

Illustrative Master Plan: Traditional Downtown

Traditional Downtown

4-A: “Traditional Downtown”

The Borough should target the core area of downtown and area centered on the College/Atherton intersection, and emphasize a mix of uses that reinforces a traditional downtown, including non-student housing, hotel, office, incubator space, co-working/flex space, gallery space and additional retail.

Implementation: Borough of State College, Downtown Improvement District, Downtown Businesses, Property Owners, Local Housing Organizations, Developers, Redevelopment Authority, Neighborhood Associations, Planning Commission

The downtown core or “Traditional Downtown” is a unique and varied district. At its center is Allen Street and the blocks adjacent to it that define the most traditional historic feel of downtown. Moving out from this area, zoning allows for denser development that has happened in some places and not in others. The “Traditional Downtown” is characterized by the following traits that should be fundamental to any development happening in the area:

- The Allen Street area and adjacent blocks along College Avenue (indicated in the zoning plan) should be areas that remain as true to the historic development patterns of State College as possible. This means ground floor retail and restaurant space, two to four story buildings and a diverse array of offerings for all ages within the local community.
- The broader downtown core has opportunities for denser development as allowed in the existing zoning code and as recommended by this plan. However, preserving the “traditional” feel of downtown can be accomplished in this area provided denser developments pay particular attention to how buildings interact with the street as described earlier. Development should include ground floor retail, restaurant, and service uses that are geared to the downtown local consumer.

Right: Artists rendering of West Campus Square Streetscape (looking North on Atherton Street)

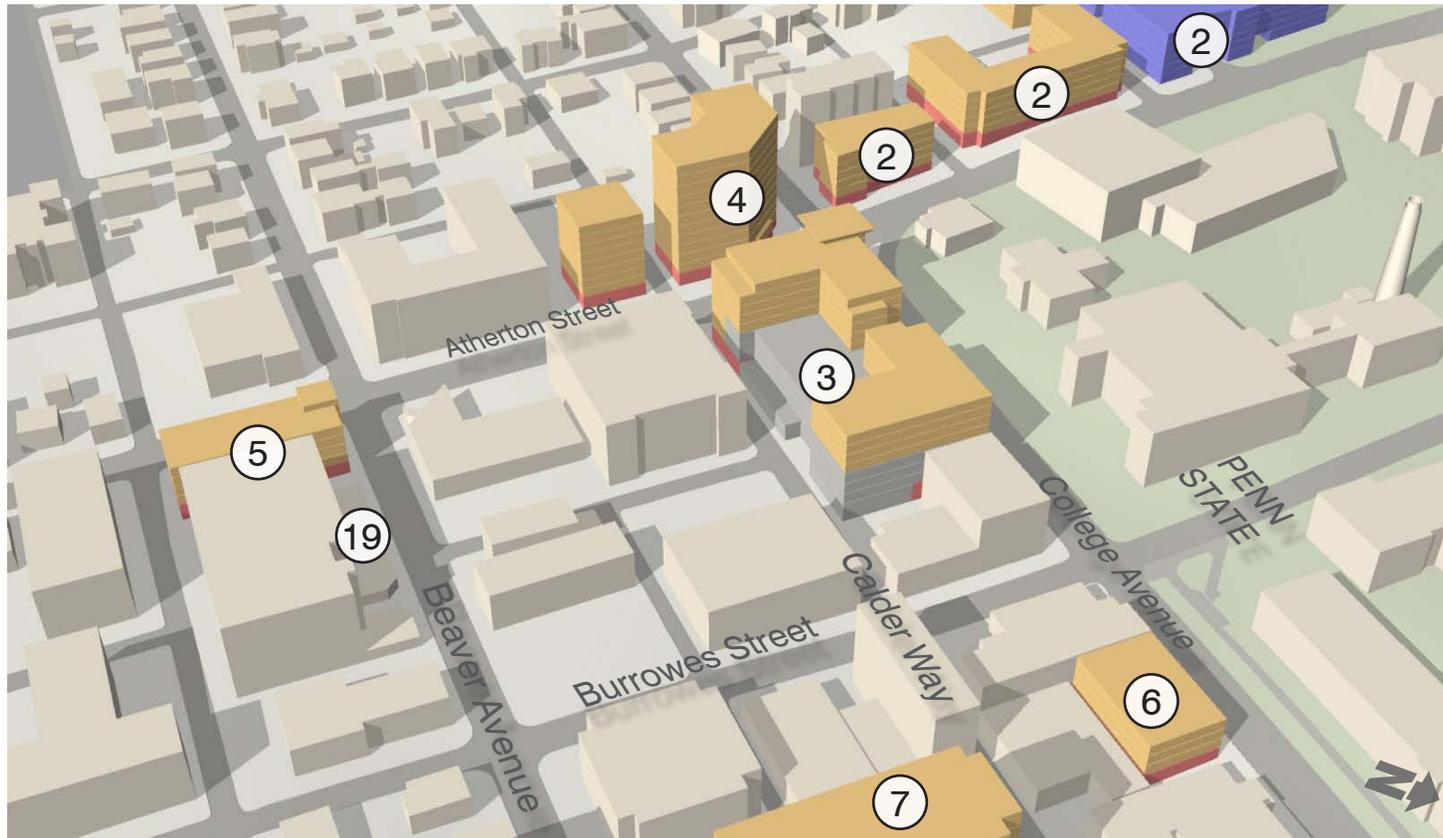
- Upper floors can combine a variety of uses including employment, residential (with an emphasis on non-student housing), hotel, family related and cultural uses and public services.
- Ultimately the downtown core should continue to evolve as a walk-able area rich in a variety of ground floor uses appealing to first to local residents as well as students, visitors, and alumni.

These tenets are expanded in descriptions of the following opportunity sites in the downtown core. All of these are identified on *Exhibit 21: Illustrative Master Plan* (page 160) while some are further illustrated in more detail on the following pages. The number that follows each project title references its location on the Illustrative Master Plan.

West Campus Square ②

This site is comprised of properties owned by Penn State as well as other property owners. Several years ago, Penn State





developed conceptual plans for the site showing how an academic and mixed-use building could be developed along the Atherton Street frontage. This approach is still relevant and should consider the following:

- Incorporate active ground level uses along the Atherton Street frontage, particularly in the mixed-use building south of Railroad Avenue.
- Design the academic building to allow for a pedestrian/bike linkage that connects Atherton Street with West Campus Drive. This could be a continuation of a shared use path along West Campus Drive.
- Use the mixed-use building to “wrap” a parking structure along the Atherton Street and Railroad Avenue frontages.
- Coordinate with property owner at corner of Atherton and West College Avenue to include that parcel in the overall redevelopment. This would allow a prominent building to be constructed on the corner with parking accommodated in the structure developed as part of the mixed-use building.

Atherton East ③

This site is comprised of multiple properties along College Avenue, just east of Atherton Street. While these properties are currently occupied by viable uses, they present a long-term opportunity for coordinated mixed-use development of a “signature” project at this important intersection. While these properties could be developed individually,

Far right: Model views showing potential redevelopment scenarios of "Atherton East":

Top: Using base CID district criteria

Middle: CID district with bonuses

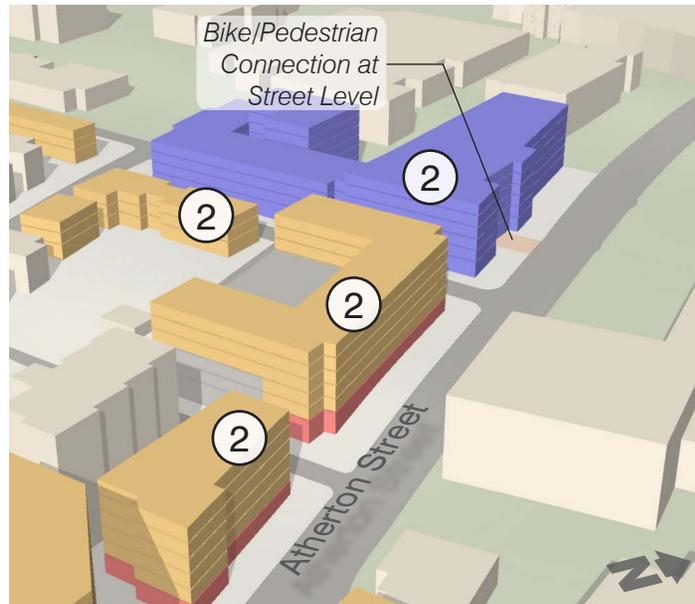
Bottom: Using existing signature development criteria

Bottom right: West Campus Square model view

this is one of the few sites downtown where coordinated development would allow for the integration of multiple levels of parking above first floor retail uses. Potential for the property includes graduate student housing, non-student housing, PSU faculty and employee housing, retail uses and office space (should there be a market). The model views show various scenarios of how the site could develop under existing zoning classifications including the CID district (student housing at 2.0 residential FAR), CID district (non-student housing at 3.0 residential FAR) and "Signature Development" overlay with a site FAR of 8.0 (and 3.0 residential FAR). The site could also be developed with less intensive development that is 2-4 stories in height. Regardless of the development intensity, an appropriately-scaled first floor is critical to activate College Avenue and reinforce connections across Atherton Street to the West End.

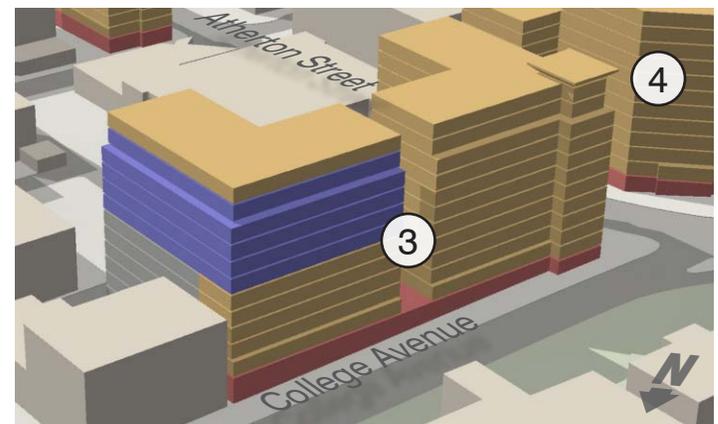
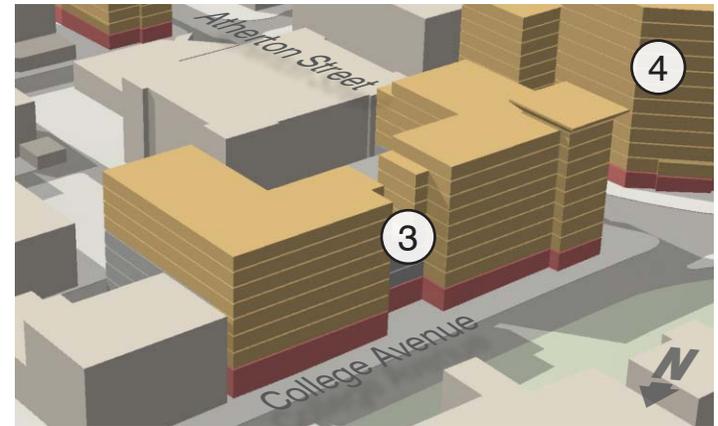
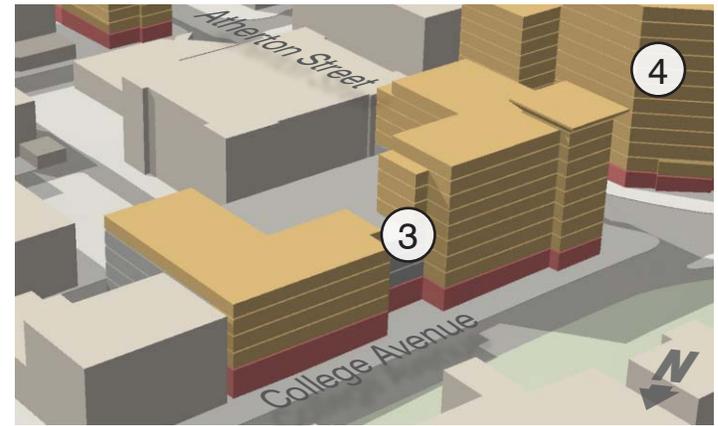
Atherton West ④

This site is located on the southwest corner of College Avenue and Atherton Street and represents an opportunity for non-student housing (such as PSU faculty and employee



Building Use

- Commercial
- Residential
- Office
- Hotel



housing) or graduate student housing over ground floor retail uses. The site is small so parking would need to be accommodated below grade. Because of the prominent location of the site and prominent sight lines (particularly from the north and east), this site is well-suited for a “signature” development. Regardless of the architectural style of any new building, the building should be articulated in a way that responds to the intersection. A small plaza and/or gathering space should also be provided at the corner to provide expanded pedestrian areas at this busy intersection.

Ideally, this redevelopment would incorporate the property to the south (existing motel) if there is interest from the property owners to coordinate. At such time that the motel property redevelops on its own (if there is no interest in a coordinated approach among property owners); it should be redeveloped with the building oriented to the street edge with parking located behind and/or below. The site is well-suited for ground level retail and upper floor office (if the market exists at the time of redevelopment) or upper floor housing.

Beaver Avenue Infill (West) ⑤

The existing one-story retail use at the corner of Beaver and Atherton is an under-utilization of this prominent corner. At such time the property owner wishes to redevelop this property, the property should be redeveloped with lower level commercial uses and upper level residential or office uses. The building should be oriented to the street edge with parking located to the rear or underneath.

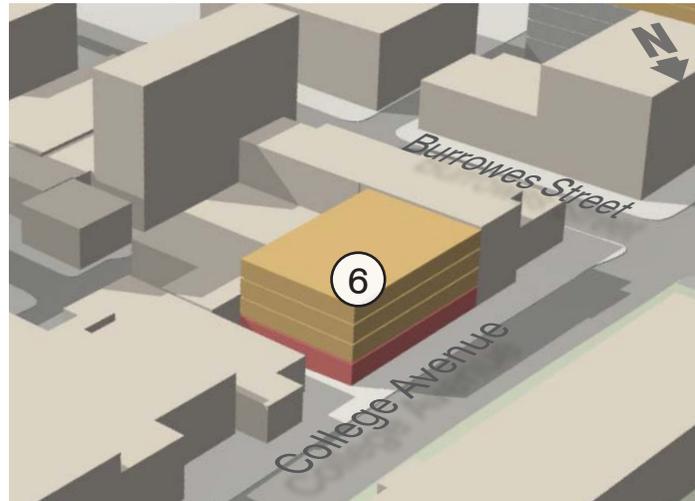
Palmerton Incubator/Co-Working Space ⑱

The Palmerton was developed with ground-level commercial space, the majority of which has been vacant for some time. Because of the property location, the low first floor height and dark glass, the space is not ideal for retail uses. This could be an ideal space to accommodate incubator and co-working space.

College Avenue Infill ⑥

While the retail uses are important for College Avenue, the existing one-story shopping center, between Fraser and Burrowes Streets does not represent the highest and best

use for this site. Should the property owners ever desire to redevelop this property, there is an opportunity to replace the existing retail development with new retail and upper floor uses. The upper floors would be ideal for residential uses or incubator/co-working office space, depending upon when the property would be redeveloped and the need for office space at that time. While residential uses could include student housing, this site would be better served for non-student housing.



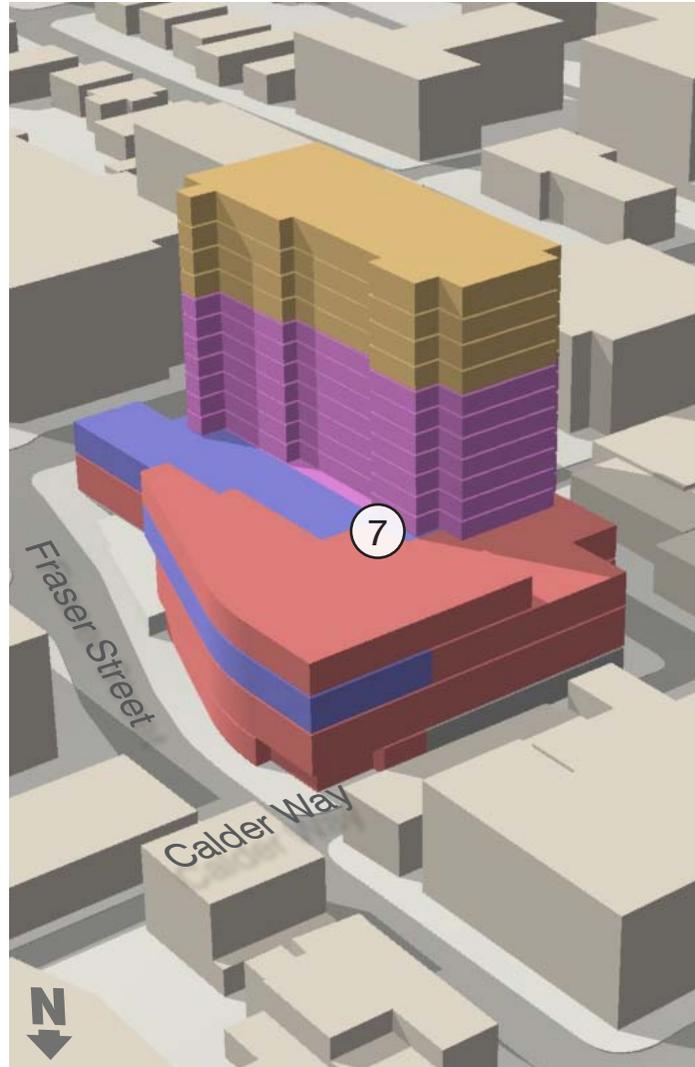
Top right: The vacant commercial space at The Palmerton is ideal for use as incubator or co-working space.

Bottom right: College Avenue Infill model view

Fraser Centre ⑦

This mixed-use development includes for-sale condominiums, hotel, retail and commercial uses and represents a pivotal project for downtown. Following some delays the project seems to be moving forward and will establish a significant east anchor development for Calder Way and the Downtown Core. The development represents

a good model for downtown re-development in that it is characterized by a high level of design and it includes pedestrian-oriented uses on the ground levels which will activate the frontages of Beaver Avenue, Fraser Street and a portion of Calder Way. Once completed, it will serve as an important west anchor for the immediate downtown core and for Calder Way.

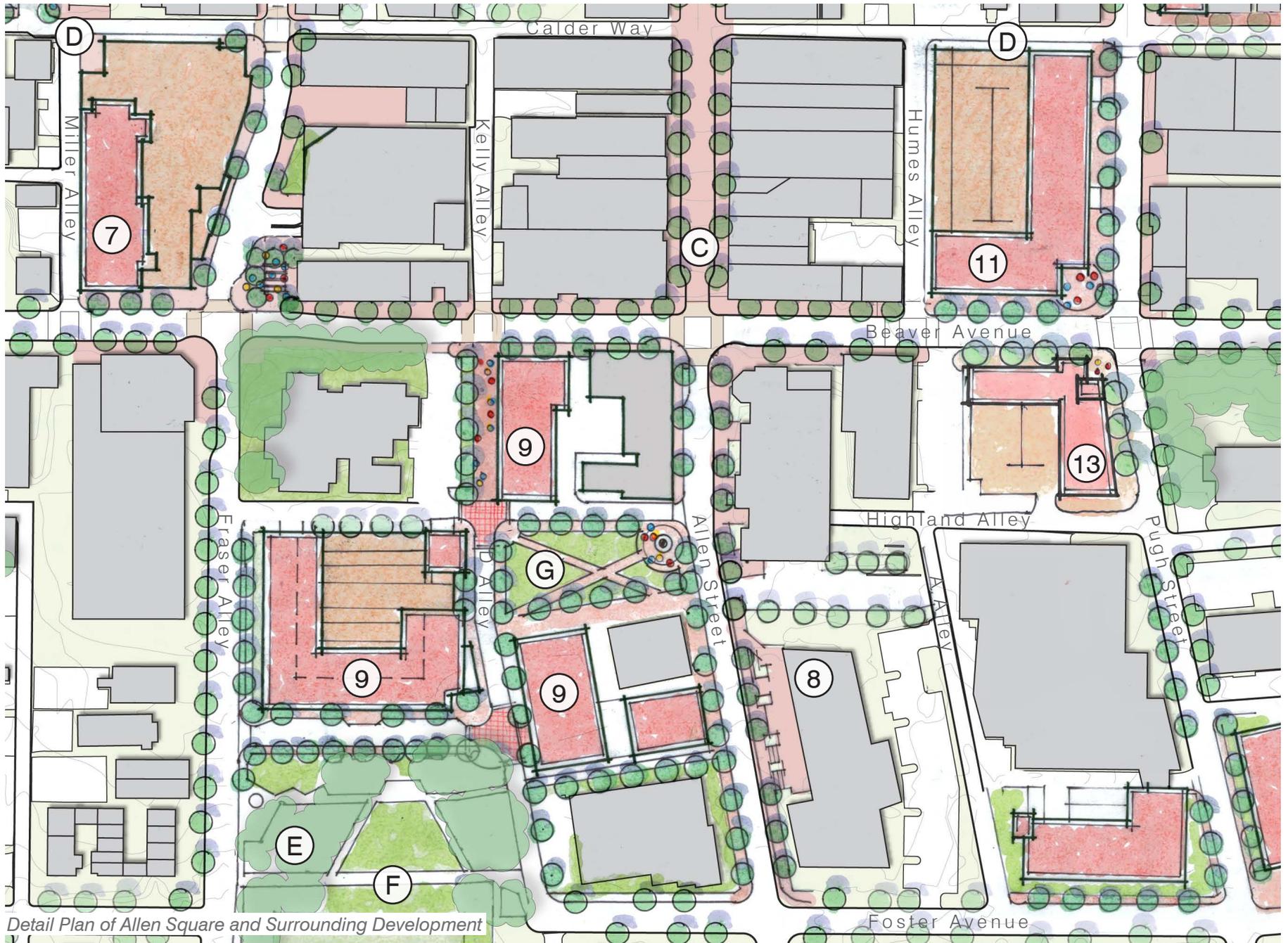


Building Use

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- Residential
- Office
- Hotel

Far right: Site of the proposed Fraser Centre. Coupled with Fraser Street streetscape improvements, this project will create a significant east anchor for Calder Way and the Downtown Core





Detail Plan of Allen Square and Surrounding Development

Allen Square ⑨

The area bounded by Beaver Avenue, Allen Street, Foster Avenue and Fraser Street represents one of the most significant redevelopment opportunities for downtown State College. If well done and coordinated among a partnership of multiple property owners, including the Borough, redevelopment could achieve many positive results including:

- Expand the family/local-oriented downtown core.
- Minimize the barrier effect of the ridge that separates the downtown core from areas south of Highland Avenue.
- Leverage the value of open space frontage for future redevelopment of the post office site while activating the park with new active uses around its perimeter.
- Provide additional opportunities for family-related uses such as expansion of the Discovery Space.
- Provide clear and attractive connections among the Borough Building, library, park, Memorial Field, Discovery Space and Calder Way (via Kelly and “D” Alleys).

Redevelopment of this area should consider the following:

- Creation of a focal point “Allen Square” at the corner of Allen Street and Highland Alley. As described earlier in the master plan report, this location is one of the few sites in downtown where a new open space could work. It is on the ridge so it is still visually connected to College Avenue. It is located at a bend in Allen Street, increasing the prominence of the site and it is adjacent to many family and local oriented attractions and businesses which could activate it. It could provide an additional venue for outdoor events or expanded venue as part of the Allen Street Promenade. Additionally it could also accommodate bicycle activities given it’s location along the Allen Street bike route.
- The creation of a connecting street, “Foster Lane”, which would provide frontage for the park and new development on the post office site.
- Pedestrian connection through the surface parking lots



Credit: City of Hagerstown

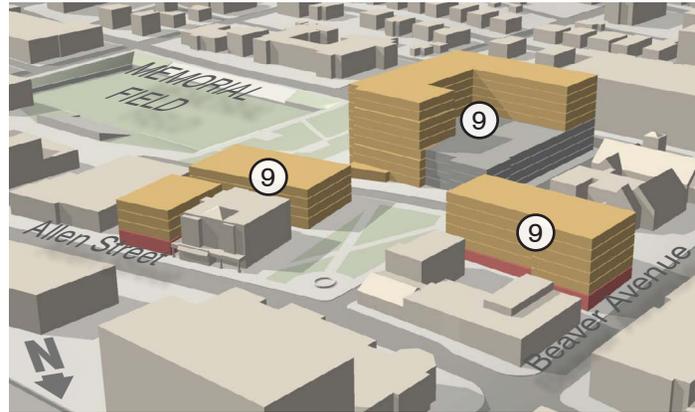


Top right: Photo of University Plaza in Hagerstown, MD shows use of flexible common area for programming.

Bottom right: Bond Street Wharf in Baltimore shows how development fronts onto open space and activates open space.

(Borough and church owned) linking Kelly Alley with D Alley (and better connecting the site to Calder Way).

- Redevelopment of the post office site as non-student housing. This housing could be high density (illustrated) wrapping a parking structure or lower density with surface parking. The important aspect is that it be oriented to several important edges: the park (and the new Foster Lane described above), Fraser Street and "D" Alley/Allen Square.
- Incorporation of post office into the redevelopment. Consideration should be given to incorporating a post office convenience center or use into the lower level of the housing and parking if the larger facility is ever relocated.



Building Use

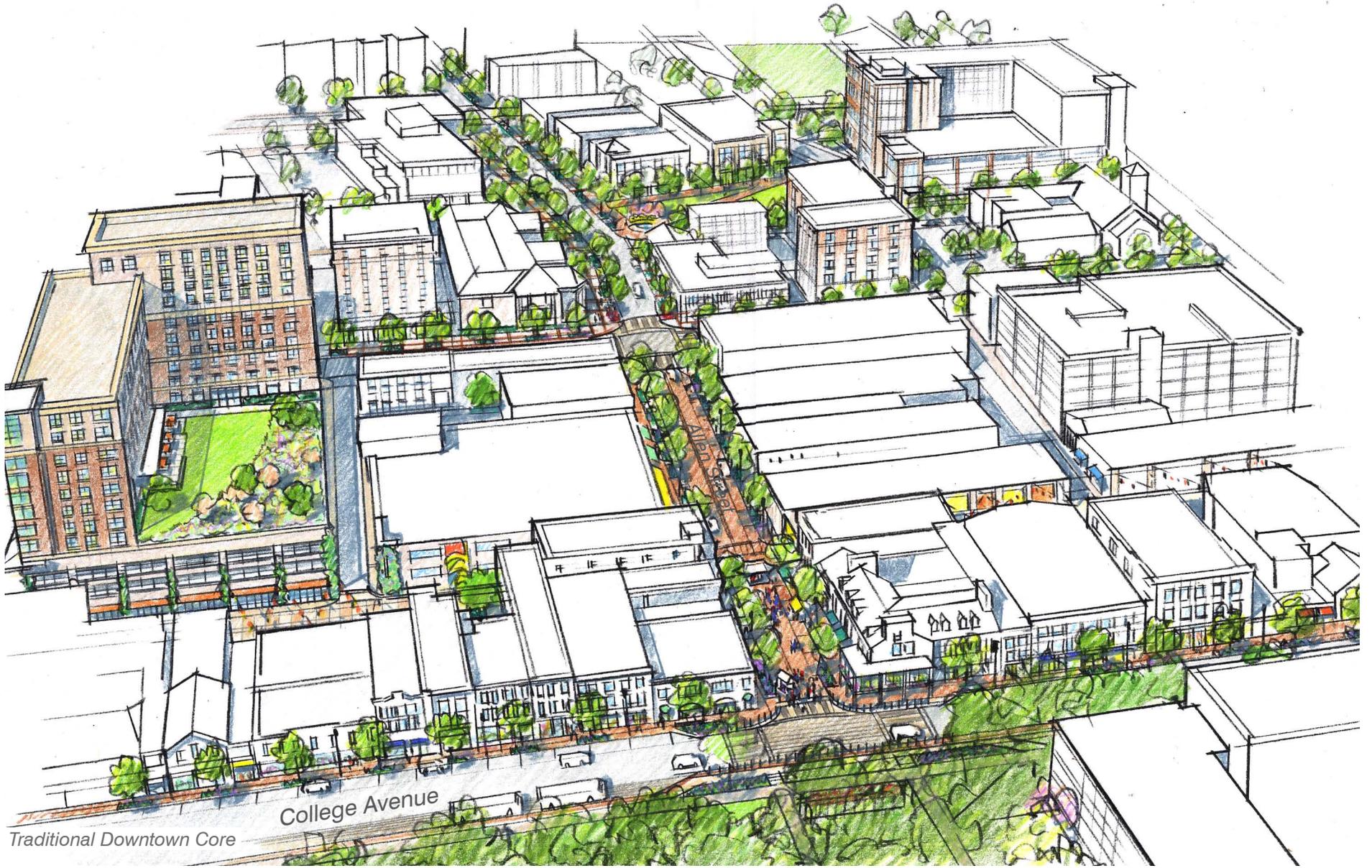
- Commercial
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Allen Square

Model view (left) and sketch (bottom left) illustrate how effective coordinated development of multiple projects can define a great place while linking other downtown districts and assets.

Opposite page: Sketch of the traditional downtown core showing Allen Square in relationship to Allen Street Promenade, the enhanced College Avenue-Allen Street intersection and the Pugh Street Garage redevelopment project.



Traditional Downtown Core

College Avenue

Allen Street

- The proposed residential building on the post office site could also incorporate a new senior center (in place of that located in the Fraser Street garage).
- Infill development on the Beaver Avenue surface parking lot with active uses along the new pedestrian connection, Beaver Avenue frontage and frontage on the proposed Allen Square.
- Infill residential (or expansion) behind the new residential building on Allen Street and within the surface parking lot. This development will be challenging as it should front onto and/or activate Allen Street, Allen Square, the existing park and the pedestrian connection to the south of the existing surface lot.
- This could also be an ideal location for incubator/co-working space along the garage frontage on “D” Alley and/or Highland Avenue.

The success of Allen Square is dependent of coordinated development. The Borough could provide additional incentives to the property owner if they work toward a coordinated effort. Property owners should be engaged early on to build enthusiasm for the project.

Borough Building Incubator/Co-Working Space ⑧

The existing Borough Building has approximately 3,500 SF of vacant space on the third floor which could be used as office incubator/co-working space until such time that space can be developed as part of a new development project.

Pugh Gateway North ⑩

The property at the southeast corner of College Avenue and Pugh Street is a highly visible corner within the downtown core and enjoys a prominent location along College Avenue at the foot of the Henderson Mall. Currently the site is developed with a one-story building; however, the site offers greater potential for a higher density development. The property should be considered for ground level retail uses and upper floor residential. The residential would be appropriate for non-student or student markets. Important considerations include the following:

- Maximize window display areas on both the College Avenue and Pugh Street frontages.
- Consider articulating the corner architecturally.



Illustrations show how small one-story properties along College Avenue, such as this one as the corner of Pugh and College (existing conditions top left, model view bottom left, sketch opposite), can be redeveloped with higher and better uses while respecting the scale of historic development. The sketch also illustrates College Avenue streetscape enhancements.

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Pugh Gateway North

Pugh Street Garage Redevelopment ⑪

The Borough is currently exploring alternative locations for the replacement of the Pugh Street Garage as part of the overall parking study. While replacing the garage in its current location is an option, this is not desirable as it would take 491 parking spaces off line until the new structure is completed. Ideally, the replacement would be developed in another nearby location and this site could be redeveloped with other uses including some component of parking.

Because this is a Borough-owned parcel, it represents a significant opportunity for important downtown uses that would not otherwise be developed without incentives. Potential uses include meeting space, incubator space, workforce housing, housing for young professionals and retirees, hotel, retail and some supporting parking. The site is centrally located to the core of downtown and offers magnificent views of Old Main and the campus from upper floors. Following are considerations for development:

General Considerations: Regardless of the uses developed for this site, the following should be incorporated into the planning and design:

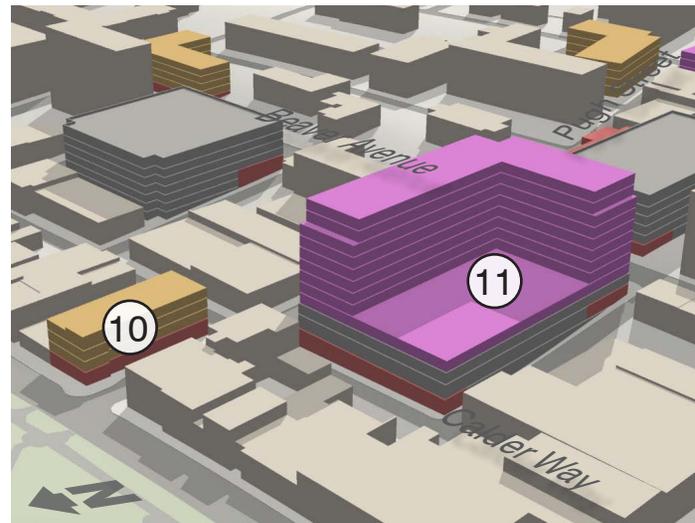
- Include active ground floor uses along Calder Way, Beaver Avenue and Pugh Street frontages.
- Include gallery/exhibit space in ground floor.
- Include small plaza/gathering space at corner of Pugh and Beaver and/or Calder and Pugh. A location on Calder Way could help activate this important pedestrian link. A location on Beaver would take advantage of southern exposure.
- Incorporate façade treatment, special lighting, along Calder Way that reinforces the artsy/funky nature of the alley, particularly on lower levels of the building.
- Coordinate with the adjacent property owner to maximize the development of the entire block defined by Beaver, Pugh, Calder and Humes.

Option 1—Pugh Street Garage Replacement: Should it be determined that the Pugh Street garage does need

to be redeveloped in this location, the following should be incorporated into the planning and design:

- Public restrooms.
- Bike storage/ Bike Commuter Parking.
- Consideration for upper floor incubator space
- Consideration for partnering with a developer to include above the parking
- Use of “green walls” particularly along Calder Way

Option 2—Pugh Street Garage Relocated: Should the public parking garage be reconstructed on another site, this site should be developed with high density mixed-use development. The site is well suited for a hotel with associated meeting space and/or non-student housing if a hotel is most feasible. The views to Old Main from upper floors could be quite attractive to alumni, visitors to the region, young professionals and retirees. The Inn at the Colonnade adjacent to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore is a good model that includes 6-7 floors of condominiums over 3 floors of hotel. While the demand for downtown hotel space is limited at this time, if the market changes at the time of the garage replacement, this concept should be



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considered. Otherwise, the site could be used primarily for non-student housing. The following could be considered for the planning and design of a mixed-use development in this location.

- Include a parking component to supplement parking provided in Pugh Street Garage replacement and to support some of the uses in the building.
- Consider hotel and meeting space (non-residential uses) on lower levels.
- Consider green roof/outdoor space on roof of lower level space (parking/meeting space/commercial space).
- Consider housing on upper levels (or for the majority of the building if a hotel is not feasible).
- Consider a component of incubator space on lower levels.

Examples of creative mixed-use development that could serve as models for the Pugh Street garage site.

Top far right: Colonnade Hotel and Condominium adjacent to Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Bottom far right: Hotel, residential, mixed-use, arts incubator, public parking in Greenville, SC

Right: Arts incubator space lining parking structure. Greenville, SC



McAllister Lot 12

The existing site bounded by Beaver, Calder, McAllister Street and McAllister Alley is owned by multiple property owners, including the Borough. The southern portion that includes the parking deck and existing small footprint buildings along Beaver Avenue could be redeveloped to better utilize this site. The site could be intensified to provide additional public parking it or it could be redeveloped with a mix of uses, along with some parking component. The following should be considered for the planning and design of this parcel:

General:

Regardless of the uses developed for this site, the following should be incorporated into the planning and design:

- Consider incorporating a plaza space or increased setback area at either (or both) corners along Beaver Avenue to provide some expanded areas to accommodate high volumes of pedestrians.
- Activate the Beaver Avenue frontage with ground level commercial uses including incubator/co-working space.



- It is not feasible to activate McAllister Street and Alley with retail uses, but these facades should have high level of design.
- Consider use of “green walls” as part of parking deck facades, particularly along McAllister Street and McAllister Alley.

Option 1 - Additional Public Parking Amenities:

While the dimensions of this site are tight for an efficient parking structure, the site could be developed as a significant public parking resource if the property owners are willing to partner. In addition to ground level retail uses, some upper floor office/incubator space could also be incorporated into the parking structure. In addition, public restrooms and bike storage should also be incorporated into the ground level.

Option 2 - Mixed Use Development:

Another alternative for this site is mixed-use development. In addition to ground level retail uses along Beaver Avenue, mixed-use development might consider upper floor residential. This site is close enough to the downtown core that it could be appropriate for workforce non-student housing, however, student housing would likely be most appropriate given the site’s proximity to the “East End Collegiate District.” The design of any housing should consider a north/south orientation or “U” configuration facing Beaver Avenue to avoid reinforcing the continuous “wall” of buildings.

Pugh and Beaver Redevelopment 13

Property at the southwest corner of Beaver and Pugh could be a significant redevelopment parcel if considered in conjunction with a portion of Highland Avenue and the property to the south (the one-story commercial space connected to the Days Inn). While it is not typically desirable to eliminate a street connection, the library development already truncated Highland Avenue. Therefore, this is one block in downtown where consideration might be given to eliminating the remainder of the street to allow for a larger contiguous development parcel. This would require interest in a partnership among the property owners.

General: Regardless of the uses developed for this site, the following should be incorporated into the planning and design:

- Active ground-level commercial uses along Beaver Avenue and portions of Pugh Street frontage.
- Architectural articulation to take advantage of bend in Pugh Street which results in strong visual connection between College Avenue and this corner.

Option - Mixed-Use Development: This site is suitable for mixed-use development. Specifically, the location is part of the downtown core and would be well-suited for non-student housing and/or hotel expansion with lower level retail uses and structured parking. Because of the grade change from south to north, two levels of parking could be provided without the need for internal ramping. Mixed-use development could work on the corner site at Pugh and Beaver or a combined site as described above. If the properties are combined, provision should be made for a pedestrian connection to the Borough Building, library and proposed Allen Square, between the existing hotel and new development.

Pugh Gateway South 14

This opportunity includes the properties on each side of Pugh Street at Foster Avenue. The west property currently includes two levels of parking, serving the existing hotel and the east property includes 4 single homes that have been converted to rental properties. Because of the location of these properties near the southern edge of the downtown core, higher density and better utilization of the property is appropriate. Redevelopment should consider the following:

- Possible hotel expansion (illustrated) for the existing hotel on the east side of Pugh Street, with a building that addresses both the Pugh and Foster frontages.
- If hotel expansion is not feasible, a multi-level parking deck could be developed here, provided there would be a high quality architectural design and streetscape treatment provided along the street frontages. While

ground level active uses would be desirable, they would likely not be feasible this far outside of the core, with the exception of potential incubator space or expanded attraction space such as Discovery Place.

- The west side of Pugh Street should be reserved for residential development and could be appropriate for non-student or student housing.