Detailed low-energy electron diffraction analysis of the (4 × 4) surface structure of C_{60} on Cu(111): Seven-atom-vacancy reconstruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

Fullerene-based molecular crystals on metals are of interest because of their unique electronic properties, which are influenced by the atomic structure of the interface between the molecules and the metal. C_{60} adsorption has been studied on several metal surfaces,1 including Ag(111),2 Al(111),3 and Pt(111);3,5 these metals were found to reconstruct into a one-metal-atom vacancy structure, in which one metal atom is missing under each C_{60} molecule. A study of C_{60} on Cu(111) performed by Pai et al.6 found that after deposition of C_{60} and annealing to 500 K, the C_{60} molecules sink into the Cu(111) surface by ∼2 Å, which is close to the Cu(111) interlayer spacing. This suggested that Cu atoms are missing to form a sufficiently wide one-layer-deep hole under every C_{60} molecule. A subsequent mass-flow analysis by in situ scanning tunneling microscope (STM) monitoring of C_{60} growth8 suggested that, in each (4 × 4) unit cell, seven Cu atoms were removed from the outermost Cu layer, enough to form such a hole.

An important further study by Pai et al.8 used first-principles density functional theory (DFT) calculations to evaluate the electronic structure of this system with the seven-Cu-atom-vacancy model, and used low-energy electron diffraction (LEED) to perform an initial structural search. The results indicated a charge transfer of about 3e− per C_{60} molecule, in excellent agreement with experiments of photoelectron spectroscopy (PES) and scanning tunneling spectroscopy (STS).3 In that work, the geometry of the interface structure obtained by total energy calculation was supported by our initial LEED analysis based on a limited experimental database.

However, that earlier LEED analysis can be considerably improved. In particular, since the molecule/metal interface is located about 7 Å below the tops of the C_{60} molecules, i.e. at a depth comparable to the electron mean-free path, it is helpful to increase the sensitivity of the interface analysis by using higher-energy incident electrons that can penetrate deeper below the molecules. The higher energies also provide a larger database of experimental LEED intensities, to which the many structural parameters of this system (about 100) can be fit with greater accuracy.

In Sec. II, we present our LEED experiment at 185 K with 40–400 eV incident electron energies. In Sec. III, the LEED analysis methodology is described. Section IV presents the resulting geometric results, which are discussed in Sec. V. Conclusions are in Sec. VI.

II. EXPERIMENT

The Cu(111) + (4 × 4)C_{60} structure is readily prepared. The Cu(111) surface was cleaned by repeated cycles of sputtering and annealing (at 600°C). The cleaned surface showed wide terraces, typically >100 nm, in STM images. C_{60} was evaporated from a homemade tantalum crucible, with a slow deposition rate ∼0.05 to 0.1 monolayer (ML) per min and a low background pressure below 1 × 10^{-10} torr. During dosing, the sample was held at ∼500 K. A slight excess C_{60} coverage (>1 ML) was dosed, followed by annealing at ∼600 K, to obtain a well-ordered (4 × 4) structure without multilayers. Scanning tunneling microscope images revealed two C_{60} orientation domains, as discussed in Ref. 6. The typical domain size is on the order of 100 nm.

Samples prepared with the above procedure showed a sharp LEED pattern, illustrated in Fig. 1. To obtain LEED I-V data, we used a commercial Omicron SpectaLEED and a commercial CMOS camera. To improve our previous room-temperature LEED I-V analysis reported in Ref. 8, we cooled the sample down to 185 K and extended the LEED energy range from 45 to 400 eV. The LEED pattern was photographed for every 0.5 eV beam energy change under normal incidence condition. We developed a code to automatically track the same beam spot across consecutive LEED photos. The beam intensity was calculated from the integration of a background-subtracted 2D fitted Gaussian beam profile. The raw LEED...
automated search procedure. We describe next the geometrical treatment of the seven-atom-vacancy model of Cu(111) + \((4 \times 4)\)-C\(_{60}\) with this code; other structural models are treated similarly.

For LEED computational purposes, the seven-atom-vacancy model is decomposed into five layers totaling 101 adjustable atoms per \((4 \times 4)\) unit cell. The C\(_{60}\) molecules can be sliced parallel to the surface into three composite layers having 21, 18, and 21 carbon atoms per molecule in the outermost, middle, and inner layers, respectively. Since the C\(_{60}\) molecule sinks into the seven-atom hole of the first Cu layer, its innermost layer of six C atoms is nearly coplanar with the outermost Cu layer, which has \((4 \times 4) - 7 = 9\) atoms per \((4 \times 4)\) unit cell. We therefore combine the 21 inner C atoms and these nine Cu atoms into a single mixed composite layer of 30 atoms per cell. The second Cu layer has 16 Cu atoms per \((4 \times 4)\) unit cell, and so does the third Cu layer. All atomic coordinates in these five composite layers \((21 + 18 + 30 + 16 + 16 = 101\) atoms in total) were adjusted by automated search, assuming threefold rotational symmetry, without imposing mirror symmetry. The assumed C\(_3\) symmetry results in 101 adjustable coordinates and one nonstructural parameter (the inner potential), totaling 102 independent adjustable parameters in this model (not counting discrete variations of layer-dependent Debye temperatures, perpendicular vs parallel vibrational amplitudes and imaginary parts of the inner potential described below).

Due to the relatively low total electron density of C\(_{60}\) compared to the metal substrate, one must expect a relatively longer electron mean-free path in the outer parts of the molecule. In the absence of corresponding measurements, we adopt a stepwise decreasing mean-free path from layer to layer, represented by an increasing imaginary part of inner potential described below).

As is frequently done in LEED, first the structural parameters (and inner potential) are fit to the data, before also fitting thermal parameters in a more approximate manner, as the optimum structure depends less on these parameters: in the case of SATLEED, the Debye temperature \(\theta_D\) and the atomic enhancement factors for the mean square vibrational amplitudes perpendicular and parallel to the surface \((F_{\text{per}}, F_{\text{par}})\) have been modified to improve the fitting by testing a few different values. Finally, we obtained \(\theta_D = 1000\) K for the C atoms, \(\theta_D = 343\) K for the Cu atoms, \(F_{\text{per}} = F_{\text{par}} = 1.0\) for all Cu atoms, and some C atoms located at the interface and bonded to Cu atoms, while \(F_{\text{per}} = F_{\text{par}} = 3.0\) is better for the C atoms which do not bond to Cu atoms, implying stronger vibrations that are approximately isotropic.

In our analysis, a maximum angular momentum \(l_{\text{max}} = 11\) was used, so 23 partial waves were taken into account: this is appropriate for higher electron energies up to 400 eV. The phase shifts were obtained by the atomic overlapping approach, with a Cu crystal environment for all Cu atoms.
with a C monolayer on a simple Cu surface for the C atoms located at the interface, and with a bulk graphite environment for C atoms which do not bond to Cu.

We used 30 symmetrically inequivalent diffracted beams obtained by experiment, with a total (cumulative) energy range of 7111 eV, for comparison with the theoretical LEED I-V curves.

We used two different estimates of the accuracy of structure determination by LEED,\(^1\) the first reflecting precision due to internal consistency of the data, while the second better reflects the accuracy of the methodology as a whole; this also ensures that our structural results are not significantly affected by the choice of estimates in the presence of a relatively large number of adjustable parameters. In the first method, applied to LEED by Shih \textit{et al.},\(^1\) the \(n\)-independent LEED beams are considered to be independent experiments. Assume that the \(i\)th beam taken alone yields a best-fit value \(y_i\) of a certain parameter \(y\) (for example, a certain bond length), and that this beam is given a weight \(w_i\) proportional to its energy range \(\Delta E_i\). Then the overall square standard deviation \(S^2\) for this parameter is:

\[
S^2 = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i (y_i - \bar{y})^2}{(n - 1)}. \tag{1}
\]

Here, \(\bar{y} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i}\) is the arithmetic mean of the values \(y_i\) and \(w_i = \frac{\Delta E_i}{\bar{E}}\). Then, using the student’s \(t\)-distribution,\(^6\) the error bar \(\Delta y\) of parameter \(y\) is:

\[
\Delta y = \pm S \text{ with a 68\% confidence level;}
\]

\[
\Delta y = \pm 2S \text{ with a 95\% confidence level.}
\]

A more common estimate of accuracy in LEED structure determination follows Pendry’s approach.\(^7\) It views LEED I-V curves as composed of \(N\) experimental Lorentzian peaks to be fit with theory using an R-factor \(R\) (which measures the discrepancy between theory and experiment) that will vary about a mean value. The double reliability factor \(RR\) was defined by Pendry to indicate the reliability of reliability factors:

\[
RR = \frac{\text{var}(R_N)}{R_N}. \tag{2}
\]

Here, \(N\) is the number of well-separated experimental peaks in the total energy range \(\Delta E\), \(R_N\) is the standard square deviation of the R-factor, and \(\bar{R}_N\) is the overall mean R-factor. The value of \(N\) can be approximated as

\[
N = (\Delta E/4|V_{oi}|), \tag{3}
\]

where \(V_{oi}\) is the (average) imaginary part of the inner potential. We can apply Eqs. (2) and (3) to obtain the standard square deviation for a fit parameter \(d\) as:

\[
\text{var}(d) = \frac{\varepsilon R_{\text{min}}}{\sqrt{2\pi}}. \tag{4}
\]

Here, \(1/\varepsilon\) is the curvature of \(R(d)\) near the minimum \(R_{\text{min}}\) and is thus the second derivative of \(R(d)\) at that minimum: \((1/\varepsilon) = R''_{\text{min}}(d)\). Typically, the Pendry approach of Eq. (4) is relatively conservative and, in particular, gives error bars that are three to six times larger than those of Shih \textit{et al.}, Eq. (1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure model</th>
<th>R-factor (R_p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(\text{C}_{60}) molecule on-top site, nonreconstructed</td>
<td>0.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\text{C}_{60}) molecule on hcp site, nonreconstructed</td>
<td>0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Cu-atom vacancy of r-fcc</td>
<td>0.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-Cu-atom vacancy of r-fcc  (Ref. 8)</td>
<td>0.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Cu(BCABCA...) fcc stacking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-Cu-atom vacancy of r-hcp (Ref. 8)</td>
<td>0.455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Cu(CBACBCA...) hcp stacking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We used the Pendry R-factor \(R_p\) for automated optimization of all structural coordinates.\(^7\)

IV. GEOMETRICAL RESULTS

We tested several possible models for Cu(111) + (4 × 4)-\(\text{C}_{60}\), listed in Table I. STM images imply that the buckyballs are oriented such that a C hexagon lies parallel to the substrate surface, with an azimuthal direction close to the crystallographic axes of the substrate. The DFT calculations also support this observation.

For each model in Fig. 2, the LEED analysis started with \(\text{C}_{60}\) positioned at a variety of heights above the metal surface, and then allowed full relaxations within the molecule and two outermost metal layers, assuming threefold rotational symmetry. The LEED-optimized relaxations were used in all our figures.

Figure 2(a) shows the best-fit result for the nonreconstructed on-top adsorption model, giving an unfavorable \(R_p\) value compared to that for the best-fit seven-Cu-atom vacancy model and the large distortions within the \(\text{C}_{60}\) molecule [cf. Fig. 2(a)] compared to the DFT results rule out this model. It should be noted that it is common for incorrect models to produce unrealistic distortions that are incompatible with total-energy calculations. The total energy calculations for this model strongly favor the particular

FIG. 2. (Color online) Three models for Cu(111) + (4 × 4)-\(\text{C}_{60}\), viewed slightly off-normal, showing only atoms in the topmost Cu layer (large red balls) and the bottom 21 atoms of the buckyball (small gray balls), as optimized with LEED. (a) Nonreconstructed on-top adsorption (i.e. with the buckyball axis above a Cu surface atom): \(R_p = 0.671\). (b) Nonreconstructed hcp-site adsorption (i.e. with the buckyball axis at an hcp hollow site): \(R_p = 0.536\). (c) One-Cu-atom vacancy model: \(R_p = 0.608\).
azimuthal orientation of C₆₀ shown in Fig. 2(a), so other orientations were not considered by LEED.

Figure 2(b) illustrates nonreconstructed hcp-site adsorption after optimization, giving $R_p = 0.536$, with distances of 2.31 Å between three pairs of C and Cu atoms. This large R-factor value also rules out this model.

Figure 2(c) shows an optimized reconstructed model with a one-Cu-atom vacancy below the center of each C₆₀ molecule, similar to the structures reported for C₆₀/Ag(111), C₆₀/Pt(111), and C₆₀/Pt(111). The best-fit result gives $R_p = 0.608$, with distances 1.98 and 2.29 Å between six pairs of C and Cu atoms. Figure 2(c) shows that the distortion of the C₆₀ molecule is severe, which is again not compatible with DFT calculations.

For the seven-atom-vacancy model of Cu(111) + (4 × 4)-C₆₀, we explored two basic alternatives: in one model, r-fcc, the Cu atoms kept their bulklike fcc arrangement, while in the other, r-hcp, the nine outermost Cu atoms per unit cell adopted hcp positions relative to the underlying Cu layers. In our DFT calculation, the energy difference between these two models is remarkably small. The r-hcp model is preferred by ∼0.01 eV/cell if the Cu slab used in calculation is thinner than ∼15 Cu layers. For thicker slabs (from 18 to 30 Cu layers), the r-fcc structure becomes ∼0.02 eV/cell lower in energy. As we shall see, our LEED analysis can distinguish clearly between these models, despite the depth of the differing atoms, namely in the third and deeper metal layers.

For the r-fcc model, we used the Cu(BCABCA...) layer stacking in the LEED analysis, while the equivalent Cu(BACBAC...) stacking was used in the earlier DFT calculations, corresponding simply to a rotation of the whole sample by 180°. For the r-hcp model, we assumed Cu(BCBACBA...) stacking in the LEED analysis. We used the optimum coordinates obtained by the DFT calculation for the top three layers (60 C atoms and nine Cu atoms of the first B layer) as the starting point for the LEED fitting, while the deeper layers were initially given the bulk structure. A total of 102 independent parameters were relaxed automatically to optimize the Pendry R-factor. As is common with tensor LEED, this process was iterated several times until the search had converged.

The best-fit geometry gave a Pendry R-factor of 0.455 for r-hcp and 0.376 for r-fcc, thus strongly favoring r-fcc. For r-fcc, the best-fit inner potential is 5.11 eV; the optimized coordinates of the 101 adjusted atoms are listed in supplementary material II. Figure 3 shows the best overall fit between theory and experiment for the 30 independent beams used in the LEED analysis for the best-fit r-fcc seven-atom-vacancy model of Cu(111) + (4 × 4)-C₆₀. Individual Pendry R-factors are shown for each beam; the overall beam-averaged Pendry R-factor is 0.376. The intensities have been normalized so each curve has a maximum intensity of 1.

V. DISCUSSION

Our new LEED results presented here strongly support the previous work with DFT and further confirm and detail our earlier conclusions from LEED.

We first compare the atomic positions from DFT and LEED for the best-fit structure r-fcc shown in Figs. 4 and 5; the complete sets of optimized coordinates are listed in supplementary material II, Part 2. The different coordinate systems used in the DFT and LEED calculations offered an opportunity to test the reproducibility of the LEED optimization process itself, by repeating the complete LEED optimization after rotation of the sample and beams by 180°: we obtained $R_p = 0.377$ vs 0.376 and differences of at most about 0.02 and 0.005 Å for parallel and perpendicular positions, respectively, for all listed atoms. This is particularly significant for the deeper atoms near the C₆₀-Cu interface, considering that these atoms are about 7 Å below the outermost C atoms, i.e. about as deep as the electronic mean-free path: this test thus gives confidence in the determination of the interface structure despite its being buried under 7 Å of material.
DETAILED LOW-ENERGY ELECTRON DIFFRACTION

PHYSICAL REVIEW B 86, 075419 (2012)

FIG. 4. (Color online) Top view of Cu(111) + (4 × 4)-C_{60} according to our best-fit LEED analysis. Here, a₁, a₂ are basis vectors for the (4 × 4) unit cell (outlined with a dashed black line). Dark gray balls are C atoms; red (gray), yellow (medium gray), and light gray balls are Cu atoms in the first, second, and third Cu layers, respectively. In our right-handed coordinate system, the z axis is perpendicular to the surface and points into the sample; the origin of the x and y coordinates is located at the center of the picture, and the origin of z coordinate is located at the top of a C_{60} molecule.

From our optimized atomic positions, we observe that, for the 101 adjusted atoms, almost all differences in z coordinates between LEED and DFT are smaller than 0.1 Å; the exceptions are three C atoms (group 18, atoms #52, #53, #54 in supplementary material II) which have a difference of about 0.14 Å. There are 32 differences in x and y coordinates larger than 0.1 Å, of which only five differences are larger than 0.2 Å, the largest difference being 0.29 Å (namely for Cu atom #84, located in the second Cu layer, at a depth of about 8.8 Å below the top of the C_{60} molecule). This is consistent with the familiar fact that the LEED analysis is less accurate for the coordinates parallel to the surface and for the deeper atoms due to the mean-free path.

The seven-atom hole in the outermost Cu layer is clearly visible in Fig. 5 surrounded by a ringlike edge of 12 Cu atoms (colored red, blue, green, and light-gray): the hole is filled with a C_{60} molecule, whose bottom C₆ ring is almost coplanar with the remaining Cu atoms. The edge of the hole is also highlighted in Fig. 4 as a blue dash-dotted line and further magnified in Fig. 6: we observe that this Cu edge is strongly distorted from its original bulklike hexagonal shape (as a result in Fig. 4, the adjacent triangles marked by darker green dashed lines are seen to be significantly rotated in alternate directions).

The cause for the in-plane distortion of the Cu hole edge can be traced to a distinct asymmetrical lateral motion of the bridging Cu atoms (identified by arrows in Fig. 6 and represented by atoms #61 and #63, respectively, in supplementary material II): these Cu atoms, although located midway between two neighboring C_{60} molecules before relaxation from bulklike positions, move sideways by ~0.30 Å (0.34 Å from DFT). Our LEED error bar [±0.022 Å from Eq. (1) or ±0.12 Å from Eq. (4)] is small enough to view this lateral displacement as distinctly significant, as also confirmed by DFT, showing that these Cu atoms make a stronger bond to one molecule than the other. As seen in Fig. 6, one such atom (at top right) makes a bond to the tip of a C₅ pentagon of the shown C_{60} molecule; other such atoms (e.g. at top left) do likewise, but bond to a neighboring molecule (cf. Fig. 4).

Some edge atoms of the hole (first Cu layer) are also pulled outward (perpendicular to the surface) by the molecule and therefore exhibit a buckling of about 0.07 Å (0.04 Å from DFT) among themselves. Note in Fig. 5 how three Cu atoms in the second Cu layer (yellow atoms) are bonded to the C_{60} molecule: these three Cu atoms are pulled toward the molecule, causing a buckling of ~0.14 Å (0.08 Å from DFT) in that second Cu layer.

The interface structure between molecule and metal is of particular interest. In Fig. 5, we show all the symmetrically inequivalent distances between C and Cu atoms which are...
shorter than 2.30 Å (the sum of the covalent radii of C and Cu atoms is about 2 Å).

The number of C-Cu bonds in this adsorption structure is remarkably large. A total of 12 Cu atoms bond to a single C$_{60}$ molecule: all Cu atoms of the outermost Cu layer (nine atoms per unit cell) bond to C atoms (see Fig. 4), while three Cu atoms per unit cell, located in the second Cu layer just below the C$_{60}$ molecule, also bond to C atoms (with bond lengths within 2.30 Å). Similarly, 15 of the lowest C atoms of a C$_{60}$ molecule (i.e. a quarter of the C atoms) bond to Cu atoms (with bond lengths within 2.30 Å). This large number of bonds illustrates why the adsorption of C$_{60}$ on the Cu(111) surface with seven-Cu-atom holes is very strong and stable.

The C-Cu bond lengths and their uncertainties are shown in Table II. The LEED and DFT results agree well within the accuracy of LEED. This is significant in two ways: first, theory and experiment come to the same structural conclusions; second, the LEED error bars, despite representing uncertainties in atomic positions about 7 Å below the surface, are small enough to allow useful conclusions.

Regarding distortion of the C$_{60}$ molecule, its six-C-atom bottom ring exhibits a buckling perpendicular to the surface of only 0.007 Å in the LEED result (vs 0.027 Å in DFT). The two alternating C-C bond lengths in this ring are 1.507 and 1.279 Å (1.445 and 1.423 Å for DFT), respectively, compared to two alternating C-C bond lengths in this ring are 1.507 and 1.464 and 1.385 Å for the unrelaxed C$_{60}$ molecule; the LEED accuracy of about 0.26 Å [from Eq. (4)] in these bond lengths leaves this difference indecisive, which is not surprising for deep bonds parallel to the surface. From LEED, the rest of the adsorbed molecule is similarly indistinguishable from its free-molecule structure, while its DFT-optimized coordinates remain within about 0.05 Å of the free-molecule structure, with insignificant changes in the outermost half of the molecule.

In addition, as pointed out by Pai et al.,$^8$ the C$_{60}$ center can sit at either an fcc or an hcp site, depending on whether the top layer Cu atoms are stacked as the unfaulted fcc-like Cu(BACBAC...) denoted r-fcc or as the faulted hcp-terminated Cu(BACBABC...) denoted r-hcp: the DFT energies for C$_{60}$ on these two Cu configurations are nearly identical (as mentioned above, which of these two DFT energies is best switches as a function of the number of Cu layers included in the Cu slab of the model, r-fcc being best for thicker slabs). However, our LEED analysis clearly distinguishes the two models, with best fits of $R_p = 0.377$ and 0.455 for r-fcc and r-hcp stacking, respectively. This illustrates the structural sensitivity of LEED I-V analysis for certain models with nearly degenerate energies.

It is particularly interesting to contrast the current results for C$_{60}$ on Cu(111) with similar adsorption structures of C$_{60}$ on other transition metal surfaces. While C$_{60}$ sits into a seven-atom hole on Cu(111) and apparently also on Ni(111),$^{19}$ C$_{60}$ sits over a one-atom hole on Ag(111)$^2$ and on Pt(111);$^4,5$ the local structure of this one-atom hole is very similar to that shown in Fig. 2(c). However, the seven-atom hole structure seen on Cu(111) is also predicted on Ru(0001).$^{20,21}$ These different behaviors on different close-packed metals can be traced$^{21}$ to a surprisingly simple dependency on substrate lattice constants (and lack of dependency on substrate electronic structures). The near-constant molecule-molecule spacing of C$_{60}$ in its hexagonal monolayer imposes different supercells relative to the different metal substrates, due to their different lattice constants; these different supercells therefore offer different numbers of metal atoms to interact with each C$_{60}$; for instance, each C$_{60}$ can interact with as many as 16 Cu atoms vs as few as 12 Ag atoms (before reconstruction) in the respective $(4 \times 4)$ vs $(2\sqrt{3} \times 2\sqrt{3})$R30$^\circ$ supercells. The seven-atom hole, which maximizes the number of C-metal bonds, is too large for the smaller supercells: with smaller supercells, metal atoms must share C-metal bonds with two neighboring C$_{60}$ molecules, weakening those bonds; the one-atom hole then becomes more favorable.$^{21}$ In both the seven-atom hole and the one-atom hole structures, C$_{60}$ bonds with a hexagon down, which is determined by the symmetry matching between C$_{60}$ and the substrate.$^1$ The C$_{60}$ mirror planes are perpendicular to those of the substrate in the seven-atom hole structure, while they are parallel to those of the substrate in the one-atom hole structure: these different molecular orientations maximize the number of C-metal bonds of C$_{60}$ to the metal substrate in the different hole structures. C$_{60}$ sinks into the seven-atom hole, bonding with both the atoms at the hole edges and atoms in the second metal layer: this bonding significantly distorts the seven-atom hole structure relative to bulk atomic positions, as shown in Fig. 4; this is different from the one-atom hole reconstructions on Ag(111) and Pt(111), in which only very small displacements of the metal atoms from their bulk positions are detected. These details in the nanopatterning at the molecule-metal interface are essential to the stability of ordered structures of molecules and can critically influence the charge transfer and the C$_{60}$ band structures, which are important aspects in the design of molecular electronic devices.

**VI. CONCLUSIONS**

Thanks to a considerably larger energy range compared to our earlier study,$^5$ our new LEED analysis has significantly increased the sensitivity to and reliability of the structure of the interface between C$_{60}$ molecules and a Cu(111) surface. We have shown conclusively that the seven-Cu-atom
vacancy model with Cu fcc stacking is much favored over the one-Cu-atom vacancy model and various nonreconstructed models as well as over a seven-Cu-atom vacancy model with Cu hcp stacking.

Our LEED results, which agree substantially with DFT results, show the intimate bonding behavior between C$_{60}$ and the Cu(111) substrate in the seven-Cu-atom vacancy model that provides a hole or nest for the C$_{60}$ to fit into: in particular, we find that the distances from all Cu atoms of the outermost Cu layer to their closest C atoms in the bottom of the C$_{60}$ molecule are shorter than 2.30 Å, which is true also for three atoms of the second Cu layer. These close distances, coupled with appreciable distortions in the substrate, illustrate the strength of the molecule-metal bonding, consistent with the DFT results.

The seven-atom hole reconstruction found for C$_{60}$ on Cu(111) [and likely on Ni(111)] contrasts with the one-atom hole found on Ag(111) and Pt(111), but coincides with the prediction of a seven-atom hole on Ru(0001). These different behaviors have been traced to a simple dependency on metallic lattice constants.$^{21}$

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18See Supplemental Material II at http://link.aps.org/supplemental/10.1103/PhysRevB.86.075419 for the atomic coordinates obtained by LEED and DFT.

