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Ox Hill Cos. wins green light for mixed-use project in Old Town Fairfax



An envisioned mixed-used residential building in Old Town Fairfax

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By **Dan Brendel** – Staff Reporter, Washington Business Journal

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A local developer has won local lawmakers' approval to redevelop a city of Fairfax site with a mixed-used condo building.

An affiliate of Fairfax-based Ox Hill Cos. has under contract a roughly 1.8-acre cluster of three parcels – 10501, 10515 and 10523 Main St. – in the city's old town area. They're currently home to a vacant bank, a vacant restaurant and a low-rise office building, about 19,000 square feet in all, built in the 1970s and '80s.

The Fairfax City Council, in a 5-1 vote at their Tuesday meeting, approved Ox Hill's rezoning and other associated land use applications to redevelop the assemblage with an eight-story, roughly 210,000-square-foot mixed-use residential building, dubbed City Centre West.

Approved plans allow for up to roughly 79 one-, two- and three-bedroom for-sale condo units over 45,000 square feet of commercial space and a 300-space, four-level below-grade parking garage. The commercial space would break down as 18,000 square feet for a bank, 10,000 square feet of general office, 9,000 square feet of medical office and 8,000 square feet for retail or restaurant uses. Also planned is a one-third-acre park on adjacent county-owned land.

One level of the garage would also serve as a bank drive-thru.

The project is anticipated to cost \$140 million all in, including land acquisition, though it's not yet known when those purchases will close, a spokesperson for the developer said in an email. It'll break ground in March 2024 and deliver in spring 2026, according to a press release.



A future restaurant at City Centre West in Old Town Fairfax

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At the city council meeting, Bob Brant of Walsh Colucci Lubeley & Walsh PC, the project’s land use attorney, described the condos as “luxury high-end,” saying they’re meant to attract those “who want to stay in the city but might not necessarily need that single-family house anymore,” such as “empty nesters.”

Mayor Catherine Read, who doesn’t have a vote except to break a tie, said in an email she supports the project, in part because it “will add a type of housing we don’t currently have so close to our historic downtown.”

She added that the city has reached an “an inflection point” as it tries “to maintain a sense of being a small hometown while also building an economic base to support the growth we need to sustain our quality of community life.”

Chris Bruno, who heads the city's economic development department, praised the project, saying in an email it'll "transform functionally obsolete space" and advance the city's high-

altitude land use strategy "by creating a more walkable environment for city residents and businesses and increases the residential mix in Old Town."

Council member Jeffrey Greenfield, Tuesday's only no vote, moved to defer the decision to September, expressing concern over the proposed building's "look and feel," suggesting the applicant should have "an opportunity to come back to us with a couple of other options that we could consider."

Immediately to City Centre West's south and west sits Fairfax County's 48-acre Judicial Center, for which the county government earlier this year filed plans to redevelop over the next 20 years. At buildout, that project would comprise 1.3 million square feet of existing buildings, plus up to 1 million square feet of new uses, including public and private uses, such as office, retail and affordable housing, per a project narrative filed in February.

Just before the pandemic, Ox Hill originally sought to build an arts-and-entertainment venue on the City Centre West location. But the developer subsequently pivoted to the present mixed-use residential concept, owing partly to the pandemic, but more to size constraints and road infrastructure requirements placed on the site, Chris Smith, Ox Hill's managing partner, told the Washington Business Journal in a previous interview.

Ox Hill **shifted its arts-and-entertainment vision to a new site**, about 3.9 acres, a stone's throw from City Centre West to the southeast. The initial phase of that project, dubbed The Ox Fairfax, is envisioned to include a 2,700-seat concert hall, with a max standing capacity of 4,100, and a 163-room hotel. At full buildout, it could grow to encompass some 1 million square feet, including a residential component, across two blocks.

The developer submitted a formal application for Ox Fairfax last month and is awaiting feedback, a spokesperson said in an email.

New York City-based Thomas Juul-Hansen LLC is City Centre West's architectural and interior designer. Douglas Elliman Realty LLC, a brokerage owned by Douglas Elliman Inc. (NYSE: DOUG), will sell the condos.