

BUSINESS

Hamilton architect says his new Barton Village BIA apartment plan would be first in ‘100 years’

Bill Curran says his four-storey mixed-use concept is a ‘missing tooth’ he’s looking to fill.

By **Jeremy Kemeny** The Hamilton Spectator

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Hamilton architect Bill Curran hopes to build something atypical — a brand new apartment building on Barton Street East.

The longtime advocate for housing intensification in the city equates the site at Barton and Earl streets, just west of Sherman Avenue North, to a “missing tooth” he’s looking to fill.

Curran’s aspirational plan for a four-storey commercial/residential structure at 647 Barton St. E. is a long way off. The approval process started in late July. In an email, a city spokesperson told The Spec the planning department received a consultation application on July 19 with preliminary drawings.

If the plan is approved, Curran says it will be the “first new apartment building [in Barton Village BIA] in 100 years.”

Barton Village BIA executive director Jessica Myers is encouraged by interest in the area, especially if the development is built with local needs in mind and is affordable for area residents.

That corner of Sherman and Barton is “sparse,” Myers says, but “there is some magic here.”

“A new building like this on the strip will be welcome, because there’s nothing like it,” she said.

The concept from Curran’s development and architect firm Curran Gacesa Sote Architects Inc. (CGS) — formerly Thier + Curran Architects Inc. — is to replace an empty parking lot with 14 residential units and a “cool bar” with a patio. The bar, CGS wrote in their design brief, will be a “landmark,” like previous projects of the firm such as Mosaic Bar, the Capitol Bar or Merit brew pub.

Mosaic, an earlier Barton Street East project, was the redevelopment of a 1920s-era mixed-use building that Curran says was one of the most recent residential apartment builds on the street.

At the 647 Barton site, CGS is focused on mostly moderately priced, approximately 900-square-foot loft-style apartments, with a cherry on top. For the upper floor, the plan calls for a larger rooftop unit with a big deck and gardens. A unit that would appeal to an “empty nester or young happening couple with a bit more cash,” Curran says.

They have yet to do public consultations and don’t yet know if the apartments will be rentals or condos, but he says, the project “will appeal to newer Hamiltonians, younger Hamiltonians and hipper Hamiltonians.”

“Part of the charm for us is that it’s right around the corner from Playhouse and 50 feet from Maipai,” he says.