

Plan for \$1-billion tower goes to city for approval; Five-star hotel part of project in Eau Claire
[Calgary Herald](#)

A proposal for a "state-of-the-art" 30-storey office tower with a commercial podium in the downtown Eau Claire district goes before the Calgary Planning Commission for approval today.

The office tower is the first phase of the \$1-billion development plans by Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd. for the entire block, named Calgary City Centre, which would eventually include Calgary's first five-star luxury hotel and spa, private residential condominiums and retail space, the Herald has learned.

Cadillac Fairview has lined up a hotel for the site, but that isn't being announced at this time.

It has been rumoured for some time in Calgary's commercial real estate sector that it could be the Ritz-Carlton. Cadillac Fairview has a project under construction in Toronto called The Residences at the Ritz-Carlton, which is a 53-storey condominium-hotel scheduled for completion in 2010.

"Calgary City Centre is about city building," said Wayne Barwise, senior vice-president of office development for Cadillac Fairview. "It will significantly revitalize a key area in the downtown core. . . . The site is strategically located in the middle of three major office blocks, and across from the historic Eau Claire Market."

He said the project will be the focal point in the area and will stitch together three disconnected city blocks through the Plus 15. At street level, he said, the project will bring new life to the area with numerous restaurants, cafes and shops.

Barwise said the company believes in Calgary's long-term economic future, as evidenced by the fact it is investing about \$1.3 billion in the community, which includes Calgary City Centre and a \$275-million expansion of Chinook Centre.

In May 2007, Cadillac Fairview purchased the 50 per cent interest Calgary-based Aspen Properties had in the block, located between 2nd and 3rd Street S.W. and 2nd and 3rd Avenues. The two companies previously had joint ownership of the block, known as the City Centre project.

The office tower, which would be about 875,000 square feet of office space, is planned for the location where the French Maid now exists on the southeast part of the city block, said Greg Kwong, regional managing director, Alberta, for CB Richard Ellis Ltd., which will be handling the leasing for the new building.

Total density for the entire project will be in the range of 1.6 million square feet.

The project "indicates the optimism that these developers from out of town have for Calgary on a long-term basis," said Kwong.

"It's not a one- or two-year phenomena. We're going to go through over the next 10 years some ups and downs but long-term the curve is pointed up," he said.

The tower proposal is the "first portion of the development -- the eastern portion -- of the entire site," said Barwise.

"The western portion is the subject of a land-use re-designation which has been applied for at the city and which we are in the process of working our way through with the planning department."

It's anticipated that the approvals on the land-use re-designation will be completed in the fall, he said, adding the land-use re-designation incorporates the five-star hotel and condominium residences.

Assuming approval of the development permit and land-use re-designation, construction is expected to start on the project in the second quarter of 2009, said Barwise.

Completion on the site would be in 2013.

The project is planning one tower with 200 hotel rooms and about 400 condominium units.

"It's a stepped tower. It has a podium base that includes a five-star luxury hotel . . . retail and a glass atrium," he said. "And on top of that is a point tower condominium."

Barwise said a hotel is in place. Cadillac Fairview will be holding a press conference in about 30 days to announce and unveil the plans for the hotel and who it will be, he said.

The office tower podium will house retail space.

In a letter to the city's development and building approvals department, Maggie Schofield, executive director of the Calgary Downtown Association, wrote: "The CDA is extremely pleased with the entire proposed development and believe it will positively impact the area."

She also wrote that the "landmark entry proposed for the north side of the building is spectacular."

A letter to the city by Roger Brundrit, president of the Eau Claire Community Association, states: "The architectural design elements of the proposed office building, especially the retail level, are outstanding."

Plus-15 connections will connect the office tower with developments to the east and south. Provisions have also been made in the proposal for future Plus-15 connection to the west half of the site to accommodate future redevelopment of that portion.

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CALGARY CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

- Located between 2nd and 3rd streets S.W. and 2nd and 3rd avenues;

- \$1-billion investment;
- 30-storey office tower (875,000 square feet) with commercial podium;
- Total of 1.6 million square feet;
- 200-room, five-star luxury hotel and spa;
- 400 private condominium residences;
- Construction expected to start second quarter of 2009; - Completion of project expected in 2013.

Source: Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd. Rendering, BKDI Architects