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business

Modern structure planned for Lower Downtown

The glass contemporary building, which will house offices, retail and apartments, would stand out from the area's traditional brick.

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Denver's historic Lower Downtown neighborhood is poised to get its first distinctly modern building.

Denver-based Urban Villages plans to build a 10-story retail, office and apartment building that would include lots of glass on the upper floors, a departure from the traditional brick structures populating LoDo.

"It will really make that whole corner sing," said Grant McCargo, a principal of the firm. "Right now, it's hard to tell historic from nonhistoric. It's nice to separate what's new from what's old."

The contemporary-style building, slated for the parking lot north of the Rio Grande restaurant at 16th and Blake streets, will include 38 luxury apartments on the top six floors.

While the cost of the project has not yet been determined, the units are expected to rent for between \$1,500 and \$5,000 a month. Units will not be sold.

The building will have concierge services for residents and the office tenants that occupy the second through fourth floors.

"We think there's a niche in this marketplace for people who want a higher level of services for their apartment living," McCargo said. "It's not just about having a hot happy hour."

The project, which also includes three levels of underground parking and ground-level retail, has conceptual approval from the Lower Downtown Design Review Board.

The developers will present their plans for the building's design to the board today.

The LoDo Design Review Board is interested in incorporating modern architecture into the historic district.

"We're looking at all projects with a very open mind and considering how contemporary architecture fits in," said Dee Chirafisi, a member of the board. "We're also looking at the guidelines and rules to see whether any of this needs to be updated."

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