



Chicago Sun-Times
Green Street getting a new Emerald

April 21, 2006

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Say goodbye to a nearly square-block section of Greektown left over from the neighborhood's past as Skid Row. The old Chicago Christian Industrial League buildings at 123 S. Green are due to come down starting this fall, to be replaced by two bright condominium buildings made possible by the surrounding gentrification. Developers of the property said they plan two 12-story buildings that will total 212 residences. Called Emerald, the complex will feature a colorful atrium for hosting cocktail parties and business meetings.

Owners of the site include condo and town-house specialist William Senne, as well as Harlem Irving Cos. and New Frontier Cos., led respectively by Michael Marchese and William Cellini, investors known for their political connections.

The deal has had a gestation of more than five years, because time was needed to find a new home for the industrial league. One of the Chicago area's leading service providers to the poor, the league is moving to 2750 W. Roosevelt, where City Hall has pledged a \$6 million subsidy toward a construction project worth about \$25 million.

"The industrial league has to be where their constituents are, and the homeless aren't around there in the West Loop anymore," said Senne, president of Senco Properties. Rick Filler, development director for Harlem Irving, said the project's Halsted frontage will have about 20,000 square feet of retail space, with Fifth Third Bank lined up as a tenant. The project will replace a warren of old buildings, some of which "are actually falling down," Filler said. Filler said three Greektown mainstays, the Santorini's and Pegasus restaurants and Dugan's bar, occupy the same block, but will be unaffected by the development. Despite the delays, the development has a reputation in the West Loop for political muscle. While its 12-story towers are a mite too tall for the tastes of the West Loop Community Association, the group won't fight the deal, said its president, Eric Sedler.

"We have been told by those affiliated with the city that this is a project people want to see happen," Sedler said. He said the developers held little dialogue with the group about the design.

But Senne countered that he and his partners revised plans several times, even though they needed no zoning change to proceed. An earlier plan called for one tower to be substantially taller, but that was dropped in deference to West Loop opposition to high-rises west of Halsted, he said.



"We tried to be sensitive to the area, because we want to do more projects in the West Loop," Senne said.

He and Filler said the project enjoyed no political favors. They said they crafted a deal that benefitted the industrial league by letting it draw from the eventual sales price before the contract closes.

The industrial league is expected to vacate the site this summer. Occupancy of the Emerald, designed by the Chicago firm Pappageorge/Haymes Ltd., is expected in 2008. Senne said the condo prices will range from about \$250,000 for one-bedroom units to almost \$500,000 for larger dwellings.

The design allows for eight corner units per floor, an arrangement intended to maximize views of the skyline.

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