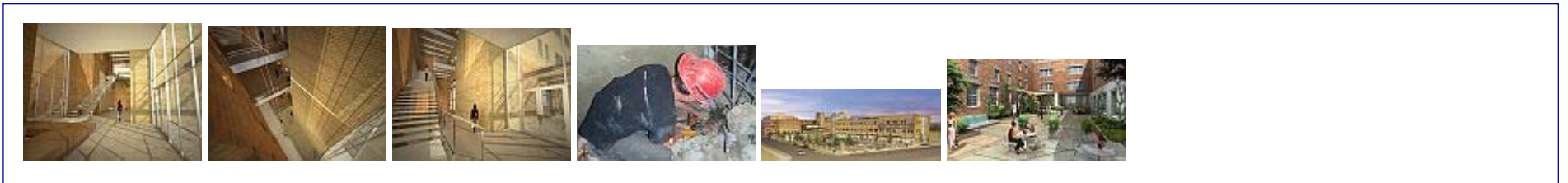


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A new lobby will be added as part of the transformation of a former tannery into a mixed-use development in Kitchener's downtown core.

Image Gallery (click to enlarge)



Restoration and Renovation

Kitchener tannery converted to mix of retail, office, studio space

PATRICIA WILLIAMS
staff writer

Raw design is helping convert Kitchener's historic Lang Tanning Co. building into a cutting-edge, mixed-use development that will include a 25,000-square-foot digital media convergence centre.

The \$30 million Tannery project, under way in the downtown core, will encompass a mix of retail, office and studio space catering in part to emerging technologies. It is being spearheaded by Toronto-based developer Cadan Inc.

"The strategic insertion of new structures and sensitive renovations will rescue an otherwise forgotten civic icon from the rustbelt era," says architect Roland Rom Colthoff of raw design.

Part of an ambitious downtown revitalization scheme, the redevelopment is being undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 is scheduled for completion next January while Phase 2 is to be finished by the fall of 2010.

The project team includes contractor Zehr Kalman Levesque Inc. of Kitchener and subcontractor Brenner Mechanical Inc. of Waterloo.

Building on the robust turn-of-the-century mill construction, contractors will replace or refurbish the aging infrastructure, including the original steam heating and drainage systems, to allow re-use of major portions of the building.

"Our goal is to create a complex that can accommodate diverse users," says Lana Sherman, Cadan's managing director.

"We want to retain the character of the building and add modern amenities, a place where multiple disciplines can work together."

Current tenants include designers, artists and wood shops.

As part of the renovations, windows are being replaced as are the mechanical and electrical systems. A new elevator core and lobby will be added as well.

A new circulation system will allow "effective movement" throughout the building.

A linked series of pedestrian promenades and courtyards will create a highly accessible public urban space.

In advance of a start on construction, demolition of some secondary structures was required to open up the site and create leasable office areas. That work was carried out by Greenspoon Specialty Contracting.

Located on the block bounded by Charles, Joseph, Francis and Victoria streets, the rejuvenated Tannery will create a link between the new University of Waterloo health sciences campus and the city's commercial core.

The 350,000-square-foot complex once housed the largest tannery in the British Empire.

"The Tannery forms a clear link between Kitchener's industrial heritage and its future growth in technologically based business," Rom Colthoff says. "New economy businesses and artists will work alongside one another in a space that formerly housed the hides used for soldiers' boots."