

MIAMI TODAY

SALUTE TO BRICKELL

Mid-priced Hampton Inn to replace condos near Brickell

By YUDISLAIDY FERNANDEZ

A Brickell developer has responded to the real estate market's steep fall by scrapping plans for a condominium complex and instead is building a modest-size hotel in Brickell—a decision Miami commissioners applauded.

Bernard Wolfson, president of Brickell Hotel Group, who planned the condo development Brickell View, returned to the commission requesting a change to the major use special permit to instead build a 221-room Hampton Inn & Suites at 30 SW 12th St. The hotel, which is to be accessed from Coral Way, is setting aside 8,870 square feet for restaurants and 1,775 for retail.

The planned 15-story hotel at 155 feet high would be about half the size of the originally proposed 29-story mixed-use residential building.

Mr. Wolfson, who owns three other Hampton Inns—two in Miami and one in Fort Lauderdale—said this is the type of

project downtown needs.

"We don't need more condos as planned for this project in the past," he said.

With Brickell's many high-price hotels such as the Four Seasons or Mandarin Oriental, he said his project would offer much-needed mid-price hotel rooms without sacrificing staple amenities such as high-speed Internet access, a gymnasium, business center and free breakfast.

Mr. Wolfson said some green components are also in the plans, like dual-flush toilets, which save substantial water, a system to harvest rainwater to use for irrigation, and designated parking for hybrid and electric cars. "Wherever possible, we are looking for conservation."

Nearby Metromover and Metrorail stations would offer guests free and fared transportation options.

Miami's Planning Advisory Board, which unanimously approved the project, persuaded the developer to make a few

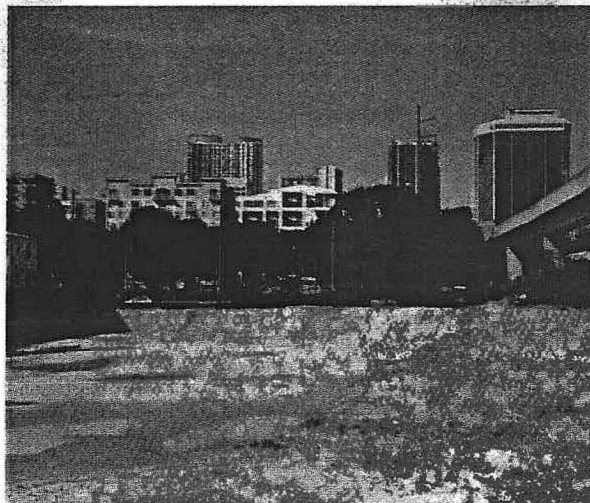


Photo by Maxine Usdan

A Hampton Inn is now planned for this site, which once was planned for the condo development Brickell View before the downturn.

tweaks to integrate the 212-space parking garage more into the building's design.

"This project is ready to move forward and provide jobs," said Adrienne Pardo, an attorney at Greenberg Traurig who repre-

sents the developer.

Mr. Wolfson said he hopes to start building within three months and finish in two years.

Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, who represents Brickell, said

"this (the hotel) is a product that has gone through an evolution. My congrats on a good product and good use of the land."

The city would take in close to \$395,000 in general fund and debt service ad valorem taxes and a contribution of \$25,000 to the Downtown Development Authority taxing district, according to a permit application. The hotel would create up to 125 jobs.

Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones asked Mr. Wolfson to employ local workers for construction and to look at hiring participants in the Community Redevelopment Agency's hospitality training program as hotel employees.

"We should give people options when they come to downtown," said Commission Chairman Joe Sanchez, who chairs the Downtown Development Authority. "...we should be grateful this is a project we know will get built."