

January 16, 2018

## Davis Live Project Narrative

525 Oxford Circle, LLC is pleased to present its plans for a 71 unit, 440-bed student housing development in Davis. Situated on an approximately one-acre parcel currently zoned Residential High Density (R-HD) on Oxford Circle, the project complements UC Davis' on-campus housing and dining in the campus Cuarto Area, and will replace an out-dated and deteriorated two-story fraternity structure. The project will be designed to LEED Gold standards and offer a mix of 4, 6, and 8 bed units ranging in size from 1,222 to 2,052 SF. The proposal is a direct response to a pressing need to provide housing for students at UC Davis' growing institution and to do so at an appropriate, central location. The chosen site, with direct adjacency to the campus and commercial services, is uniquely suited to a high-density, bicycle and pedestrian-oriented project. The building has been thoughtfully designed to create a comfortable and welcoming scale along the Russell Boulevard pedestrian / bike path and will serve as an active and engaging gateway to the university from the west end of town. In addition, it is well buffered from more distant single-family residences to the north. As such, the project is designed to maximize the potential of the site while maintaining conformity with community standards and minimizing any adverse impacts a sizable development could have. The development team is excited to work with the City and community to ensure that the project becomes a truly great addition to the immediate neighborhood and Davis as a whole.

## Requested Entitlements

Land is precious, especially in a small town that is home to a major and expanding university. If we want to develop in a sustainable way while accommodating growth, we need to achieve greater density in appropriate locations where conditions permit. This particular site with direct proximity to the University of California Davis, existing student housing and commercial services is ideally and uniquely suited to a high-density student-oriented proposal. The site location will allow young students to get around easily by bike or on foot. For that reason, we can minimize provided parking (car space) and maximize provided housing (people space). Since we are on a wide boulevard with a mature tree canopy, the scale of a larger building is well-mitigated. Since we are adjacent to an existing park, there is less need to provide duplicate open space on the project site. Since we are in a neighborhood already featuring an established student population, the proposed use is undeniably appropriate. This project seeks to celebrate a place where an engaged and forward-thinking community of UCD students can thrive and actively interact with the greater Davis community.

In order to create the project as envisioned, the design team has been encouraged to "think outside the box" of current zoning for the site. While the proposed project is well under the 100' height limit allowed under the R-HD zoning, the building program exceeds currently-allowed FAR, side-yard setbacks, parking and residential density for the site. The project will seek to create specific "planned development" zoning with changes to FAR, setbacks, parking and residential density particular to this site. There will be a request for a General Plan Text Amendment to allow for an increase to 68 units per acre (current maximum is 25 / acre in R-HD and 50 / acre with a GP amendment); the FAR is

proposed to be 3.36 (current maximum is 2.0 in R-HD); side-yard setbacks are proposed to be 10' (current setbacks vary with height of building and are typically wider than 10' for taller buildings); reduction in required parking due to the pedestrian and bicycle centric design, target population and close proximity to UCD, public transportation and commercial services.

### **Summary of entitlement applications:**

1. General Plan Text Amendment
2. Zoning Amendment to Planned Development
3. Individualized Affordable Housing Plan
4. Development Agreement
5. Design Review for Site Plan and Architecture
6. Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Exemption for "Transit Corridor" Project
7. Vacation of Right of Way – already completed
8. Demolition Permit for existing structures – already granted

## **Site Characteristics & Background**

The project site recently contained a vacant two-story building with parking lot and landscaping that was home to the Sigma Nu Fraternity. It was in poor condition and no longer in use at the time of purchase in March 2017. The existing building was approved for demolition by the City of Davis after an historic analysis was prepared by Historic Resource Associates and reviewed by the Davis Historic Resources Management Commission. It was determined the building and site had no historic or cultural significance. After asbestos and lead-based paint abatement was done, the major portion of demolition work was completed in early January 2018. Existing mature on-site trees and shrubbery will be preserved as long as possible prior to construction of the proposed project. While it is likely that all site trees may need to be removed to allow space for proposed storm water treatment bio-swales, the development team will make every effort to preserve as many trees as possible.

The site is located on the north side of Russell Boulevard directly opposite the northern edge of the UC Davis campus, and about 1/8 mile east of Highway 113. Russell Boulevard is a four-lane major east-west connector with a median strip and 10' wide exclusively-dedicated bike and pedestrian paths on both sides. The north side bike and pedestrian path is directly adjacent to the project site. The site is flanked on the west by La Casa De Flores, a 3-story private apartment complex and on the east by Thoreau Hall, a 3 ½ story student housing facility owned and operated by UCD. To the north-west of the site is Oxford Circle Park featuring children's play equipment, a disc-golf course, picnic areas and a large central lawn. The park features a mature grove of tall redwoods and pines. Additional properties surrounding the project site on all sides are student housing and apartments including Pinon Apartments, Oxford Parkside Apartments, University Court, Wake Forest Apartments, Emerson Hall and Webster Hall, a 4-story UCD student housing project currently under re-construction. The nearest single-family home neighborhood is well to the north of the project site and completely buffered from it by existing multi-family apartments, Oxford Circle Park and a mature and healthy canopy of street trees.



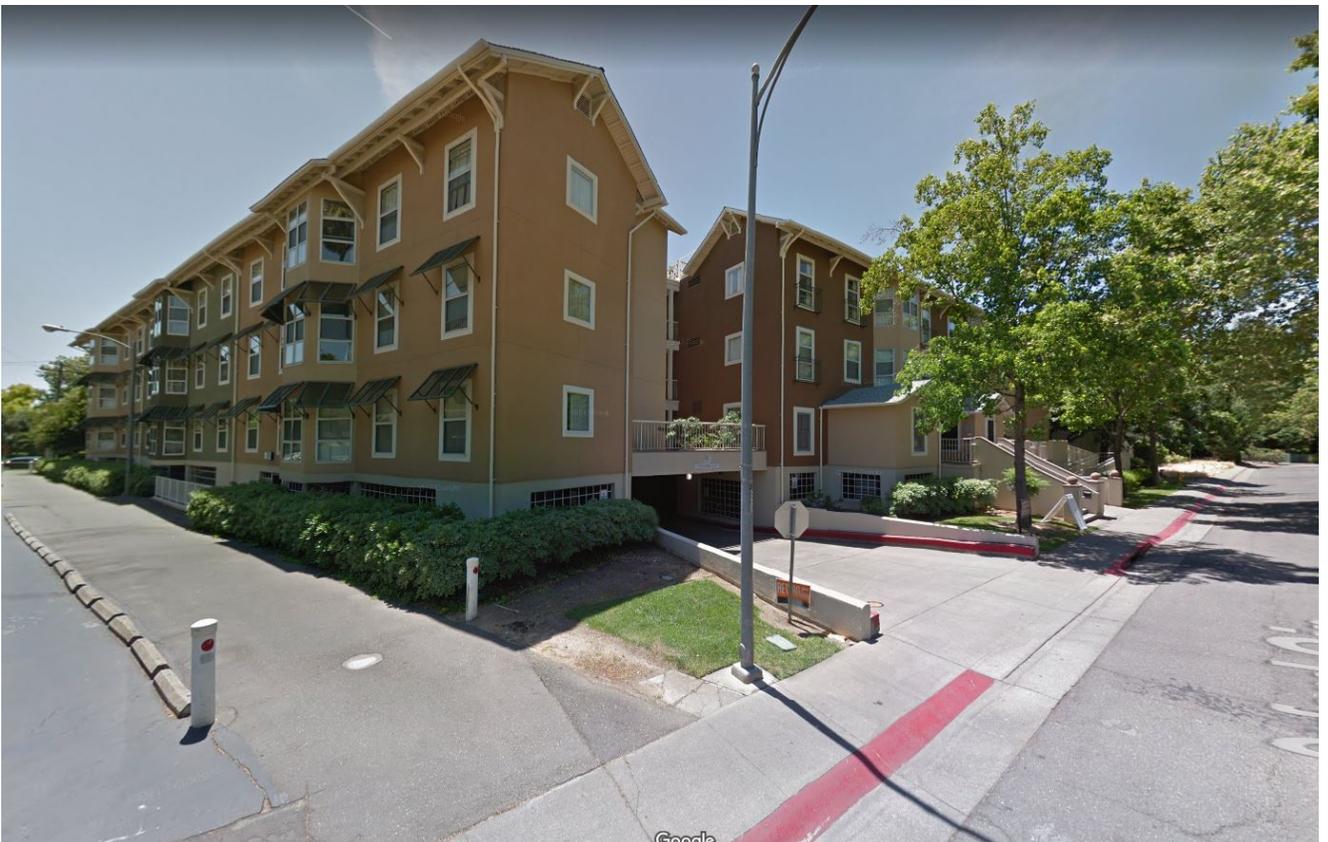
**Neighborhood Context**



**Project site: Prior existing two-story fraternity structure seen from Oxford Circle (now demolished)**



**La Casa De Flores Apartment seen from Oxford Circle (adjacent to and west of site)**



**Thoreau Hall seen from Oxford Circle (adjacent to and east of site)**



**Oxford Circle Park seen from Oxford Circle (to the north-west of site)**

## **Project Description**

The project proposes a 185,277 SF, 84' tall building consisting of 5 stories of Type IIIA construction over 2 levels of Type IA construction in a fully-sprinklered building. There are pedestrian grade-level entries from both the Russell Boulevard (south) and Oxford Circle (north) sides featuring stepped sculptural stair / planters plus elevators for full accessibility / universal access. The building is conceived as two interlinked vertical elements creating a courtyard for sun and light, with a central break on the north and south to let the space “breathe” and connect visually to the neighborhood. The first two floors along Russell Boulevard containing many of the common use areas are highly articulated and transparent. They form a welcome, active and inviting street edge at a “people scale”. There is a central activity courtyard, with wide views to the south, providing informal outdoor gathering spaces and visually connecting many of the amenity spaces such as study lounges, the fitness and yoga center, and clubhouse / media space. The upper residential floors feature varied articulation, materials and color breaks to create a light and playful composition. They will contain a variety of residential unit types for 4 to 8 students, with all bedrooms and living rooms having natural light and views. The units are accessed by a combination of enclosed and open circulation with informal terrace spaces at the building “bridge” elements. The top floor will also contain a special resident lounge with flexible programming. The building is targeting LEED Gold standards for energy efficiency. The sustainable design includes over 10,000 SF of common area, collaborative and club space.

### **Ground level includes:**

- 68-space naturally ventilated parking garage with electric vehicle charging stations. Access is direct from Oxford Circle and vehicles are fully concealed from Russell Boulevard. There are an additional 17 on-grade parking spaces available to the project on Oxford Circle for a total parking count of 85 cars.

- 3,500 SF secure indoor bike parking room for approximately 450 residents and guests accessible at grade level from both Russell Boulevard and Oxford Circle. Also included in the bike room is a bike maintenance and repair “shop” available for use by any of the students.
- 1,900 SF leasing and management office with employee collaboration space, student orientation center and mail room. This space is located to provide an open and central nexus for public access from the Russell bike path, the bike and vehicle parking areas and the central elevator core to the common use and residential floors above.
- Stepped planter and informal meeting and gathering spaces at the building edge fronting Russell Boulevard and the main City east-west bike path. This feature serves as a symbolic as well as functional “front porch” to the project.
- Trash and recycling room, building mechanical rooms.

#### **Second level includes:**

- 7 Residential apartments.
- Outdoor “Amenity Plaza” for group gatherings, outdoor fitness, study and socializing. The space includes some completely open areas and some areas under roof, for use in all weather.
- Outdoor projection wall for movies and sporting events.
- 1,800 SF “Fitness Center” and yoga facility.
- 3,100 SF “Club Room” with game and lounge spaces and media facilities.
- 1,500 SF “Study Lounge” with micro conference rooms and diversity of study environments.
- Stair and elevator access to both north and south entries.
- Trash chute to garage level trash and recycling.

#### **Residential Floors 3-7 include:**

- 13 residential apartments per floor, (12 units on Floor 7).
- Informal exterior decks at “bridge” connections for study and lounging.
- Top-floor interior resident lounge with flexible programming (Floor 7).
- Trash chute to garage level trash and recycling room.

#### **Residential units include:**

- Full furnishing of all apartments.
- Washer/dryer in each unit.
- Dedicated study spaces in larger units.
- Options to have private or shared room.
- Larger kitchens to accommodate up to 8 residents.
- Additional privacy and security features for residents.

## **Sustainable Design Features**

The project site selection itself contributes to sustainable design practice. The City of Davis is admirably committed to promoting densification of centrally-located in-fill sites in an effort to discourage more low-rise sprawl. There is recognition that this policy goal is a core tenet of sustainable development. Davis Live seeks to fulfill that vision, providing an ideal opportunity for “smart” growth. Higher density development on this central in-fill site conserves public infrastructure such as water, sewer, storm-water and power distribution systems and will help alleviate student rental stresses on single-family home neighborhoods. Existing infrastructure is already in place and ready to serve a much larger population of students at this site.



We will be demolishing a deteriorated building with inefficient heating and cooling systems, water-wasting plumbing fixtures and irrigation system and un-shaded surface asphalt parking. The prior fraternity use served to house only a relatively small number of students when it was active. In short, it was an under-utilized, blighted and out-dated facility. Our new building will increase by many times the number of students served at a prime, central location and will be a state-of-the-art sustainable structure using far less energy and resources per resident. The project proximity to UCD, commercial services, the city bike path and bus stops will allow more students to very nearly “live where they work and study”, reducing automobile dependency and encouraging walking, biking and use of public transportation.

The project will be built to LEED Gold standards, exceed California Title 24 energy standards and be Cal Green Tier 1 and Green House Gas Reduction compliant. Residential units will be individually metered for electricity and water consumption to encourage residents to conserve. High-efficacy LED lighting with lighting controls and natural day lighting / ventilation will be employed throughout the project. Use of low and no-VOC finishes, materials with recycled content and locally-sourced materials will contribute to sustainability and healthy indoor air quality. All plumbing fixtures will be low-water use compliant. There will be a solar hot-water preheat and central boiler system. Roof-top photo-voltaic electrical panels will generate power for house energy demands, with a goal to achieve a net-zero energy profile for the site and common area spaces.

All residential units will be separately heated and cooled with zone controls to limit energy use when apartments or individual rooms are vacant. All of the car parking for the project is completely shaded under the building, entirely eliminating the problem of heat island effect typical for surface parking lots. The building roof cover will be a high-albedo heat reflective “cool-roof” to minimize heat gain. There will be dedicated electric vehicle charging outlets in the garage to encourage use of electric vehicles. A conveniently located, spacious and fully-secure bike parking room with greater than a 1 to 1 ratio of bike spaces to beds will ensure this green transportation option is fully supported and encouraged. 100% of the project storm water will be treated on site in surface bio swales. Landscaping will feature California native drought-tolerant plantings and a drip irrigation system with rain sensor.

## **Operations and Management Overview**

Davis Live will offer various fully-furnished unit configurations, leasable by the bed and designed to accommodate a range of affordability options. Individual billing for each resident will be all-inclusive of utilities, cable and wi-fi. Utilities and water consumption will be sub-metered and individualized for each apartment to encourage residents to conserve. On-site amenities and study areas will be available at all times under the lease and residents will have monthly payment options and management oversight to assist with administrative responsibilities. In addition, Community Assistants will be available to attend to day-to-day resident issues and 24-hour maintenance staff will be available to help with any emergency repair or maintenance issues. In the spirit of the project goal to encourage use of public transportation, walking and biking, limited vehicle parking will be available only on a monthly fee basis in addition to apartment rent. Ample bike parking and access to ride-sharing programs will be available to residents at no additional expense.

The property will be managed by Greystar Student Living, a subsidiary of Greystar Property Management which is a fully integrated multifamily real estate company offering expertise in investment management, development and property management of rental housing properties globally. Greystar is the largest operator of apartments in the United States, including two student housing properties in Davis – “The West Village” and “The U”. Greystar has been selected to manage the Davis Live facility based on their outstanding reputation for customer service and their intimate knowledge of the Davis community.