

ANNA HEAD WEST STUDENT HOUSING PROJECT – UC BERKELEY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Anna Head West Student Housing project will construct a new undergraduate housing complex that will help meet undergraduate student housing goals as described in the University's 2020 Long Range Development Plan. The 2020 LRDP identified a need for over 1,600 new beds of single-student housing. The 135,000 gsf project will consist of a new residence hall for 160 sophomores and apartments for 264 upper division students. The objectives are to meet single student housing demand and to provide the opportunity for students to have continuity in housing throughout their university careers.

The Project is located on a University-owned surface parking lot located three blocks south of the central campus in the Southside neighborhood. The property includes the former Anna Head School for Girls, a City of Berkeley Landmark that is currently used by UCB research units, student services and a childcare program. The project site is bounded by Channing Way, Bowditch and Haste Streets, and is directly across the street from People's Park. The site is less than a half block from the University's Central Dining Facility. This location provides excellent access to public transportation, stores, and services, and is within one mile of the center of campus, as defined in the LRDP Housing Zone.

Per the jointly developed UC Berkeley-City of Berkeley Southside Plan, "...the campus will acknowledge the Plan as the guide for developments within the Southside area". The project design guidelines draw from the Southside Plan, which has as its overarching goals:

- To enhance the Southside neighborhood's unique social, cultural and architectural character;
- To create safe and appealing Southside neighborhood based on a comfortable and pedestrian-oriented environment, and
- To create a strong physical connection ...between UC Berkeley and the Southside neighborhood.

The project will displace existing parking, which was converted from campus parking to public parking in November 2008. Construction is anticipated to start in July 2010, targeting student occupancy for Fall Semester, 2012.

Building Design. The building will consist of up to six stories, with a residence hall component on the north and apartments on the west and south. At ground level will be a concourse which consists of common spaces, including staffed security counters, a student lounge, mail room, fitness room, laundry, kitchenette and academic support spaces. The residence hall is designed for double-occupancy bedrooms and compartmentalized bathrooms situated around a small courtyard. The apartment units consist of four single bedrooms, a bathroom and a combined living/study/kitchen area.

The building is designed to be a product of its own time while respecting the surrounding context by preserving primary views of the Anna Head School. The design seeks to contribute to the eclectic mix of low-rise and high-rise architecture in the neighborhood. The facades are designed with a modular window system and varying wood siding patterns that shift vertically to break down the visual mass of the building.

The building design seeks to meet the demands of a high-density program without compromising livability. The residential units are located around courtyards which provide usable outdoor areas for social gatherings or quiet study and which provide for outdoor views, maximum natural ventilation, thermal mass and daylight. One of the courtyards is designed around a Queensland Kauri-Pine, which is identified as a rare specimen tree for the Bay Area.

Southside Design Guidelines. The Southside Design Guidelines state that “new buildings should respect and respond to the pattern of residential height and massing of buildings in this subarea.” The listed maximum height within the project’s zone, R-S (Residential High Density) is 5 stories and 60 feet. Any new construction on the southern side of the site should also respect adjacencies to the Residential Medium Density subarea (R-3) which limits buildings to a maximum height of 4 stories. The project height varies from four to six stories, with lower areas on the east side adjacent to the Anna Head buildings and maximum heights concentrated on the west side which abuts commercial properties on Telegraph Ave.

The Southside Plan Design Guidelines encourage strong physical connections between People’s Park and adjacent land uses:

- Encourage infill buildings on sites around the park to create more eyes on the Park
- Consider the Haste Street frontage of the Anna Head parking lot as a UC Housing site to create a residential constituency who could use the Park

In contrast to the majority of buildings ringing the Park which do not provide “eyes”, the project provides four-to-five stories of student apartments along Haste Street overlooking the Park. A staffed entry lobby and computing center occupy the ground floor and face out toward the Park.

Landscape Design: The building site is envisioned as park-like, replacing what is now asphalt with new and preserved trees and a new lawn area that helps provide a buffer between the new building and the Anna Head complex. A landscaped diagonal path runs through the site, connecting Channing Way and Haste Street and affording the opportunity for public circulation through the site, similar to other nearby mid-block pathways at Units 1 and 2 and the University Art Museum. The pathway will provide an accessible connection between the residence hall entry plaza at Channing Way and the apartment entry at Haste Street.

Security is a major consideration for student housing sites, particularly in proximity to People’s Park. The project will provide enhanced exterior lighting throughout the site, active building uses on the ground floor with views of the exterior circulation area, multiple “blue light” phones and staffed entrances off both streets. Covered, secure bike parking is located near both building entries.

The project will preserve significant trees such as the two canary date palms, the Flowering Red Gum and the Queensland Kauri-Pine, a rare specimen for the Bay Area. The large camphor tree on the parking lot will not be retained. The landscape plan includes a replacement of two trees to each existing tree removed.

Sustainable Practices: The project is targeted for a LEED Silver rating, which has a high standard for energy savings. The project design is based narrow floor plates which surround courtyards in order to maximize natural ventilation, daylight and views for all residential units. A high performance building envelope coupled will minimize the need for mechanical heating systems. The existing asphalt parking lot will be replaced with landscaping and pervious materials to significantly reduce stormwater runoff.

CITY OF BERKELEY REVIEWS

The Continuing Best Practices prescribed in the 2020 LRDP EIR include the following requirements for all projects located in the 'City Environs', which includes the areas within Berkeley lying outside the 'Campus Park' and 'Hill Campus':

UC Berkeley would make informational presentations on all major projects in the City Environs in Berkeley to the Berkeley Planning Commission and, if relevant, the Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission for comment prior to schematic design review by the UC Berkeley Design Review Committee ... Whenever a project in the City Environs is under consideration by the UC Berkeley DRC, a staff representative designated by the city in which it is located would be invited to attend and comment on the project. (Continuing Best Practice AES-1-e)

The subject Project is in the City Environs, and thus these practices are required by the 2020 LRDP EIR.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

Major milestones for the Project include the following:

State Historic Preservation Office: SHPO reviewed the site on November 24, 2008 and commented on early massing concepts. The proposed design was reviewed with SHPO on August 27, 2009.

City of Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission: The Project was presented to the City of Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission in June 2009.

City of Berkeley Planning Commission: The Anna Head West Student Housing project will be presented to the City of Berkeley Planning Commission in September 2009.

City of Berkeley Design Review Committee: The Anna Head West Student Housing project will be presented to the City of Berkeley Design Review Committee in September 2009.

Community Review: Public meetings were held for community review of the Anna Head West Student Housing Project in December 2008 and June 2009.

UC Berkeley Design Review Committee: The Project was reviewed by the UC Berkeley Design Review Committee at its September 2008, March 2009 meetings, and will be reviewed at the September 2009 meeting; a representative from the City of Berkeley participated in all previous reviews. In September 2008, the DRC approved design guidelines for the Project. In March 2009, the DRC endorsed conceptual massing studies of the proposed design. In September 2009, the DRC will review schematic level design.

Regents Consideration: The Anna Head West Student Housing project budget was approved at the June 2009 Regents meeting. UC Berkeley expects to ask the Regents to approve the design of the Anna Head West Student Housing project in November 2009, and the construction of the Project is planned to be underway in July 2010, to be completed by Fall 2012.