


City Council approves construction of two buildings in historic area

Posted: Jan 27, 2009 04:13 PM MST

Updated: Jan 27, 2009 05:00 PM MST

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by ABC-7 Reporter Darren Hunt

EL PASO, Texas -- City Council voted Tuesday to allow a group of buildings to be constructed in a historic district.



Centro de Salud La Fe and TVO North America want to build two three-story buildings in the Magoffin Historic District in Central El Paso.

They would add 1,700 square feet of retail space and nearly 100 apartment units, 20 percent of them affordable housing.

Even though construction of the two buildings was approved by the City Plan Commission, the Historic Landmark Commission tried to block the construction, saying the structures are too large for the area and the appearance contrasts greatly with the historic look of the neighborhood.

Because of Tuesday's vote, they will be allowed to go ahead with the construction.

The change in zoning Council approved and the decision to vacate the portion of a street and two alleys in the area for development was significant to many because they saw it as a decision that would either move the Downtown redevelopment plan forward or stall it if development was not approved.

Mayor John Cook spoke just before the vote was taken.

He pointed out how difficult it is to do in-fill development in El Paso, especially near Downtown.

City officials said by approving this development, they avoid putting a nail in the coffin of Downtown revitalization.

The city previously approved \$1.5 million in funds for the project since it has an affordable housing concept. The total cost of the development is expected to be more than \$8 million.

Written for KVIA.com by web producer Annette Arrigucci