

# **Statement of Use for 1010 Murray Street**

Desired Use Permit: Art/Craft Studios and 1 unit of Live/Work

*Record of Public Support Viewable at: [www.theshipyard.org](http://www.theshipyard.org)*

The Shipyard artist collective is applying for an Administrative Use Permit to allow for Art/Craft Studios and 1 unit of Live/Work at 1010 Murray Street. We believe this usage to be consistent with the many small art, design and craftsperson studios and live/work spaces already on Murray Street as well as the general light industrial character of West Berkeley.

The Shipyard is a unique experiment in creating studio/shop space tailored to the needs of artists working in large-scale mechanical, kinetic and electronic media. Most artists at The Shipyard artists have for years struggled to produce their works in typical warehouse/studio settings and have found these spaces not well suited to their needs. Creative types working at the intersection of art, technology, and engineering need a new type of work space. The solution we are attempting combines recycled shipping containers with a large open-air shared lot- a solution which results in both small dedicated studio spaces for each artist as well as a large communal workspace for times of more ambitious building.

The Shipyard studios have been created during the past 5 months using 27 recycled shipping containers stacked two high around the perimeter of a 11,000 sq ft lot, leaving the large shared build space in the center. This perimeter arrangement is important as it provides privacy and security for in-progress works in the yard, as well as hides the typical messes of art from the surrounding neighborhood. The stacked containers and perimeter fence also significantly reduce the typical noises of fabrication for nearby neighbors.

Our efforts have resulted in new studio spaces for about 20 artists, each artist paying the below market rent of \$125 - \$200 a month. These studios are filled with a wide array of Bay Area artists, students from local art schools, alumni from Crucible classes, and other local creative types. We also offer a free artist-in-residence program that makes our space available to members of the community needing temporary build space.

We feel our container based studios are consistent with current uses of shipping containers on many other MU-LI lots in West Berkeley. Our elaboration of the containers into studio/shop spaces is part of a growing worldwide movement to recycle and retrofit shipping containers for non-cargo purposes, creating facilities ranging from mobile medical labs to turn key manufacturing shops. The Seabreeze Market on the north side of I-80 is the most well known local precedent for such conversions. Enclosed you will find pictures of the Seabreeze as well as documentation on other shipping container artist communities around the world. Our experience so far is proving the containers to be an important and reproducible solution for the severe shortage of affordable artist studio space in the region.

For the past three years, 1010 Murray Street has operated as a gallery with a small workspace for emerging East Bay artists. It was called The Bacca Gallery and offered a full calendar of indoor and outdoor exhibitions. You can see a record of the Bacca shows at [www.bacca1010.com](http://www.bacca1010.com). During their tenure, the Bacca Gallery completed a major renovation of the existing building on the site, converting a dilapidated industrial shell into a white cube gallery space with a mezzanine live space, kitchen and proper bathroom facilities. Along with our container based studios, we would like this mezzanine to remain a live space, with the rest of the building functioning as a multi-purpose indoor workspace.

Previous to The Bacca Gallery, 1010 Murray Street was a junkyard and amateur car repair lot. All reports from neighbors indicate there were major homelessness and drug issues during the decade long junkyard tenancy. Previous to the junkyard, the lot was a boat repair yard, and before that, an olive oil transfer facility. The last known Use Permit for the lot is for the boat repair yard.

We started the container based art studio expansion in November, 2001. During this time, we have also cleaned up the historic debris and weeds on the adjoining rail road right of way and planted trees, shrubs, runners, etc. on all sides of our lot. In the process, we have increased activity and eyes on Murray Street which has significantly decreased the nighttime drug and prostitution trade as well as reduced dumping and homeless on the railroad right-of-way.

The Shipyard represents a major new contribution to the “art renaissance” currently underway on Murray Street. The Crucible began this process over three years ago, and since then many buildings on the block have transformed towards primarily creative pursuits. 1010 Murray Street has been a central part of this neighborhood transformation as The Bacca Gallery and now we would like to expand our contribution with the much more ambitious configuration of The Shipyard.

We look forward to working with the Planning Department to bring our Use Permit and Building Code issues up to date. Our facility is always open to city officials and neighbors who would like a tour and/or make suggestions on our activities. If you have any questions, please contact me, Jim Mason, the Director of The Shipyard, at [jimmason@longnow.org](mailto:jimmason@longnow.org) or 415.305.0955.

Thank you again for working with us to bring our facility up to current and legal status. We greatly appreciate the good faith engagement you have shown us to date. And we look forward to working together to build The Shipyard into an important creative resource for the entire Berkeley community.

Jim Mason  
Director, The Shipyard  
Submitted: 4/2/02