

Developer Redesigns Tower

The redesign of what is planned as downtown Hartford's first office tower in decades is back to square one — literally.

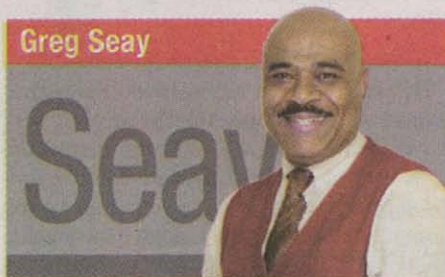
Gone are the elliptoid curves and mixture of metal, masonry and glass exteriors of the previous design for the \$40 million AI Technical Center to be situated in Constitution Plaza, replaced by a rectangular, glass-sheathed design penned by Boston architects Childs, Bertman Tseckares Inc.

According to the architects, the glass will maximize the 13-story building's collection of solar heat and light to aid in its goal of energy sustainability as a LEED Platinum building. The new design also more closely resembles the boxy, 1960s-era styling of the rest of the buildings in the Constitution Plaza complex.

The 180,000 square foot — 10,000 square feet more than a preliminary design by Technon Architects Inc. of Hartford — of AI Tech Center will have, among other green technologies, photovoltaic power, fuel cells, and a central solar light well to push light down through the structure. It also will feature a rooftop garden and underground parking.

"This building will be able to produce at least 50 percent of its own power," said Middletown engineering entrepreneur Abul Islam, whose initials will adorn the tower.

Islam is founder-president of AI Engineers Inc., slated to occupy two floors in the building.



Meanwhile, Islam, at the same public unveiling of his new building design, announced the identity of the building's first signed outside tenant — Hartford's Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

Saint Francis Hospital, which has signed a letter of intent to occupy one floor, sees the space as a way to offer convenient health care services to downtown workers and residents, said Paul Pendergast, president of the Saint Francis Foundation.

Islam has hired Boston real estate firm Jones, Lang, LaSalle, which has a downtown Hartford operation, to oversee leasing the rest of the building including ground-floor retail space and space for a rooftop restaurant. The lease broker expects the tower's green footprint to translate to lower energy costs, which will appeal to prospective tenants.

Suffolk Construction of Boston, which says it has built a number of buildings in Fairfield and New Haven and boasts of a close working relationship with architect CBT, will be the project's general contractor.



AI Engineers recently unveiled a new design for a downtown Hartford office tower.

So far, demolition continues on the remnants of the reinforced concrete shell of the Broadcast House building at the corner of Columbus Boulevard and State Street, once home to WFSB Channel 3. Razing and clearing of the site is expected before the end of this year. ■

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