

240 G Street

Davis, CA



VERTICAL MIXED USE

Design Narrative

June 6th, 2023

**120 UNITS + 6 GROUND
FLOOR LIVE/WORK LOFTS**

#22030 | B03



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Design Narrative: Nestled at the border of downtown and creating a bookend along the natural edge created by the commuter railway, our proposed 6-story Vertical Mixed-Use building aims to become an iconic entrance to the city while seamlessly blending into its surroundings. Designed to comply with the city's form-based code planning requirements, the building combines residential and live-work spaces, along with a delineated first-floor storefront, incorporating stucco, brick, and horizontal siding materials that harmonize with nearby buildings. This design narrative explores the importance of materials, the community benefits, and how the building enhances the city's entrance.

Material Selection: Within the context of our design, the selection of materials becomes a paramount consideration, forging a strong visual connection between the building and its surroundings. Our proposal incorporates white stucco, tan brick, and terracotta-colored siding, each chosen deliberately to resonate with the architectural heritage and historical character of Davis while introducing contemporary interpretations.

The choice of white stucco serves as a nod to the abundant natural light that bathes Davis, infusing the building with a radiant and inviting aura reminiscent of the historic city hall. Drawing inspiration from the surrounding structures, the use of brick brings texture and warmth, establishing a visual link to the timeless charm of nearby buildings. The tan hue of the brick mirrors the color palette of other prominent structures in the district, including the adjacent train station. This deliberate selection reinforces a sense of continuity and cohesion within the architectural fabric of the area.

To further enhance the building's visual appeal and reduce the perceived height, terracotta-colored siding is introduced. This choice not only adds additional texture to the façade but also elongates the forms and further reduces the visual appearance of the building's height. The terracotta color pays homage to Davis's architectural heritage, referencing traditional materials such as terracotta roofs, brickwork, and other historical details found throughout the city. This intentional reference creates a timeless connection between the building and its context, reinforcing a sense of place and history.

In addition to these dominant materials, a darker stucco with an alternate construction joint pattern is incorporated to accentuate the three primary materials, allowing them to stand out and make a statement. This contrasting element adds depth and visual interest, contributing to the building's overall architectural composition.

By carefully selecting and combining these materials, our design ensures that the building integrates into the local architectural fabric. The white stucco, tan brick, and terracotta-colored siding collectively pay homage to Davis's historical character while embracing contemporary design principles. Through this thoughtful material palette, we create a visually striking building that not only respects its context but also establishes itself as an integral part of the city's architectural tapestry.

Community Benefits: Our vertical mixed-use building strives to enhance the community in several ways. Firstly, by providing 120 residential units, we aim to address the pressing need for housing in Davis, offering comfortable homes for individuals and families. The diversity of unit sizes and configurations caters to a range of lifestyles, promoting inclusivity within the community. Additionally, the 6 ground floor live-work lofts provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs and artists to establish their businesses, fostering economic growth and creative expression. The double-height first level has been reserved for commercial use, seamlessly weaving the ground floor experience into the surrounding downtown storefronts and allowing the community to engage with the project similarly to the existing buildings in the downtown core.

The building also features several community spaces, such as rooftop access and communal gathering areas. A significant amount of space has been allocated for common area amenities at the mezzanine level. These spaces promote social interaction among residents, creating a sense of community and neighborliness. Moreover, sustainable design principles are incorporated throughout the building, including energy-efficient systems and water conservation measures, demonstrating our commitment to environmental responsibility. The project was designed with an understanding of Davis's specific needs in mind, including bike parking located at the ground level for safe and easy access, which exceeds the minimum requirement.

Gateway to the City: Situated at one entrance to downtown, our building serves as a significant gateway, leaving a lasting impression on visitors and residents alike. The design takes into account the city's form-based code planning requirements, ensuring a harmonious transition from the existing urban fabric to the proposed development. By incorporating elements such as setbacks, building heights, and architectural detailing that mirror the adjacent structures, the building integrates seamlessly into the neighborhood and creates welcoming storefront to the downtown.

Form-Based Code: Situated within the vibrant MS-L District, our project carefully considers the form-based regulations and architectural guidelines to create a visually striking and thoughtfully integrated design. The building's primary frontage, known as "Front Street," gracefully runs alongside H Street. To add depth and visual interest, the street-facing portion is gently set back by 15 feet, creating a harmonious rhythm with the surrounding structures. A carefully curated vertical element aligns seamlessly with the entry along H Street, creating a cohesive and visually appealing composition. However, at the captivating corner where H Street and 3rd Street intersect, a unique and inviting element emerges, projecting slightly forward to catch the eye of passersby.

As one traverses along 3rd Street, the designated "Side Street," the building adheres to the form-based regulations by maintaining a setback of 15 feet above the fourth level. This strategic setback adds a sense of architectural proportion and reduces the apparent size of the building.

While the rear of the building faces the city-designated paseo and future park to the west, it thoughtfully embraces its surroundings. Recognizing the prominence of this façade when viewed from the future park, the design introduces projections and material changes to break up the massing, creating a dynamic interplay of light and shadow. This artistic approach not only enhances the building's visual aesthetics but also ensures a harmonious integration with the natural landscape and the park's future visitors.

The south-facing side elevation dutifully follows the form-based regulations, continuing the design language established throughout the building. Materials thoughtfully align with the other elevations, further emphasizing the project's cohesive and visually captivating presence. This design approach not only ensures compliance with the regulations but also creates a sense of unity and purpose, reflecting the careful consideration given to the project's overall composition.

The material choices have been applied as a tripartite. The white stucco, brick, and horizontal siding façade create a visual landmark that welcomes people into the city while respecting its historic character. The building's contemporary design language, combined with the use of traditional materials, strikes a balance between the past and the present, representing Davis as a vibrant and progressive city.

Conclusion: By thoughtfully implementing setbacks, material changes, and strategic alignments, we create a visually striking building that integrates with its surroundings while creating a front porch for the city along the neighborhood's natural edge. Through these design choices, we aim to establish a building that not only adheres to the requirements but also enriches the streetscape and becomes a landmark within the MS-L District of the city.

In conclusion, our proposed 6-story vertical mixed-use building in downtown aims to benefit the community by addressing housing needs, supporting local businesses, and creating spaces that foster social connections. By complying with the city's form-based code planning requirements, the building harmonizes with the existing architectural context, serving as a visually striking entrance to the city. Through careful attention to materials, community benefits, and contextual integration, our design endeavors to contribute positively to the fabric and character of Davis.