



BY WILLIAM RICH

New Development Plan Takes Shape at Randall School

The redevelopment of the Randall School site on I Street SW has taken a new twist with the inclusion of new developer partners. On Feb. 17, a Purchase and Sale Agreement worth \$6.5 million was reached between the Corcoran and a partnership between Telesis Corporation (a DC-based developer) and CACB Holdings LLC (owned by the Rubell family that owns the Capitol Skyline Hotel across the street from Randall).



Under the new development plan with the Telesis/CACB team, the original historic structure of the Randall School will be transformed to a contemporary art museum and boutique hotel with residential units built behind the building. Photo: Andrew Lightman.

Back in 2006, the Corcoran purchased the school site for \$6.2 million with plans to turn the school building into a branch campus of their College of Art + Design and in partnership with Monument Realty build an apartment complex behind the historic school. However, after Monument's financial partner Lehman Brothers went bankrupt in 2008, the developer backed

out, and the Corcoran had been looking for a new partner ever since. The new plan for the Randall School site will be about the same size as the old Monument Realty proposal, but the elements of the plan will be different – there will be a mixed-use project with a contemporary art museum, hotel and a residential building.

The museum will be 20,000 square feet in size and will house the Rubell Family Collection/ Contemporary Arts Foundation, which will serve as a satellite location for the Rubell Foundation's main museum in Miami, Florida. As with the previous plan, the historic sections of the school building will be preserved, but the additions made later on will be replaced with new construction. According to Marilyn Melkonian, president of Telesis Corporation, the museum will be located in the Randall School building, as well as part of the hotel, but the residential units will be new construction. "The number of residential units and hotel rooms has not been determined yet, but we will work within the approved FAR (floor area ratio) envelope of 480,000 square feet," said Melkonian. There is the potential that the residential units could be affiliated with the hotel, which means some hotel services could be available to residents. Two examples of hotel-affiliated condos in the metro area include the Ritz-Carlton Residences in the West End and Waterview Residences in Rosslyn. These changes to the original plan will mean the Telesis/ CACB team may have to apply for a new Planned Unit Development (PUD). Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D approved the extension of the old PUD in January, but it still has to be approved by the Zoning Commission. Construction is scheduled to start in 18-24 months; however, an architect has not been selected yet.

Absent from the new plan is the

Corcoran College of Art + Design, which was going to move to Randall School under the prior proposal. While the Corcoran will no longer move their College of Art + Design to Randall, they will collaborate with the Rubell Foundation and others on exhibits and educational programming in Southwest. In addition, the college is actively looking to lease space in the District for a third campus, most likely in Northwest, in order to meet their needs for an expanding student enrollment.

DC Woos Northrop Grumman with Incentives

The District has some recent success in luring corporations to establish their headquarters in the city despite a reputation of being business-unfriendly. In February, CoStar Group, a commercial real estate data provider, purchased an office building downtown after the DC Council approved an incentive package to lure the company to the city from Bethesda. On the heels of CoStar's move to the city, the

District government has set its sights on another company – Northrop Grumman, the aerospace and defense technology firm who is moving their headquarters from Los Angeles to the Washington metro area. Other jurisdictions rumored to be in the running for Northrop include Arlington County, Fairfax County and Montgomery County, but the District is poised to offer another financial incentives package.

On Feb. 2, the DC Council introduced legislation to offer \$25 million in incentives for Northrop to move to the District. Included in the legislation is a preference for the company to locate atop the new DCFD Engine 13, planned for a lot at the intersection of Fourth St. SW and E St. SW.

About a year ago, the deputy mayor for planning and economic development chose E Street Development over two other proposals to develop two city-owned parcels in Southwest – Parcel A being the current home of DCFD Engine 13 at the intersection of Sixth Street SW and E Street



This firehouse red office building planned for the corner of Fourth Street SW and E Street SW could be the new headquarters of Northrop Grumman if the city has its way. Rendering: E Street Development

SW and Parcel B, a vacant lot. E Street Development is a combination of Potomac Investment Properties, CityPartners and Adams Investment Group. Beyer, Blinder, Belle is their designated architect. The team has partnered with the DC Central Kitchen and Kid Power Inc. to provide community-oriented space in their development.

Both parcels will be designated LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver and will have green roofs. Parcel A will become a 307,000-square-foot, nine-story office building with ground floor retail space along E Street SW. The DC Central Kitchen wants to create a retail outlet on the first floor of the building in the form of a restaurant where their trained cooking staff can prepare affordable nutritious meals. Retailers that the development team will target include a coffee shop and daycare center.

Parcel B will be built first and will be a 191,000-square-foot, 10-story office building, with a new Engine 13 firehouse on the ground floor. Northrop would most likely locate their headquarters in this building since the DC Council legislation gives a deadline of March 31, 2012, for the company to move into their space in the District, and Parcel A will not be built until the new firehouse is complete. There will be 3,000 square feet of community space on the second floor of the building, where Kid Power Inc. will have space to implement their programs. Locally, Kid Power Inc. works with 50 kids at Amidon-Bowen Elementary School and Jefferson Middle School but currently does not have enough space to do after-school programs. Securing an anchor tenant like Northrop will allow the E Street Development team to start construction on the firehouse building by this summer.

William Rich is a blogger at Southwest... The Little Quadrant that Could (www.southwestquadrant.blogspot.com). ★

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