage the University to use the Downtown Design Guidelines and Downtown Area Plan to
 2923 guide the character and scale of its future development.
- 2924 b) Encourage the University to make development at the east end of University Avenue (between
 2925 Walnut and Oxford) a priority to bring more retail and pedestrian activity, and for the creation of
 2926 an important "Gateway" for persons arriving to the Campus or Downtown.
- 2927 c) Active pedestrian-friendly ground floor uses should be maintained on all three sides of the
 2928 proposed new Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA). The proposed primary
 2929 entry of the museum should be located on Center Street, with a secondary entry provided from
 2930 Oxford or the corner of Oxford and Addison. Consider modulated edges and pockets of open
 2931 space. Loading docks should be carefully designed to contribute positively to the pedestrian
 2932 environment.

2933 **Policy HD-5.2: Public Improvements.** Encourage the University to help enhance streets and public
 2934 open spaces in Downtown (see OS-1.1 and OS-1.2).

- 2935 a) Urge the University to make substantial and fair contributions for street improvements adjacent to
 2936 their properties in Downtown. Continue to have conversations with the University on how to fund
 2937 other improvements in Downtown, including but not limited to those noted below (see OS-1.4,
 2938 OS-3.1 and LU-8.1).
- 2939 b) Continue to work in partnership with the University in the development of the Streets & Open
 2940 Space Improvements Plan (see OS-1.1 and 1.2), especially in locations of mutual interest. Give
 2941 priority to development and street improvements along UC's frontage on University Avenue and
 2942 Oxford Street

- 2943 c) Encourage University efforts to enhance open spaces along the Oxford-Fulton edge of the main
 2944 campus, including provisions regarding “the Crescent” and a new publicly accessible “green” at
 2945 the east end of Kittredge Street
- 2946 d) To provide a transition between the park-like campus and the urban Downtown, partner with the
 2947 University to design and implement Oxford Street as a green boulevard, with active building fronts
 2948 along the west edge of Oxford.
- 2949 e) Encourage the University to enhance the Ohlone Greenway extension (from the Ohlone
 2950 Greenway to the UC campus) through landscaping and building design along Hearst Avenue on
 2951 its DHS site
- 2952 f) Create a convenient pedestrian connection through the State Department of Health Services
 2953 (DHS) site between Walnut Street's segments north and south of the DHS site.
- 2954 g) Encourage midblock pedestrian connections between University Avenue and Center Street, as
 2955 part of future UC development.
- 2956 **Policy HD-5.3: Historic Buildings.** Encourage the University to respect historically important
 2957 buildings, and strive to integrate them within its development.
- 2958 a) When proposed UC development includes or adjoins historically important buildings, consistent
 2959 with provisions of the UC Berkeley 2020 Long Range Development Plan, the City expects that the
 2960 University will consult early in the development design process with appropriate City entities, and
 2961 use the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.
- 2962 b) The University is encouraged to include integration and preservation of a meaningful portion of
 2963 the landmarked garage building and forecourt at 1952 Oxford Street into any future development
 2964 on the University/Oxford/Berkeley Way/Walnut block.