

Development trucking along

By: Shelby King in Real Estate and Development January 21, 2015 4:48 pm



Redevelopment of the Leland James Center in Northwest Portland will be the third project of the second phase of the Con-way Master Plan. (Sam



The Leland James Center will be renovated to gain windows as well as a new penthouse and rooftop terrace. The project is part of the Con-way Master Plan on 17 acres of Portland's Slabtown neighborhood. (Courtesy of SERA Architects)

A truckload of new construction is under way on and around the **Con-way Master Plan** site in Northwest Portland's Slabtown neighborhood.

Tom DiChiara, principal at **Cairn Pacific**, the master developer for the effort, said his company will soon approach the city with design plans for the third building of the second phase. The **Leland James Center**, directly across Northwest Raleigh Street from the **New Seasons** store now under construction, will get an exterior face-lift and have its insides converted into 110,000 square feet of creative office space.

"We're stripping the skin off and ripping the guts out," DiChiara said. "The design will play off the New Seasons warehouse and integrate aspects of it over to this site."

The three-story building has about 32,000 square feet of usable space on each floor. When complete, it will feature ground-floor retail space, two stories of creative office space and a new penthouse and rooftop terrace, DiChiara said.

"It's unique because it's got a large floor plate compared to other buildings in the area," he said. "We think it will be of interest to single tenants who need more space."

The timeline for the renovation of what DiChiara is calling the **LJC Building** is expected to be the same as one for a large construction project just to the east that Cairn Pacific is developing as part of the Con-way Master Plan.

DiChiara and **GBD Architects** representatives on Tuesday met with **Bureau of Development Services** staff to discuss preliminary designs for that large project, which will deliver 370 residential spaces, ground-level retail space and 600 below-grade parking spaces in one 14-story, one six-story and one three-story building.

This second phase is being developed on two blocks – 294 East and 295 East – currently used as surface parking bounded on the north by Northwest Thurman Street, on the south by Raleigh Street and on the east by 21st Avenue.

"When we're done, Savier Street, which doesn't go through there right now, will be reconnected," DiChiara said.

The 14-story building, on the block north of the three- and six-story buildings, will occupy a "marquee" location, DiChiara said, and be the tallest in the area.

"We didn't hear any objections about the height during the design meeting," he said. "I think the way we're crafting the building it really fits in well with the context of the neighborhood."

DiChiara is hoping to get construction crews to begin digging out space for the garage toward the end of the year, and said he expects a 21-month construction schedule.

"It's a very complicated project," he said. "It's kind of like a jigsaw puzzle to make all the pieces work."

The first phase of the approximately \$150 million **Con-way Slabtown** project is nearing completion, with New Seasons set to open in early August and the adjacent 113-unit apartment complex to follow a few weeks later.

Tenant improvements for the New Seasons store at **Slabtown Marketplace** began this week, according to Brian Alger, president of Vancouver, Wash.-based **John Residential Construction Group LLC**, the company overseeing the Con-way Slabtown project at Block 296, bounded by Northwest Raleigh and Quimby streets and 21st and 22nd avenues.

"They're finished with the work on the seismic retrofit," he said. "It's just an empty building inside right now with a gravel floor because a lot of below-ground work needs to be done."

Slabtown Marketplace – which will hold New Seasons and two, smaller retail spaces – and the adjacent **L.L. Hawkins** apartments – a six-story building with 113 residential units, ground-floor retail and below-grade parking – are the first buildings being constructed as part of the **Con-way Master Plan** to redevelop 17 acres into a mix of housing, office and retail space, pedestrian walkways, plazas and green space.

At a property just south of the Con-way's Slabtown development, at 2120 to 2140 N.W. Quimby St., developers have applied to the **Bureau of Development Services** for a permit to begin partial demolition of an existing tilt-up warehouse. The demolition is the first step in **GRES Landing Investors LLC's** plan to incorporate part of the warehouse building into a new seven-story mixed use building with 163 units, 27,000 square feet of office and retail space and in-building parking for 105 cars.

The approximately \$32 million project – known as **Q21** – is being developed as a partnership between **Guardian Real Estate Services** and **Andersen Construction** in response to the Con-way Slabtown development.

Alex Yale, a principal at Portland-based **YBA Architects** and the project's lead designer, said Q21 is a "gateway" to the Con-way project.

"This site is kind of a missing tooth in terms of the development," Yale said. "When you're coming north on 21st, it's the first thing you'll see as you approach New Seasons and the Con-way Master Plan. (Q21's) design is in response to that development."

Once approved for demolition, crews will remove about 50 percent of the 37-year-old building and reuse as much of the original structure as possible in order to retain the warehouse feel.

"We're ripping out the guts of the building and putting in new post-tension concrete," Yale said. "We're saving as much as we can and basically creating a new, mixed-use building inside the warehouse. Like many other repurposed Portland warehouses, this building is able to tell a story by leaving the remnants of the old construction."

If all goes as planned, Q21 developers are aiming to get demo crews working at the end of February. They're shooting for a 16-month construction schedule, Yale said.