

Developers submit design plans for SkySong 3

By Jane Larson

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

SkySong's developers have submitted plans for the project's third office and research building, featuring a new look and shape.

The third building would sport bands of glass and aluminum in varying shades of blue, wrapping around an L-shaped structure. It was designed by Architekton, a Tempe firm that also designed the Tempe Center for the Arts and the Arizona State University Foundation building.

Architekton wanted to create a building that continues the development's urban-pedestrian experience and relates to the SkySong shade structure outside, principal John Kane said.

Overhangs will shade the sidewalks, and the blue exterior will reflect the blue walls of the existing buildings.

"We tried to reinforce what has already begun," Kane said.

But SkySong 3 also will differ from its brethren, just as buildings in urban areas of great cities differ from each other, he said.

The stratified exterior would play off the Arizona sky and geology, Kane said. People using the building would park south of it, then enter a long lobby that feels like a slot canyon before it opens up diagonally to the dramatic shade structure, he said.

SkySong co-developers Plaza Cos. and Higgins Development Partners submitted the latest plans to the city last week.

City planning staffers will review them, and the architects will address any comments before the plans are submitted to the Development Review Board for approval.

The date the board will consider the plans has not been set, staff coordinator Greg Bloemberg said.

The building would go up west of the current buildings, occupying the southwest quadrant of the plaza covered by the shade structure.

It would be four stories, the same height as the first two buildings, and total 158,912 square feet.

Like the first two buildings,

SkySong 3 would include space for retail shops on the ground floor.

Construction would start in mid-2010 at the earliest, Plaza Cos. spokeswoman Michele Irwin said.

Timing will depend on factors such as when the review board approves the plans and when the developers hire a contractor and receive the building permit, she said.

SkySong, the ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center, is intended to be a global high-tech portal where businesses big and small can mix with ASU students and

researchers. Major tenants so far include ASU entrepreneurial programs, Canon U.S.A. Inc. and Ticketmaster.

The project is being built on the site of the former Los Arcos Mall at Scottsdale and McDowell roads.

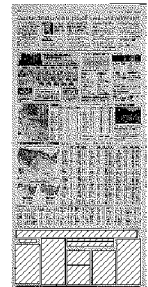
The first two office buildings, designed by Pei Cobb Freed & Partners of New York City, have been criticized as bland.

Supporters say the simple design was planned to allow the soaring lines of the shade structure to stand out.

Developers also plan to seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, certification for the third building from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Certification for the first two buildings is being considered.

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