

Upper Broadway Advocates

CCA SITE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

From: Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA) Steering Committee
To: Emerald Fund, Equity Community Builders, California College of the Arts, City of Oakland Planning, Oakland Planning Commission, Oakland Design Review Committee, Oakland Heritage Alliance, Councilperson Dan Kalb, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
Date: September 5, 2022
RE: CCA Site Development Update, April 29, 2022, and
5212 Broadway Site Development Guidelines, December 23, 2021

UBA has reviewed the latest proposal and analyzed your answers to our questions of June 2022. While we all agree that housing should be built on this site, we feel that your current proposed design and program is deficient in several crucial aspects:

1. Demolishing a standing API is extremely serious. The City of Oakland historic preservation website states as one of its goals is to "prevent unnecessary destruction of properties of special historical, cultural, and aesthetic value." We call upon you to rethink your application and preserve more of the API.
2. Continuing to increase the size of the residential buildings at the expense of community open space is damaging to the entire neighborhood and inconsistent with the historic View Corridor. This project will dwarf the historic structures and minimize the long history of the Arts & Crafts movement in Rockridge.
3. Your stated inclusion of 10% affordable units is wholly inadequate. We continue to request at least 20% and that you partner with one of the many, excellent nonprofit affordable housing developers in the Bay Area to accomplish this. There is no comparable land value and if your client, CCA, reaps a little bit less financial gain, then so be it. The City of Oakland doesn't owe anything to CCA as it abandons its original campus.
4. The proposed 90' height limit is more than the neighborhood character can bear. There is no precedent for this in North Oakland and certainly a site like this on a hill of a historic property is no place for massive, monolithic 90' structures. There is much room for improvement here and we ask you to approach density and height with more sensitivity to the surrounding community.
5. The Design Guidelines are too vaguely worded and open to interpretation. We suggest replacing words like "encouraging", and "if feasible" with language that is **specific, measurable and enforceable**. Your project, if constructed, will forever damage the API and surrounding neighborhood for decades. There have been many instances in Oakland of imprecise and vague Design Guidelines destroying hard-earned negotiations with neighborhoods. Let's not let that happen in Rockridge.

Additionally, we have identified instances that need clarification about some of your proposed designs and programming. Below are those details.

We look forward to speaking with you soon regarding our concerns.

Attached below are comments on Emerald Properties recent proposed design and associated Design Guidelines for the CCA site. We believe a preface to a final version of the comments should focus the recipients' attention on the most critical concerns and suggest the following:

The recent Conceptual Design presentation was a considerable improvement over prior proposals in both form and character. However, when evaluating this design along with the recently received fully developed draft of the Applicant Site Guidelines, several key concerns arise:

- 1) Program: There are two principal aspects to our concerns in this area
 - a. Housing: The unit type and percentage distribution are not made clear in the present conceptual design, and the guidelines provide no clear guidance in this aspect of the intended development other than an allusion to transit-oriented housing. The City's goals should be reflected in these guidelines, and we believe there should be a variety of unit types and sufficient distribution to support the diversity of housing needs in the community in terms of household types and income levels.
 - b. Historic Buildings: The programmatic uses of the preserved historic buildings and how they engage and activate the public spaces within and adjacent to them. They should be reserved for public use relating to arts activities and education.
- 2) Affordability/Unit Count: It is important to note that the underlying cost of the land is not fixed, and this should enable the project to deliver higher percentages and deeper levels of affordability. The residual land value of the property is not determined by any specific comparable site as this site is unique in its location, size and historic characteristics. The value will be determined by the difference between the anticipated income over time minus cost of development and operations. If income is less due to deeper levels of affordability, and/or reduced total unit count, then the underlying land cost simply reduces accordingly to make the project work financially. The Guidelines should specify that at least 20% of the units be affordable and at least 5% of these should be low-income units.
- 3) Urban Form: The CCA site is located at the termination point of the Broadway commercial corridor, which then separates into two residential boulevards, where height limits reduce considerably, as they do on College Avenue. Thus, the project must negotiate these architectural and urban form transitions with grace and respect, feeling new, yet fitting gracefully into the context. However, in the current conceptual design, the buildings' mass overwhelms immediately adjacent neighbors to the north, east and west, by 4-5 stories. While projections and setbacks in the current design proposal attempt to mitigate this contrast, the design guidelines provide no prescriptive requirements. This should be corrected. For instance, structures located along the east property line should be subject to customary step backs requirements laid out in the Oakland Planning Code (see Chapter 17.35 CC COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL ZONES REGULATIONS).
- 4) Architectural Character: The CCA site sits at College Avenue's southern terminus, linking Rockridge to UC Berkeley, where each educational institution has contributed significantly to the American Arts and Crafts Movement and the Northern California/Bay Regional Style with its multiple re-interpretations over the past 150 years. As the guidelines indicate, these traditions are at the heart of Rockridge's character and quality as a place. However, further development of the guidelines should reference specific aspects of the regional design elements that will make the development both worthy of its unique setting and consistent in character and quality with the architectural traditions of the region, as it will be a landmark at the gateway to our

neighborhood, visible for miles around. This does not mean the development needs to mimic some old-world styles. It means using traditional techniques to moderate the bulk of the building through asymmetrical massing, clustering openings, projecting balconies and bay windows, and responding to specific orientations of the façade by capturing views or northern light or shielding from the sun.

5) Sustainability and Resilience: These characteristics of the project are only vaguely mentioned in either the site guidelines or the conceptual design presentation. However, it is commonly understood in the industry when the environmental goals and objectives of the project are established during the development programmatic goals, objectives, and guidelines, they are more easily achieved and often exceeded at little or no additional cost. California energy codes are among the most advanced in the world and moving toward zero-net energy for all residential construction by 2030. Additionally, we are experiencing a 27-year drought, with no signs of it abating, yet water use is barely mentioned. Sustainability and resiliency goals of this project and how they might be achieved should be clear and present in the Site Guidelines and any future design presentation.

Based on review of the presentation and Site Development Guidelines, the Upper Broadway Advocates provide the following comments and questions:

Context Map-p12: Neighborhoods should be delineated on this map, as it would show that the site is at the confluence of three principal neighborhoods, Rockridge to the north and west, Temescal to the southwest, and Piedmont Avenue to the southeast.

Design Guideline Goals: Reference numbers are to the Guidelines

Goal 1-p13 *Celebrate Legacy of Estate and Campus Eras*. What is this intended to mean? How does this goal track in the guidelines? Are there requirements for new artwork, such as new murals, or pavement designs, etc., or just harvesting a few remaining artifacts?

Goal 2-p13: *Create Opportunity for transit-oriented housing...* What about affordability, diversity, or other General Plan Housing and Transportation Element goals that are simply ignored here? Why is there not a transit access map in this document showing bus stops, or walking & biking radius map showing MacArthur and Rockridge BART Stations here? The Guidelines should indicate how the development should link to these existing transportation alternatives and expand alternatives, such as shared electric cars, shuttles to BART, etc.

Goal 3 p-13: *Design new buildings to complement...Rockridge's eclectic architecture*. Isn't there a broader context of the Bay Region Style that should be referenced and respected on this site? College Avenue shopping areas are shown in the Guidelines as examples of the eclectic design nature of Rockridge, but in fact, College Ave buildings are primarily commercial and do not represent the majority of Rockridge's Craftsman style. Residential streets in Rockridge should therefore serve as a design guide for the proposed housing on the CCA site. In addition, due to the proposed very dense nature of the CCA buildings we feel strongly that you should use local references of large-scale buildings, such as the Claremont Country Club, the Claremont Hotel, UC Berkeley's International House, the Berkeley City Club, and the similar prominence of this site at the terminus of College Avenue. See First, Second and Third Bay Tradition in Wikipedia for details.

Goal 6 p-14: *Reduce Impact on Climate Change by Implementing Sustainable Measures* - How is this articulated or manifested in the site guidelines? See comments further below.

Objectives H3 & H4 p-18:

H3: Celebrate the historic landscape qualities and features reflective of the creativity of the Campus Era

H4: Create a visually cohesive district of high visual interest while respecting architectural differentiation of Campus Era adaptation and expansion.

The Campus Era crammed lot of highly variant architectural styles into very restricted sites. How will this project avoid overwhelming the Treadwell Estate buildings being conserved with two large monolithic structures? Perhaps this can be achieved by breaking up the scale and architectural elements or materials of the various components based on their orientation (street or bay views, versus internal views)

The General Plan Map p-24 Figure 1.7: This appears to show the apartment complex at the top of Clifton as Community Commercial Zoning. This is incorrect. 225 Clifton is zoned RM3 and is subject to Chapter 17.35 CC COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL ZONES REGULATIONS regarding step backs.

Historic Significance p-28 Figure 1.9: The Eucalyptus Row is identified as a significant landscape element, but it is wiped out in the design. Is any justification or mitigation for this provided?

Period of Significance p-29: Shouldn't this reference to the period of significance of the Treadwell Estate mention its architectural style?

Historic Significance p-28 Figure 1.9: References contribution of CCA to the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Historic Significance p-31: Should this not be referenced in the guidelines as the notion of generating a 21st Century Fourth Bay Tradition? See comments on Goal 3 (p-13) above.

Program: It is important to point out that the land price is negotiable, due the unique characteristics and ownership of the site. As an Area of Primary Importance and a Potential Designated Historic Property with unique historic resources, some of which are listed on the National Register, the property requires special permitting process and care and attention to its character and history. We urge the developers to explore future iterations that increase the quantity and deepen the affordability of below-market-rate units. Knowing there are subsidies available for the creation of more deeply affordable housing and that the land value is not fixed, we ask that the goals of the project include increased quantities of below market rate housing and deeper the levels of affordability to meet Oakland's housing needs more broadly. Clarifying objectives by unit types, counts and distribution will further inform future reviews. The Guidelines should specify these.

- 1) In the present iteration the there are several aspects of the program that remain unclear, and more information is requested. These include:
 - a) The unit types, count and distribution of unit types by percentage. Also, it is unclear as to where the townhouses are located or what they might look like. Of particular concern is the lack of details on how the townhouses interact with the paseo. Will there be steps up to the townhouses, patios facing the open space, planter boxes or planting that will shield residents from prying eyes.
 - b) What are the anticipated commercial uses along Broadway within the building and in the courtyard entered via the Carriage Gate and/or the Clifton side of Building A?

- i) Is this commercial space sufficiently visible from Broadway? What regulations will be imposed on commercial signage?
 - ii) Could seating and lighting be provided along the areas of the Wall where bus stops are located?
- 2) What are the uses intended for Macky Hall and Carriage House? And will any of this space be made available to the community for scheduled activities? We believe that the presently ill-defined programmatic use of Macky Hall and the Carriage House should be clarified in the guidelines and reserve them for arts activities and education.
- 3) Useable open space is a scarce in our neighborhood.
- a) The rejuvenated meadow and woodlands should have clear programmatic goals.
 - b) The programs within the adjacent buildings should contribute to the vitality of its setting, such as provision of community activity rooms and public restrooms as part of this program.
 - c) Access paths and available activities should be clearly signed, illuminated, and apparent near these entrances.
 - d) What is the square footage of open space that will be open to the general public (not just building residents)?
- 4) What do you envision for programmed activities within the meadow area and open space?
- i) Is it terraced or simply sloped?
 - ii) Will it have access to power and technology to support special events
- b) Why isn't the newly added the amenity wing (and view terrace) of the upper building accessible to the community? Are there physical barriers to keep out the general public? What do these barriers look like and how do they function?
 - c) Will this amenity program interact with the public space in ways other than visually?
- 5) What is proposed for the building A resident access area? Will there be a security gate, wall, fence, security guard booth, etc.? What measure will be used to ensure that the security necessary for the building does not impose itself on the public open space?

Urban Form: This is not a generic housing site. As such, it calls for an urban form and architectural character that respects and responds to its presence and position in the urban fabric, the City's history, the architectural traditions of the region and site, and the sustainable environmental aspirations of the State. Hopefully, this project response to context will serve as a model for other susceptible sites in and adjacent to our neighborhood, and within the City and the Region.

- 1) The present design guidelines allude to these contextual references; however, they do not provide guidance on how the project should respond to its immediate urban form context, such as site sections that reference adjacent street widths or show streetscape characteristics, the heights of buildings on opposing block frontages, or current height limits in adjacent zoning, though these were referenced in earlier drafts.
- a. Please provide site sections showing opposing and adjacent development in relationship to the proposed project, and the number and uses of various stories.
 - b. These sections should include cross-sections through the proposed development to aid in understanding the project's responsiveness to its context in terms of heights, grades, proposed and existing streetscape and relationship of the interior programming.

c. Similarly, please provide at least four primary elevations that incorporate the elevations or sections and allowable height limits under current zoning for adjacent and opposing development sites, such as Clifton House, Broadway commercial and residential development, The Ridge shopping Center, and the 225 Clifton Apartments.

2) Building B: The height and setback relationships between Building B and the adjacent apartment buildings is a concern, particularly as the building is 80-90' above the grade at the eastern property line and extends nearly the full 400'+ length of this interior lot line. Guidelines as to how to mitigate this relationship would be helpful but are not yet provided, and there is no elevation shown in the current design proposal.

a. Should this be built as two or more buildings or use deeper setbacks with tall planting to mitigate this "Great Wall" effect?

b. Should there be more than the one entrance with 200'+ long hallways on either side? Could this entrance, or multiple entry points be transparent or open air, offering residents that do not face the western view, and the neighboring property glimpses of the Bay?

c. Please show the sectional relationships between the CCA site development proposal and the adjacent Ridge Shopping Center and how they might be connected in the future, as the present design concept makes no connection.

d. Current design iterations do not provide enough detail on entrances of proposed townhouses and how these units interact with the Paseo and paths. Please provide more detail.

3) Building A: Reconsider the heights and setbacks of the massing along Broadway frontage:

a. The proposed structure is significantly taller and thus more imposing than its neighbors. Located a mere three-foot planting bed behind the wall, the lower shoulder forms at each corner are multiple stories higher than any adjacent buildings and exceed the 35-55' height of adjacent zoning.

b. The aesthetic value of the increased setback and courtyard centered on the Carriage Gate is apparent but appears cramped and should be increased to ensure it is an activating place along the street for commercial tenants and the public.

Architectural Character: The modulation of the buildings' facades has improved the overall aesthetics of the building to create a base-middle-top composition as articulated in the guidelines. This is further enhanced by changes in materials, though the precise nature and character of these materials is to be determined. Further development is needed to make this building worthy of its unique setting and consistent in character and quality with the architectural traditions of the region.

1) The facades appear rather industrial, monolithic, and boxy, lacking traditional elements or details that mitigate their scale or reference any of the Bay Area's residential traditions.

a) Adding balconies, balconettes, bay windows, or corner windows to take advantage of the views from various locations would vary the massing, improve environmental and site responsiveness to views and solar orientation, and thus avoid a monolithic character at every façade.

b) These architectural elements create opportunities for lateral views in units where they would only be looking at another building 40 feet away.

2) In keeping with the traditional architectural characteristics of the on-site historic structures being preserved as well as, the traditional character of large structures in the neighborhood, the 'tripartite' (Base-Middle-Top) architectural composition of the design and the three-dimensional texture of the facade, with bays and inset window planes, should be adhered to and reinforced.

- a) This latter detail is critical in imparting a feeling of substance and quality to the building and is often lost in future iterations of project design, as developers seek to economize with cheaper windows flush with the wall surface
- b) Consistent with traditional building methods, material changes in the facade should not be coplanar, merely graphic or take place at outside corners. They should also not be characteristics that are only relevant in a flat rendering, such as those at Merrill Garden across Broadway, but be material changes that give true form to the building massing and are consistent with the underlying structure.
- 3) How tall will rooftop mechanical systems and associated infrastructure screening systems impact the perceived height of the structure?
 - a) Could these elements be screened and visually mitigated by sloped solar collection armatures to reduce their apparent height? (This approach is often cost neutral.)
 - b) Assuming this is an all-electric building complex this could produce sufficient power generation capacity to meet common area and emergency power requirements.
 - c) Some assurances should be provided to the neighborhood that no cell phone towers, billboards or lighted signage or unlighted signage will be added to the rooftops of any building on the site.

Sustainability and Resilience: These characteristics of the project are not mentioned in either the site guidelines or the conceptual design presentation. Yet it is commonly understood in the industry when the environmental goals and objectives of the project are established during the conceptual design process, they are more easily achieved or even exceeded at little or no additional cost. California energy codes are among the most advanced in the world, and we are amid a 27-year drought. It has been demonstrated that long-term sustainability improves affordability.

- 1) What are the sustainability and resiliency goals of this project and how will they be achieved?
 - a) The building should be ZNE.... Consistent with pending State energy codes
 - b) This should be a Zero Carbon Building. For example, it should be an all-electric building to avoid GHG emissions from gas-fired boilers.
 - c) Should it aspire to on-site-solar energy generation for all common areas and site lighting, and possibly submeter all units for 100% renewable purchase agreement.
 - d) Will there be on-site grey water harvesting or storm water collection? For example, could the Meadow and surrounding tree groves serve as stormwater retention areas?
 - e) Should the project seek recycled water for all landscaping (Note: Claremont G&CC uses the nearby reservoir, could water be purchased from them?)
 - f) Guidelines should provide required ratios of vehicle charging stations
- 2) Will the project seek LEED or other environmental performance third-party certifications?

Access & Mobility: This is a large site with limited access, challenging topography, with significant development being proposed. Importantly to its context, this is a very high-density traffic area even now when this project or Phase 2 of the adjacent Ridge Shopping Center has yet to be developed. There are four complex-signaled intersections that are poorly coordinated and divert traffic into and through the adjacent residential narrow streets, as drivers seek shortcuts. This situation is made more complex by the location of multiple bus stops within a very congested area, with multiple curb cuts for legacy land uses. As part of any entitlement process for this project and others in the immediate area, a complete rethinking of circulation in the area should be undertaken by the City. This should be referenced and

incorporated into these guidelines and implemented as part of the development of this site. Specific considerations include:

- 1) Intersection Design, Pedestrian Safety, and Streetscape Improvements (ref p-52/2.3)
The city should consider reshaping the intersections within the vicinity of the project (including Broadway, Coronado, Hemphill, Clifton, Broadway Terrace, 51st and Pleasant Valley) to minimize traffic conflicts, reduce congestion and improve pedestrian and bike safety, by eliminating future curb cuts, designating specific zones for transit access, eliminating on-street parking along Broadway, adding roundabouts at the Pleasant Valley/51st Street, College Avenue and Broadway Terrace intersections, and making Coronado and Clifton Street right-on/right off only intersections.
- 2) Emergency Access: A full review by the Fire Marshal and Fire Department is warranted
 - a) How is fire access being managed to ensure that multiple emergency vehicles and fleeing residents can be accommodated via a single entrance and exit along the Paseo and Clifton?
 - b) Is the proposed hammerhead adequate?
 - c) What are the provisions for exiting emergency vehicles if another neighborhood emergency occurs at the same time?
 - d) Will fire-fighters be willing to enter the narrow passage between two buildings or scale up the slope from Broadway or the steep, rocky face of the Ridge Shopping Center entrance drive to reach the interior of the site?
 - e) Does the building construction typology include wood, or is it concrete and steel, and how do these materials impact fire-fighting strategies?
- 3) Transit and Ride-Share Access:
 - a) How do service and ride-share vehicles access, park and leave the site? Circulation diagrams are needed, particularly as there is no turnaround further up Clifton Street.
 - b) What are the intended intersection improvements at the intersection of Clifton and Broadway, as this area is already severely congested due to multiple signaled intersections?
 - c) How will the bus stops be improved along Broadway to provide seating and shelter at the base of the wall along an exceedingly narrow sidewalk for the current and anticipated pedestrian traffic load?

Landscape and Streetscape: A site development plans showing the full width of the adjacent streets including sidewalk widths, pedestrian crossings, bikeways, bus stops and traffic lanes, and existing and proposed tree planting, will further inform evaluation of your proposed design. Specific questions are:

- 1) Can tall growing trees be planted between Macky Hall and the 90' tall façade that looms behind it to enhance its context as the focal point of the meadow? Can portions of the historic Eucalyptus Row be preserved? What sizes street trees will be specified to replace the very mature trees currently on the Broadway and Clifton sidewalks?
- 2) Will colorful plants drape over the top of the street wall to enhance the pedestrian experience? Why do the Guidelines limit the planting to 50% of the wall?
- 3) Could benches be inset along the historic wall and the sidewalk be widened to accommodate the heavy pedestrian flows?
- 4) Could the wall be illuminated to enhance its landmark role and improve neighborhood safety?
- 5) How will the streetscape and site lighting be handled.

- a) This is important, as this section of Broadway can feel dark and unsafe in the evenings, particularly along the long concrete wall, where the few streetlights are buried in the trees.
- b) Will the pathway and meadow area be publicly accessible and illuminated in the evenings?
- c) Will Macky Hall and the Carriage House receive enhanced illumination?
- d) What building materials will be used to mitigate severe reflective light on west facing facades?
- 6) How does this project truly connect to the history of the site? Other than preservation of a few artifacts from the CCA site, what other actions could be taken to tie this development back to the site's historic relevance to the Bay Area artworld?
 - a) Could there be sites for commissioned sculptures, or exhibits incorporated into the landscape?
 - b) Could some of the blank ground floor walls along Clifton become commissioned murals?
 - c) Could the courtyards and walkways within the site also be opportunities to tell the story of the site or the arts community that arose here?

UBA appreciates your attention to these recommendations and looks forward to discussing them with you at a future date. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by the UBA Steering Committee

Attachments:

Item A: We would appreciate your correction of Rockridge's boundaries in the context diagram on Page 7.

