

ASTORIA *Times*

Thursday, April 19, 2007

Your Neighborhood - Your News

50 cents

THE NEWSPAPER OF ASTORIA, LONG ISLAND CITY, WOODSIDE & SUNNYSIDE

Developers planning two hotels for LIC

BY NATHAN DUKE

The rapidly developing Long Island City may soon be a hot spot for business travelers now that two city developers plan to open hotels in the neighborhood during the next few years.

In 2005, Manhattan developer Ravi Patel purchased a building for \$4 million at 42-11 Vernon Blvd. in Long Island City. It formerly housed the Q Hotel and Patel said he planned to convert the former 23-room property into a 78-room boutique hotel. The five-story building will reopen by the end of the summer with rooms starting at \$300 per night, Patel said.

A few blocks away on 43rd Avenue, a second boutique hotel known as the Z Hotel, is being developed with plans to open within two years. The 10-story building, the first hotel to be created by Long Island City limousine service owner Henry Zilberman, will feature 100 rooms at competitive rates. It is being designed by architect Andre Kikoski, who created the Lower East Side eatery Suba.

Patel said the conversion in recent years of many hotel rooms to condominiums in Manhattan and the rapid growth of Long Island City has created a demand for upscale hotels with cheaper rates in the neighborhood.

"I think it's totally under-served," he said. "A lot of hotels are turning into condos, so hotel rooms are disappearing, but tourism is a big industry in New York City."

Patel said area residents were originally opposed to the new hotel because of reputed prostitution problems at the site in the past.

But he said the Ravel Hotel will be an upscale development with several rooftop bars and a movie theater where local artists can screen their work.

Steven Kratchman, the architect for the Ravel Hotel, said all rooms in the building will feature a variation of a French balcony or terrace.

Kratchman, who was the senior project designer for the transformation of the Chelsea Piers waterfront complex, said the hotel's lobby, check-in desk and parking will be on one side of the hotel and the rooms on the other, guaranteeing that each visitor will have a view of the Manhattan skyline.

Jeff Marcus, project manager for the Z Hotel, said the building is still in its design stage and that construction might begin by the fall. The property will feature a restaurant and lounge and Zilberman's limousine service will provide free transportation to the city for hotel patrons.

"We are trying to create a product similar to the fantastic boutique hotels in the city that have become exorbitantly expensive," he said.