



ED ROBERTS CAMPUS | BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



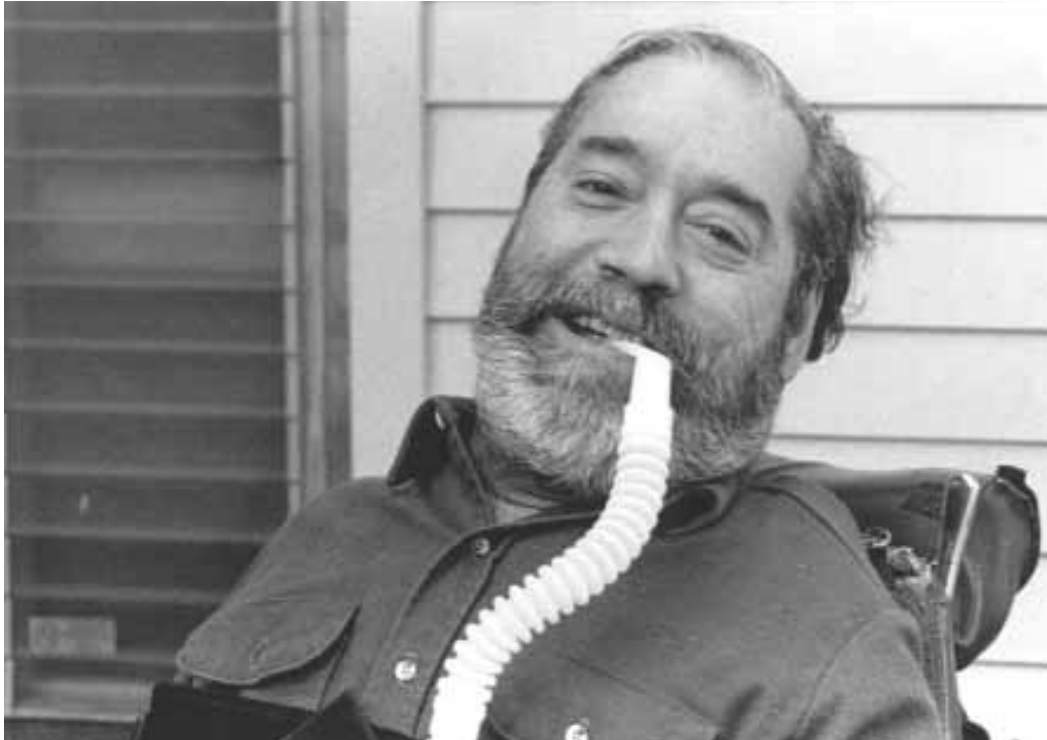
*“We propose to build a new building, one that does not look like buildings of the past. We are hoping to change history and move to a brighter future.”*

BOARD MEMBER, ED ROBERTS CAMPUS

## CELEBRATING AN INDEPENDENT LIFE

JOAN LEON

IN 1995, ED ROBERTS, A HERO OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH disabilities, died. The movement had begun in Berkeley, California, in the 1970s and it forever changed the lives of people with disabilities. After Ed died, leaders of the movement, the City of Berkeley, and the University of California, Berkeley, gathered to discuss a suitable memorial to his legacy, and the idea for the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) was born. The campus will be the world’s foremost disability service, advocacy, education, training and policy center. It will also be the embodiment of inclusive design, integrating the principles of independent living, universal design, sustainable design and transit-oriented development.



Ed Roberts, a founder of the Independent Living Movement.

LYDIA GANS

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**PROJECT** Ed Roberts Campus   **LOCATION** Berkeley, California   **DATE DESIGNED** 2002   **CONSTRUCTION COST** \$35 million   **CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED** 2008  
**SIZE** 80,000 sq. ft.   **ARCHITECTS PRE-DESIGN:** Siegel Diamond Architecture  
**DESIGN:** Leddy Maytum Stacy   **DESIGN PROGRAMMING** MIG, Inc.   **DEVELOPER** Equity Community Builders   **PROJECT MANAGER** Calib Dardik   **CLIENT** Ed Roberts Campus Partnership

Ed Roberts was born in 1939 and became disabled in 1952 as a result of polio. In 1962, he was the first severely disabled student admitted to the University of California. He was an early leader of the Independent Living Movement, a struggle by people with disabilities to control their own lives. The movement began in reaction to the dehumanizing processes people with disabilities were subjected to, and it championed the need for equal access and equal opportunity. It recognized that the struggle for independence was not a medical or functional issue; it was a matter of civil rights. At a rally in front of the federal building in San Francisco, which ultimately resulted in a major change in federal disability policy, Ed defined the problem as the system's view that disabled people should have a "separate, but equal world." He captured the sentiments of the disability movement when he declared, "Integration is the key word. People with disabilities have to come back into our society."

The Independent Living Movement changed the old paradigm by developing a consumer-directed approach to services—people who use services could have control over the choices and options available to them. Instead of a presumption of charity and dependence, the movement successfully empowered people to become productive members of society.

One of Ed’s favorite stories was about how his rehabilitation counselor,

employed by the California Department of Rehabilitation, refused to serve him and opposed his desire to go to UC Berkeley. He was “too disabled to work,” so what was the point of an education? Ed went to the director of the Department and convinced him to reverse the decision. “You don’t let people walk all over you; you do something about it. You fight for what you believe is right,” Ed commented. Ed earned a Master’s Degree in Political Science and

had completed all the course work for his Ph.D. when he left campus to work in the nascent Independent Living Movement. Years later, he became the director of the Department of Rehabilitation for the State of California, the same agency that had tried to refuse him an education.

Ed traveled throughout the world promoting the concept of independent living and firmly believed in the strength



People with disabilities have always known that a simple architectural design change can make all the difference in being able to self-sufficiently navigate and use a building. Their input drove the design process for the Ed Roberts Campus.





of collaborative efforts—he called it “working toward our preferred future.” In 1984, Ed was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship for his work championing the right of people with disabilities. When he died in 1995, the concept of developing the Ed Roberts Campus became a memorial to him.

The Ed Roberts Campus is being developed by eight partner organizations who are board members and co-owners: Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP), Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT), Center for Independent Living (CIL), Computer Technologies Program (CTP), Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), Through the Looking Glass (TLG), Whirlwind Wheelchair International (WWI), and the World Institute on Disability (WID). Several other non-profit and government organizations will also be located on the campus.

The founding board agreed on basic requirements for the campus—that it easily accommodate hundreds of people with all types of disabilities at any one time, that it be situated at a transit hub to make it easy for people to obtain the services the organizations offer, and that it be located in Berkeley, the home of the Independent Living Movement. The 80,000-square-foot complex on a 1.5-acre site will house the partner organizations and other tenants, exhibition space, meeting rooms, a fitness center and a café. Construction of the \$35 million facility is scheduled to begin in 2007; it is scheduled to open in 2008.

#### USER GROUPS

- People with all types of abilities
- People of all ages
- Students, researchers and policy-makers from around the world

The Ed Roberts Campus presents a sweeping plaza on Adeline Street, an embracing civic gesture that expresses its important role in the community (artist's rendition).



## PURPOSE

The Ed Roberts Campus will be the home of eight trailblazing disability organizations; by collocating they will provide services, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on the continued development of improved services for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities in the Bay Area, the nation and many other parts of the world have relied on the ERC organizations for as many as 35 years. Their services and programs offer assistance with all aspects of a person's life, from legal advocacy and computer training to parenting support and wheelchair basketball. In addition, their work in public policy research, advocacy and program development has had a major impact on people in other countries. Many of the programs and services provided by these organizations cannot be found elsewhere.

The ERC will take the popular “one-stop shopping” concept a step further,

grouping services in one place. People will come to the campus for a wide range of health, education, recreation and vocational services, and for social, educational and professional programs. Many of the programs will be new collaborative efforts by the participating organizations and other government and nonprofit entities.

One collaborator is the University of California, Berkeley, where, according to former UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Berdahl, “faculty members have begun to work closely with the ERC and its partner organizations on ways that we can collaborate so that our students will benefit from the vibrant atmosphere, extraordinary accessibility, and talents that will be located at the campus.”

## TRANSIT-ORIENTED PRINCIPLES

The ERC site is a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) parking lot next to a BART station in a diverse neighborhood of single-family homes, apartment buildings and

larger commercial structures. Half of the project site is located in a commercial zone facing Adeline Street—a busy commercial boulevard—and a large urban open space created by another BART parking lot to the west (home to a popular flea market on weekends). The other half of the project is located in a residential zone facing the remaining portion of the existing BART parking lot and single-family homes beyond. As a result, the building presents two different, but related, faces to the surrounding community, respecting its diverse context while offering a vitalizing presence to the neighborhood.

Transit agencies in California and the U.S. Department of Transportation have recognized the ERC as a model of transit-friendly development that maximizes the value of accessible public transit. People with disabilities from a multi-county area, who have had little or no access to these services before, will be able to travel easily and inexpensively to the center. The transit

The transparent lobby provides a welcoming view of the helical ramp and covered courtyard for gatherings (artist's rendition).



Project design committee members reviewed the building design concepts to ensure it followed a simple equation: move people with disabilities from being dependent to independent.

location of the ERC is one of its most important innovations and is likely to be replicated in other urban areas. U.S. Congressional Representative Ellen Tauscher, in written testimony for a joint hearing convened by the House Committees on Transportation and

Infrastructure and Education and the Workforce in May 2003, said that the ERC “will maximize Bay Area human services and, by locating at a BART station, reduce the need for costly and sometimes unreliable paratransit services.”

#### DESIGN PROCESS

The relationship between access and design will become ever more important as the population ages and the demand for accessibility grows. Most people who design buildings and public spaces do not have a disability. It is people with disabilities who know what they need and who are beginning to inform design and architecture as direct participants and co-designers.

In designing this campus, members of the disability organizations carried the concept of universal design for large buildings to a new level of innovation and effectiveness. People with disabilities have always known that a simple design change—often at little or no cost—can mean the difference between being able to do something themselves and needing help from someone else. The planning team advanced a simple principle: move people from being dependent to independent. A woman in

a wheelchair changes the placement of the hinges on her oven door—now she can bake. Put kickpads on an elevator—she doesn't have to wait until someone comes who can push the button. A beeping light on a traffic signal allows people without sight to cross the street. Perhaps the most well-known example, and the one that people most associate with disability rights, is curb cuts: change the landscape so that people in wheelchairs can navigate sidewalks and walk to the store. And, by the way, that helps mothers with strollers, seniors with walkers and kids on tricycles, too.

The disability organizations started working with the City of Berkeley in 1995 to find a suitable location for the campus. Berkeley is a small, densely built city with little room for new large-scale developments. But in 1996, with the City's help, an ideal site was found: a parking lot co-owned by the City and BART. The City held the air



Wood screens on the Adeline Street main entry integrate warm, natural materials that also control light and add expressive detail (artist's rendition).



The eastern entrance, facing a residential neighborhood, is more compact and enlivened by a colorful mural celebrating people with disabilities, landscaping and an irregular rhythm of projecting bays in harmony with the residential scale of surrounding properties (artist's rendition).

rights to the lot (BART runs underneath) in an agreement executed when the transit system was built. The lot had been slated for development for some 25 years, but no agreement had been made about what to build.

In 1997, ERC held community meetings, neighborhood associations meetings and meetings with local merchants associations. The ERC was agreed on as the only project that was both economically feasible and satisfac-

tory to the neighboring community, the City and BART. The way was cleared for ERC to buy the site from BART at the original 1968 price.



The partner organizations then developed a design program for the campus to visualize how it might fit on the site. They organized design charrettes to develop fundamental concepts and principles to incorporate in the design. They

addressed the unique challenges of designing a transit-oriented facility to accommodate hundreds of people with all kinds of disabilities.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission of the San Francisco Bay Area provided a grant that paid for a series of community meetings on the design and the development of a newsletter so that neighbors could be brought into the process in a meaningful way. At these meetings, the architects presented a facility that occupied 110,000 sq. ft. (including a 13,000 sq. ft. gym and fitness center and a 5,500 sq. ft. Early Head Start Program). It also included a 10,000 sq. ft. conference center and 4,500 sq. ft. of meeting rooms, catering kitchen, library and computer and media resource center. The project provided parking at the ratio of two spaces/1,000 sq. ft. of building (estimated to be 220 spaces), as well as replacement parking on a 1:1 basis for parking displaced on the BART lot.

This plan turned out to be very costly, especially the BART and ERC parking requirements. It also generated considerable controversy in the neighborhood because of concerns about traffic and scale. During the next year, the ERC design went through many iterations as the partners struggled to balance space needs, costs and the concerns and wishes of the neighbors with the organization's fundraising capability. Finally, it was decided that 110,000 sq. ft. was simply too large and, reluctantly, the gym was dropped and other reductions were made in the development program.

#### FINDING THE FUNDS

As a newly formed organization, the ERC did not have an endowment to tap or a long-standing Board of Directors to support its desire to build a campus. It is a community-based, consumer-led organization very much like the non-profits that founded it. These organizations place the greatest value on having consumers on their boards. They focus



The final design—a transit-oriented facility—will accommodate hundreds of users with a wide range of disabilities (artist's model).

ZD MODELS

so strongly on using their resources to meet the need in the community that they do not have the time to build an endowment. And, of course, as nonprofits operating continuously at full throttle, the organizations could not stop their own fundraising efforts while developing the ERC.

The ERC reached out to community leaders to form a campaign committee and decided to approach government sources that support health and economic development and foundations that support disability issues. A major early

supporter was the City of Berkeley. Proud of Berkeley's history with the Independent Living Movement, City officials recognized that the ERC would not only benefit the people living in its boundaries but would also be of major national and international significance, both as a collaborative model for nonprofits and as a beacon for independent living for people with disabilities.

One of the other important early donors was NEC Foundation of America, which provided the funds for the design of a comprehensive technology system to make the campus fully accessible with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities for people with disabilities. NEC made the award in commemoration of its 10th anniversary. An NEC-funded report, "Technology and Universal Design Assessment of the Ed Roberts Campus," describes the ways technology is used now by the partner organizations and presents strategies for its use in the future. It recommends technological solutions and an information technology

action plan, and presents a newly created Universal Design Tool. (The report is available from the ERC.)

The ERC developed a long-range financial plan to support planning for the new organization, as well as designing, building and operating the facility. The plan was laid out in phases so that each phase of work could proceed as funds are raised. This approach is working. The ERC raised more than \$2 million in public and private funds for the planning. This money was used to incorporate, secure the site and develop the design to the level needed for the City's permit process. While ERC carried out Phase 2—the schematic design—it continued fundraising for Phases 3 and 4, the construction drawings and construction.

Once built, the ERC will be a self-sustaining entity, with partners and tenants paying rents and fees that are adequate to pay off the debt and maintain and operate the facility.



The site plan shows access for BART patron parking via a new driveway at the northwest corner of the site at Adeline Street.