

Historic Kitchener smokestack to be preserved

BY TERRY PENDER, RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER — The brick chimney off [Joseph Street](#) will be preserved as a reminder to this city's industrial past, as the old buildings around it are demolished to make way for a parking lot.

The parking is needed to support the ambitious \$30 million redevelopment of the historic Lang Tannery building, which contains 330,000-square-feet of leasable space. About half is already occupied and the developer, Toronto-based Cadan Inc., needs additional parking to support what it calls The Tannery District.

"We are very heritage conscious and heritage aware," Lana Sherman of Cadan Inc. said Tuesday.

Sherman made her comments following a presentation to Heritage Kitchener on Tuesday. The old tannery building was not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, but Cadan Inc. has redeveloped the property while preserving the historic features of the old industrial complex.

The company has briefed Heritage Kitchener on every aspect of the redevelopment ahead of time.

"The smoke stack is a very unique structure that needs to be preserved," Zyg Janecki of Heritage Kitchener, said.

The tannery is bounded by Charles, Victoria, Joseph and Francis streets. A digital media centre is expected to move into the ground floor of the building, taking 36,000-square-feet of space. While an agreement has not been signed yet, an announcement is expected soon.

Across Joseph Street are five, small buildings and the smokestack that are about 93 years old and formed part of the tannery complex. This block is bounded by Linden, Joseph, Victoria and Oak streets.

Once the buildings are down, Cadan plans to build a gravel parking lot for 172 cars, "as soon as we can get permission," Sherman said.

In the long term, a five-storey parking garage will be built on the site and a row of townhouses will run along Oak Street. The garage will provide 640 spaces.

"The demand for parking is driven by the market, it is driven by the office users," Roland Rom Colthoff, the architect for the tannery's redevelopment, told members of Heritage Kitchener.

Colthoff, one of the founders of the Toronto-based firm called *raw design*, said the Tannery District may require up to 900 parking spaces when completely occupied. But that could be reduced if public transit in the core improves, Colthoff said.

"You are competing in a market place where people can go to the suburbs and get a lot of parking," Colthoff said.

More than one prospective tenant has wanted to locate in the Tannery District, but not before more parking was available nearby, Colthoff said.

The parking lot and future parking garage are the best way to guarantee the future preservation and re-use of the historic tannery building, says a Heritage Impact Assessment.

"The smokestack is the most significant element/building on the site," says the assessment. "It is one of the last remaining original smokestacks within the downtown that is representative of Kitchener's industrial heritage."

John Ariens, a member Heritage Kitchener, urged the developer to locate some industrial artifacts in the court yards and amenity areas of the Tannery District.

"I think there has to be some thought go into it," Ariens said.

Ariens said the old smoke stack, one of the last in the city, should be protected under the Ontario Heritage Act as soon as the buildings around it are demolished.

The redevelopment of the Tannery District is one of the biggest private-sector investments in the downtown in years. It was sparked by the City of Kitchener's move to provide \$30 million and land to the University of Waterloo for the establishment of a school of pharmacy and a satellite medical school nearby on Victoria Street.

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