

# Davpart plans 55-storey The United Building at historic Toronto site

Redevelopment

Mixed-Use

Real Estate Companies



Steve McLean

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An artist's conception of The United Building, a 55-storey mixed-use tower planned by Davpart at the intersection of University and Dundas streets in Toronto. (Courtesy Davpart)

Toronto's **Davpart Inc.** unveiled plans Tuesday for a 55-storey, mixed-use tower called **The United Building** which would become the tallest architectural heritage

“Our development will revitalize this significant intersection with a new and yet historically respectful energy,” said Davpart president and chief executive officer David Hofstedter at an event to announce the project at the former Maclean-Hunter Publishing site at 481 University Ave., at the corner of Dundas Street West in the downtown.

“The development is adjacent to other heritage buildings in the area, including major insurance companies and courthouses, so the location on University carries a lot of prestige.”

Construction of the first commercial building on University Avenue began in 1910 and became the home of Maclean Publishing Company. The property has gone through several expansions and renovations over the past century.

The United Building will include preserved components from 210 Dundas and 481 University, both designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and listed as City of Toronto Heritage Properties.

The “Collegiate Gothic-style” structure at 210 Dundas was designed by Scottish-born and Toronto-based Murray Brown and New York-based Schultze & Weaver and built in 1928. The “international style” building at 481 University was designed by notable Toronto architectural firm Marani & Morris in 1961.

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## The United Building design team

“In order to realize our vision, we had to rezone the property within the context of preserving and restoring the existing building,” said Hofstedter. “The complexities are enormous. We recognized that we needed to work with top-notch architects who have this type of experience in preserving historic components for a new development.”

The United Building design team includes: **B+H Architects** as prime consultant and design

architects; heritage consultants **ERA Architects Inc.**; and **Tomas Pearce Interior Design Consulting Inc.**

Davpart purchased the former Maclean-Hunter property for an undisclosed price from **Crown Realty Partners** in 2011. B+H has its offices on the third floor of the building and hosted the launch event.

“This is an entire city block heritage development,” said ERA principal Graeme Stewart of the “really storied site” that’s also bounded by Centre Street to the east and Edward Street to the north.

Stewart called The United Building the only urban scale block in Toronto to be preserved and enhanced with redevelopment “to meet the needs of our 21st-century city.”

### The United Building’s features

The United Building will encompass 735 condominium suites spread over 577,818 square feet in a new tower which will rise from the heritage structure. It will include studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom designs, some with a den, flex or media room. Suite sizes will range from 300 to 1,400 square feet, and some will be two storeys.

**Baker Real Estate** will manage condo sales activities, though there’s no word yet on pricing or a sales launch date. Davpart has also not released an estimated cost for the project, nor a timeline for construction and occupancy.

The United Building residential interior amenities will include: a luxury lobby; 24/7 concierge service; a party room with kitchenette; an idea space; a fitness centre; a sports lounge with billiards tables; a golf simulator; a video game lounge; a library; a theatre; a swimming pool with fireplace; an indoor/outdoor pool deck with sun loungers; a pet spa; and a sauna and rain room overlooking the courtyard.

Residential exterior amenities will include: a four-season reflection pool with warming pavilions and seating; a bocce court; a yoga deck; barbecues; a dining area; a lounge with fireplace; hot tubs; a zen garden; and a dog run.

### Office and retail space below residences

Below The United Building’s residential component, from the ground floor to the 10th floor, will be 224,245 square feet of office space and 39,320 square feet of retail. There will be four floors of underground parking.

There will be access to The United Building from all four surrounding streets, and the pedestrian area along Dundas will be widened to accommodate a colonnade with columns and enhance

the ground-floor retail component. An entrance to the St. Patrick subway station will be incorporated into the building, which will also eventually be connected to the city's underground **PATH system**.

"Activating and enhancing the public realm was very important at an intersection where there's the convergence of three transit systems: a bus, a streetcar and a subway," said B+H principal Mark Berest. "This is one of the busiest intersections in the city."

The United Building will be within walking distance of shops, cafes, hospitals, parks, restaurants and nightlife, including **Nathan Phillips Square**, **Toronto City Hall**, **Art Gallery of Ontario**, **Grange Park**, Chinatown, **Ryerson University**, **University of Toronto**, **CF Toronto Eaton Centre**, the financial district and the **Superior Court of Justice**.

## Davpart and H&R Developments

Privately owned and Toronto-based Davpart is a full-service real estate investment and property management company that was established in 1993. It has a mixed portfolio of more than 90 industrial, office, retail and residential projects in Ontario and the United States.

Davpart's most recent project is **Avro Condominiums**, a 14-storey, 180-suite residence under construction just north of Allen Road and Sheppard Avenue in North York. Occupancy is scheduled for 2021.

Hofstedter's father, Sandor Hofstedter, founded H&R Developments in 1952 after surviving the Holocaust in Europe and moving to Toronto after the Second World War.

"In the 1960s, my father and a partner assembled the lands for the **Yonge Eglinton Centre**, and developed what became the biggest residential, commercial and entertainment centre in Canada at that time," said the younger Hofstedter, who's now a partner in H&R.

"As a kid, I followed the process of that development. I was fascinated by the mixed-use concept of combining office and retail — a vision that would influence my future."





## Steve McLean



Steve is a veteran writer, reporter, editor and communications specialist whose work has appeared in a wide variety of print and online outlets. He's the author of the book Hot...

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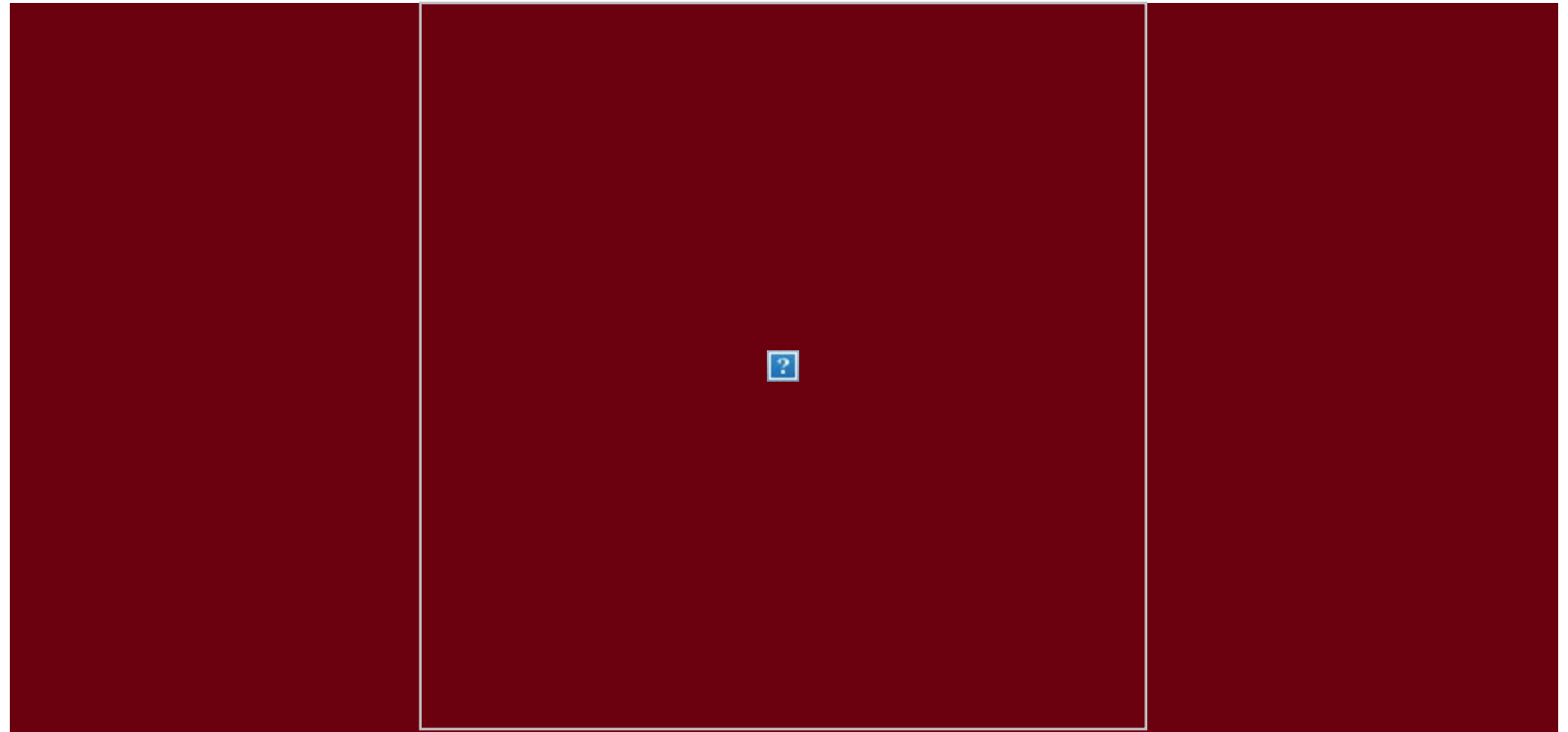
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