

# High-rise atop downtown parking garage may lift off

Louis Aguilar, The Detroit News 4:54 p.m. EST November 2, 2015



(Photo: Roxbury Group)

The nearly 10-year effort to build upscale housing atop a downtown parking garage is ready to get off the ground.

Construction is expected to begin this month on The Griswold, a five-story apartment complex that will be stacked above the 10-story parking garage on Michigan Avenue and Griswold. Soon mammoth cranes will hoist steel beams to the top of the garage, which offers panoramic views. The garage is adjacent to the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel and Residences.

The Griswold is the first new construction of downtown housing in nearly 25 years and the first in a very long time to build above an existing structure, which is more common in denser cities.

It's a \$24 million project that will create 80 market-rate apartments, according to The Roxbury Group, the project developers.

Planning for the project started in 2006 when the garage was built for the renovated Book Cadillac, which underwent a \$200 million overhaul after being empty for decades. The recession delayed the apartment project for years.

The development is part of the Capitol Park historic district, referring to the triangular park one block away.

A decade ago, Capitol Park was mainly a bus stop by day and an "open vice market by night," said David Di Rita, principal in the Roxbury Group on Monday. Now, most of the historic buildings around the park have undergone extensive renovations or about to go through major upgrades.

"We were ahead of our time," with The Griswold, Di Rita said. "Now is the time."

The Griswold will have one-, two- and three-bedroom units ranging from 750 to 1,600 square feet. The apartments could be ready by end of next year.

Upscale housing is in big demand in "greater downtown" — a 7.2 square-mile area of the city that include downtown, the east riverfront, Midtown, Eastern Market, Lafayette Park, Woodbridge and Corktown.

A steady stream of new and renovated housing developments are in the works for those neighborhoods. The Griswold is a rare development in Detroit in that it's using "air-rights" — the space above an existing building.

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