

Addendum to Use Permit Application for 1010 Murray Street

Answers to questions from initial review by Hector Lopez
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Use Defined:

The Shipyard provides art studios and fabrication spaces tailored to the needs of artists working in large-scale mechanical, kinetic and electronic art. To address the unique space requirements of such artists, we have taken a 11,000 sq ft lot and ringed it with recycled shipping containers, stacked two high, leaving a large open-air shared work area in the center (see drawings). The shipping containers have been converted into light fabrication shops (F-2 occupancy) as well as left in their original state and used for storage of art materials (S-2 occupancy). This arrangement results in a combination of small dedicated studio/fabrication spaces for each artist, protected areas to store art materials, and most importantly, a large outdoor communal workspace for times of more ambitious building.

The perimeter layout and two high stacking of the containers 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 connecting fences also significantly reduce the typical noises of fabrication for nearby neighbors, few as they are.

Artwork at The Shipyard involves a wide range of media: wood, metal, electronics, computer programming, painting, neon, etc. The containers and live/work unit are used for light fabrication that does not involve open flame. Our work is done mostly with hand tools and small machines (drills, band-saws, lathes, sanders, mills, etc.). All work with open flame (welding, torch cutting, neon) takes place in the open air yard where there are no building fire hazard or constricted space ventilation issues. We have already been inspected by the fire department and have been issued a welding permit for the center yard.

We are requesting one live/work unit for the lot, which is for the caretaker of the facility. Living is not a primary use of our facility, but for security and logistical reasons, it is important that we be able to have one caretaker live on site.

The Shipyard is a private facility, not intended for general public accommodation. We have no employees, no retail activity, and infrequent visitors and events. The artists are tenants who pay a modest monthly rent. Application for space rental at The Shipyard is open to anyone in the community and we also encourage community participation through workshops, art shows, and a quarterly artist-in-residence program.

People:

There are approximately 15 artists with studio space at The Shipyard. Typical work days have 2 or 3 people working in the yard at any one time. Most work takes place during daylight hours, with the heaviest usage on the weekends and late afternoon during weekdays.

Shops/Studios and Storage:

We propose to convert nearly all the ground level containers into art studio/shop spaces. All second level containers will be for storage only, infrequently accessed by forklift or rolling staircase.

Building Code Issues:

The previously submitted statement by architect Thomas Dolan (attached again) addresses the feasibility of converting shipping containers into F-2 and S-2 buildings. Our initial assessment has shown feasible solutions for all seismic, electrical, ventilation, ingress/egress, and other code issues and we are committed to carrying out these solutions in a timely manner.

Parking:

Onsite:

The main site plan drawing indicates locations for 6 parking spots inside the yard. 4 of these are tandem spots, as many of our vehicles move infrequently (trucks, trailers, etc.). Is it not critical that we have typical public parking arrangements as this is not a public retail or commercial facility which has frequent comings and goings of vehicles. It is a private space for a small group of artists and we are very capable of coordinating the entrance and exit of tandem parked vehicles. In addition, many of our vehicles are often “tools” themselves (i.e. work trucks) that people use for their projects and need to park in the middle of or adjacent to the work areas in the yard.

Street:

There is also ample space to accommodate the daily parking needs of Shipyard tenants on Murray Street as well as Folger Street, both lightly used industrial streets,. In addition, all workshops and events described below will take place after business hours when these streets are nearly empty and parking is plentiful.

Disability Issues:

We will provide an ADA compliant public bathroom and access to an appropriate subset of the ground level shop spaces. There will be no disabled access to the upper containers as they are for storage only, accessed by forklift or rolling staircase. Potential disabled renters can use an ADA compliant bottom container for storage if storage is needed.

Events:

We plan to have occasional small events promoting and providing public access to the mechanical, kinetic and electronic arts. These will be mostly small demonstration, exhibition or lecture events, one every two or three months, with 10-75 people. Once a year we will hold a fundraiser with approximately 200 people to generate resources for the support of our

facility. This larger fundraising event is critical to the continued existence and upkeep of the facility as studio rents alone are not sufficient to support our total costs.

We will not be having any large non-mission related parties (i.e. raves, hip-hop events, rentals to other groups, etc.). Our events will be strictly related to the showing, promoting, and supporting of our artwork and giving the wider community access to space and resources for creative work.

Design Review:

Our recycling of shipping containers into architectural spaces resonates nicely with the maritime and rail history of West Berkeley and is consistent with the recycling agenda of our “green gulch” location. We have taken great care to arrange, stack, paint, fence and landscape the outside of the Shipyard facility in a manner that significantly improves the viewshed of our neighborhood as well as adds new and relevant architectural forms to the area.

We are consciously experimenting with a new model for creating affordable art studio spaces on underutilized or empty lots through the use of converted shipping containers. This model is proving to work exceedingly well and has already been copied for the shipping container art studio facility in San Francisco called The Box Shop.

Shipping containers are finding many new architectural uses around the world: from disaster relief housing and mobile medical facilities, to high end high end homes and massive scale architectural experiments like the shipping container “city” at this year’s International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam. We are excited to be expanding this architectural reuse experiment in the service of creating affordable art studio spaces in a region where affordable art studios are becoming increasingly scarce.

See drawings and photos to better review the aesthetic particulars of our installation.