

Wednesday, September 27, 2006

## **Triangle condos proposed**

Apartments may be bought, razed

By **Martha Elson**  
[melson@courier-journal.com](mailto:melson@courier-journal.com)

A 1970s-style apartment building in the Cherokee Triangle could be the next site for developer Kevin Cogan's "grande" vision for high-end condominiums.

Cogan said last week he plans to buy the Aquarius Apartments, 1049-1053 Cherokee Road, for about \$2 million from owner Gerald Landau and raze them for The Cherokee Grande, a proposed \$20 million, six-story, 28-unit condo building.

A brochure on The Cherokee Grande was available at Cogan's new Park Grande condo building, 1604 Cherokee Road, where the Bellarmine University Women's Council Designers' Show House ended Sunday.

Landau, a local retired physician who operates Monopoly Realty Co. in the Triangle and lives part of the year in Florida, said last week that many people wanted to buy the 42-unit Aquarius property.

"Kevin was kind of hand-picked because of his ability and his desire and his plans," Landau said. "What he's doing is correct."

Landau, who owns several other apartment properties in the Triangle, including Camelot Apartments on Everett Avenue where his real-estate office is located, said he also could be interested in selling those properties.

The seven-story Park Grande building overlooks Cherokee Park, with six units selling for about \$2 million or more each. The location was controversial because of the building's height and because it was along the edge of the park.

The Cherokee Grande project, in its preliminary outline form, would require a zoning change because it exceeds the square feet permitted by the existing zoning, said Charles Cash, director of Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services.

Tony Lindauer, president of the Cherokee Triangle Association, said Cogan has discussed the plans with him and others in the neighborhood. He also said a committee, made up of residents who would most be affected, is being formed to follow the plans.

Lindauer said the Aquarius Apartments are considered out of character with the neighborhood -- one of seven local preservation districts overseen by the Louisville Metro Landmarks Commission.

"Most people would love to see something that fits in the neighborhood," he said. But they don't want something overbearing, he added.

"The concern of the neighborhood is that we don't replace ... one thing that's out of character with another," he said. "But it sounds like Kevin is willing to work with the neighborhood."

Cogan said last week at his Jefferson Development Group office, 1706 Bardstown Road, that he needs the extra height and floor space to make the project economically feasible.

He said he's trying to revive a concept that was allowed years ago -- represented by such buildings as The Commodore and The Dartmouth-Willow Terrace apartments, now condominiums -- before suburban-type zoning required more yard space.

He said he expects to close on the Aquarius purchase within 60 days and start on the project next spring.

Jean Henderson, who lives across Cherokee Road from the Aquarius Apartments, said she and about a dozen people in the vicinity have known about Cogan's plan about six weeks and are thrilled. "Everyone is so excited," she said. Cogan said his building will have a stucco and limestone exterior and a slate roof.

The limestone facade will "keep it light and airy and elegant," Henderson said. "We're ready to support him. We are all for it."

The Aquarius Apartments used to be the site of the old Cherokee Inn, which also operated as a boarding house, according to "Cherokee Triangle: A History of the Heart of the Highlands," by Samuel W. Thomas.

The book says the razing of the inn and construction of the Aquarius Apartments in 1972 was one of the factors that led to the designation of the neighborhood as a preservation district in 1975.

The book said the apartments were an example of "incompatible intrusions" into neighborhoods that had led to the creation of the Landmarks Commission.

Landau said times have changed since he demolished the inn and the two homes on either side that had been purchased by it.

"In the '70s, I think that what we did there was what was best for the area," he said, adding that some homes were abandoned along Cherokee at that time. "They were just sitting there. Nobody wanted them. That's when we looked ahead and thought that this would be a good area."

He said his apartment buildings in the Triangle have enabled many people to live there and work downtown. Rents at the Aquarius are \$500 a month.

Prices for The Cherokee Grande condos would range from about \$450,000 to \$1.3 million, Cogan said.

Jessica Loving, who lives next door to The Park Grande and does marketing work for Cogan, said migration from the Cherokee Triangle to areas farther east has been reversing, and people want to move back.

Cogan calls it "reattaching to the city," but "a significant number are not ready or interested" in moving downtown, he said.

Cogan said the advantages of The Cherokee Grande development outweigh possible drawbacks from a zoning change. He plans to eliminate parking and a curb cut in front and bring the front of the new building in line with other buildings on the street.

A new underground parking area with at least 52 spaces and seven visitor spaces at ground level also would help reduce on-street parking, Cogan said. He estimated about 60 Aquarius tenants currently park on the street.

A stone wall also would be rebuilt in front of the new building, he said.

Reporter Martha Elson can be reached at (502) 582-7061.



Jefferson Development Group A rendering shows how the Aquarius Apartments site on Cherokee Road will look if The Cherokee Grande is built.



The Aquarius Apartments on Cherokee Road would be razed for The Cherokee Grande condos. (By Martha Elson, The Courier-Journal)