

Journal Square Urby – A canvas for living

Architecture and interior design by Concrete Amsterdam



Rising 25 stories tall, Journal Square Urby introduces 340 meticulously crafted apartments situated at a strategic location that bridges the evolving high-rise corridors of Journal Square with the intimate, smaller-scale residential streets that characterize the surrounding neighborhoods. The development not only provides a substantial new housing option but also activates the neighborhood's social fabric, encouraging community engagement and interaction. As Urby's footprint grows, with upcoming projects in Miami and other sites across the country, this project exemplifies how innovative design and urban planning can foster a more integrated, human-focused city experience.

Bridging the gap

Urby is the new kid on the block of Jersey City's 'Journal Square', standing proudly at the corner of Summit Avenue and Pavonia Avenue. Perfectly placed next to Journal Square PATH station with a quick 15-minute transit to New York's World Trade Center and across the future park development by the historic Brennan Courthouse. The project forms a transition between the newly developed high-rise around Journal Square and the existing low-rise residential neighborhoods. The building is carefully massed and programmed with a public space that connects to the smaller-scale neighborhood at street level, inviting public spaces open up to the community. While above, the building rises to join the skyline, offering residents extensive views and a rooftop designed for connected communal living experience. Inside, the apartments carry Urby's

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signature design philosophy. Smart and efficient layouts create homes that feel larger than their footprint. With open flows, balanced proportions, and thoughtful details, every unit maximizes comfort and functionality, offering a modern and surprisingly spacious living experience.

"With Journal Square Urby, we set out to create a building that connects people to each other and to the neighborhood. The interlocking towers and brick base respond to the surrounding context, while shared spaces like the public café, entrance square, and rooftop garden foster a strong sense of community and belonging." - Erikjan Vermeulen, Concrete Amsterdam

Open up and connect

All Urby buildings are designed to encourage interaction and strengthen connections, both among residents and with the surrounding neighborhood. At Journal Square, this begins with the placement of the tower, set back from the corner of Summit and Pavonia Avenue to create space for a welcoming entrance square that links directly to the public realm. On this square stands a two-story corner building whose brick façade and scale give it a timeless presence, bringing a sense of human scale and familiarity to the neighborhood. This building is home to BRBQ, a public cafe and restaurant space that opens its doors to both residents and neighbors, inviting the community to come together. The café extends outward with a terrace that flows onto the entrance square and connects seamlessly with the Urby lobby inside. The result is a lively meeting point where everyday life naturally comes together.

Interlacing towers

The tower itself consists of two interlacing towers and a lower base, all with their own distinctive facades. The tallest tower has a vertical accent in its bronze-finished facade, making it appear rather monolithic amidst the generic neighbor towers. The architectural finishing and detailing of the red copper anodized lower tower are linked to the pocket neighborhood located east of the building, while the 9-story brickwork base is part of the street wall along Pavonia avenue. The massing of the top floors creates extensive communal areas in the form of a kitchen and garden room that extends onto a landscaped deck with pool. The smart massing of interlacing towers is simply achieved by combining a typical rather squarish 'tower floor plan' with a 'center corridor' plan. This also helps to create a wider range of apartment configurations, all with their own sizes and orientation while maintaining the core qualities of an Urby apartment: smart spacious, filled with daylight and hyper functional.

"With Journal Square Urby, we set out to create more than just a residential tower—we designed a place where architecture brings people together. From the welcoming public café in its own distinct building to the communal spaces at the crown, every element is designed to encourage connection, both among residents and with the surrounding neighborhood." - Concrete Amsterdam

Facade as a living art canvas

The side wall of the building artistic expression comes to life with Felipe Pantone's monumental mural, Optichromie. This vibrant, 14,000-square-foot masterpiece marks Pantone's largest and most ambitious project to date, covering the 25-story façade of the building. Featuring his signature geometric patterns, gradients, and bright colors, the mural stands in vivid contrast to the subdued hues of the surrounding cityscape, creating a dynamic visual sight that enhances the skyline. The mural also represents Urby's vision to blend thoughtful artistic elements with a strong connection to the surrounding community.

A warm welcome

Creating community and fostering interaction is at the core of Urby. Through careful space planning, flow design and materiality, connection and atmosphere are designed so that residents naturally meet, gather, and feel at home. Both the Urby entrance and the café open onto a vibrant entrance square, which doubles as the café terrace and acts as a welcoming public space for the neighborhood. The entrance itself is a single-story vestibule that gracefully bridges human scale with the tower above. It appears detached from the main building and is angled toward the nearby PATH station. A carefully detailed wooden door is the eyecatcher that guides people into the main lobby; a warm, quiet inviting space built out of ribbed wood walls, terrazzo flooring and soft lighting that welcomes residents and visitors with seating corners and thoughtful curated artwork. Pockets on all sides of the space lead to different functional spaces like the mailboxes, the communal filtered water fountain, host location, leasing offices and the elevators. One of the pockets is the internal connection to the café, designed by the BRBQ team, serving as an all-day dining space centered around an open fire kitchen, which blends seamlessly with the entrance square. Together, the lobby, café, and square create a lively, human-scaled environment where residents and neighbors can connect effortlessly, making Urby more than a building; it's a community.

A place to unwind

While the ground floor welcomes the public, the 25th top floor is a communal retreat designed exclusively for Urby residents. Just below the tower's crown, a serene escape rises above the city streets. A garden room and communal kitchen, both filled with greenery, flow seamlessly onto a lush landscaped deck, creating a peaceful oasis in the sky. The interior space has a very grounded and natural atmosphere, shaped by terracotta floors, wood-clad walls, soft carpets, and a wide variety of seating arrangements surrounded by pots, plants and balanced lighting. Large, deeply recessed windows framed in wood draw the eye outward, framing views toward Manhattan.

The spaces form the heart of the Urby community and are used in many different ways; intimate dinners and casual drinks, to music sessions, conversations, getting some work done, board games, or simply reading a book while enjoying the skyline view. Regular events and gatherings, curated and organized by the Urby cultural team are held in both, the kitchen and the garden room add an extra layer of connection, inspiration and joy among the residents. The interior spaces extend onto a vibrant green roof deck and pool, designed by landscape architect Bas Smets. Here, residents can relax among diverse seating configurations, a pergola, and an outdoor kitchen with barbecue stations, all surrounded by planters overflowing with wild grasses, flowers, and small trees. A stepped terrace leads to the pool, offering the perfect spot to swim, soak up the sun, or simply unwind while taking in sweeping views of New York and beyond.

Notes to editors

About Concrete Amsterdam:

Concrete is a multidisciplinary interior and architecture studio based in a canal house in the middle of the red-light district in Amsterdam. Since 1997 Concrete develops concepts that transcend traditional boundaries. Whether it is in architecture, interior design, urban design, branding and conceptual programming, Concrete's talents converge to create unique and impactful solutions. Fundamentally, Concrete places people above buildings, recognizing that the essence of design lies in its human connection. Concrete firmly believes that form should follow life, shaping environments that seamlessly integrate with the ways people live and interact. This human-centered approach also forms the foundation of the collaboration with Urby. Since its inception in 2010, Concrete has been working with Urby, taking responsibility for its architecture and the majority of its interior designs. Next to Urby, Concrete stands at the cradle of citizenM hotels worldwide, Zoku Hotels in Europe and Moos Living in the Netherlands. Other projects are The West Residences NYC, The BoTree Hotel & Bar in London, W Hotels in Osaka, London and Verbier, Mongkok Skypark Hongkong, Andaz hotel Munich, Manifattura Tabacchi Florence, Virgin Voyages, Jeroen Pit Healthcare Huis Amsterdam, and many more.

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About Urby

Founded by David Barry with the intention to pioneer the future of multifamily, Urby creates built environments with vitality, soul, and a distinct point of view. With experience developing numerous residential and hotel properties, such as the Standard East Village, Chiltern Firehouse in London, and W Hotel in Hoboken, David has made Urby into one of the fastest growing real estate platforms in the United States. Since opening in 2016, Urby operates properties in New York City, Jersey City, Harrison, Stamford, Newark, Dallas, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia. Future Urby developments are underway.

Since 2010 Urby and Concrete started to collaborate to re-think multifamily living in urban areas. In the past decades, urban life has changed beyond recognition. As a result of shifting values and new technological possibilities, our lives today revolve more around experience than possession. Thanks to technology, we can turn any public space into a mobile office, drive cars without owning them and connect to everyone and everything at any time. Residential development, however, is struggling to keep up with the changing demands of the modern city dweller. As rents go up and value for money falls behind, the urban rental offer is rapidly losing its appeal to young professionals and the middle class.

That's where Urby comes in. Built from the ground up with the needs of contemporary urban citizens in mind, Urby is a unique residential concept that offers a truly connected living experience. Urby stands for thoughtful design, a unique approach to shared spaces, and a strong sense of community. The apartments – available in S, M and L – are efficiently designed, resulting in rent premiums. At the same time, they feel larger and more spacious thanks to the clever use of the available square footage and natural lighting throughout. Sliding doors between rooms further increase the sense of space, whilst large windows let in abundant daylight and offer panoramic views. With plenty of built-in storage space, lighting, a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom, Urby apartments re-frame the notion of apartment living. Urby buildings have been designed to create natural opportunities for neighbors to meet and interact. Every building is next to a café that gives anyone

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walking through the door an instant feeling of coming home. Once inside, all areas are seamlessly connected. The numerous communal resident spaces include a café, a gym, gardens, a pool and potentially even an urban farm. The communal spaces are actively programmed and can include anything from an in-residence chef who cooks several days a week and offers cooking lessons in the communal kitchen, to an in-house artist who hosts creative workshops or a musician who provides music lessons to the residents. The communal spaces are actively programmed: events and programs are created in collaboration with local people or small businesses. It all depends on the local needs and demographics of the residents. The goal is to foster interaction between the residents and between residents and the neighborhood.

Being a residential concept for the connected age, Urby has a digital side as well. But one that always serves the analogue purpose of interacting with other residents in real life. Via the Urby app, residents can access the program of the communal activities, enjoy keyless entry via the Latch app to their apartments, and use the smart mail and package systems and a variety of local services. Other amenities include communal bicycles and filtered water stations that serve as natural meeting points and promote the use of tap water over bottled water. The architectural design of the properties reflects the playful and organic nature of the Urby brand, focusing on openness, space and connection resulting in an expressive and progressive architecture. Ever-evolving, thoughtfully tailored to each neighborhood, and adaptable to the shifts of modern urban life, Urby is a real estate concept designed for change—not set in stone.

www.urby.com | @urby

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Journal Square Urby – Credits

project information

project: Journal Square Urby, Jersey City, NJ, USA
client: Urby LLC, Hoboken, NJ, USA

architecture and interiors: **concrete amsterdam**
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e-mail: info@concreteamsterdam.nl
website: www.concreteamsterdam.nl

project location:

address: 532 Summit Avenue, Jersey City, NJ
e-mail: info@urby.com
website: www.urby.com/location/journal-square
start design: 2018
opening: November 2024

project facts:

total apartments: 340 apartments total, divided into S (studio), M (1-bedroom) and L (2- bedroom)
Public café, gym, garden room, communal kitchen, rooftop with pool
total gross sq ft: 260.000 sq ft
size of mural: 14.000 sq ft

design:

architecture & interior design: Concrete Amsterdam, NL
project team concrete: Erikjan Vermeulen, Tobias Koch, Juliana do Prado Mul, Daisy Koppendraaier, Andreas Rechsteiner, Vivianne Medeiros, Cristina Palicari, Zuzanna Kurzawa
executive architect: HLW New York / New Jersey
landscape architect roof deck: Bas Smets Brussels, Belgium
executive landscape architect: Melillo + Bauer, NJ
lighting design: Map Design Studio, Miami Beach, FL, USA
civil engineer: InSite, USA

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structural engineer:
MEP engineer:
Artist mural:

DeSimone, USA
Barone, USA
Filipe Pantone Spain, curated by Peter Ernst Coolen/Streetarttoday

contractors:

general contractor:
facades:
bespoke furniture:
lighting fixtures:

AJD Construction, NJ
Elicc Group, NJ
design by concrete, produced by AMG H&H NY,NY
design by concrete, execution by Frandsen, Horsens, DK