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# Shipping containers would frame proposed North Loop offices

Posted by: Eric Roper Updated: March 21, 2014 - 4:52 PM

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Updated at 2:55 p.m.

An innovative trend of constructing buildings out of shipping containers is making its first foray in the Twin Cities with a new office building proposal unveiled on Friday.

Local marketing firm Akcuracy is behind plans to construct what founder Scott Petinga says would be the largest shipping container building in North America.

The three-story, 18,500-square-foot structure in the North Loop would use 60 identical 40-foot containers to form a rhombus framing a ground-level park and plaza.



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Shipping containers have become a trendy medium for new buildings because they are abundant, strong and relatively cheap.

The architecture firm that designed the building, New York-based LOT-EK, has used shipping containers as the basis for designing buildings and mobile pop-up shops across the world. One of Akquracy's clients is Puma, who used LOT-EK to design a mobile retail and event structure called Puma City.

"If you look around the North Loop, the one thing that everything has in common is buildings were built to last," Petinga said. "Modern buildings aren't necessarily built to last. So I'm trying to bring some of that craftsmanship back."

Petinga purchased the site at 5th Avenue North and 3rd Street North, which he says has been vacant for 98 years, in 2013.

The proposal would house Akquracy on the upper floors, as well as co-shared "incubation space" for local entrepreneurs. The ground-floor would feature a restaurant-cafe space, retail, and a plaza with an array of chairs. Since the building is not square, there is much open space between the and the curb.

"We've built it in such a way where we're looking for residents to come hang out, we're looking for people essentially who work in the neighborhood to come out, to spend a little bit more time in the North Loop," Petinga said. "Instead of just coming in, coming to work and then leaving immediately after."

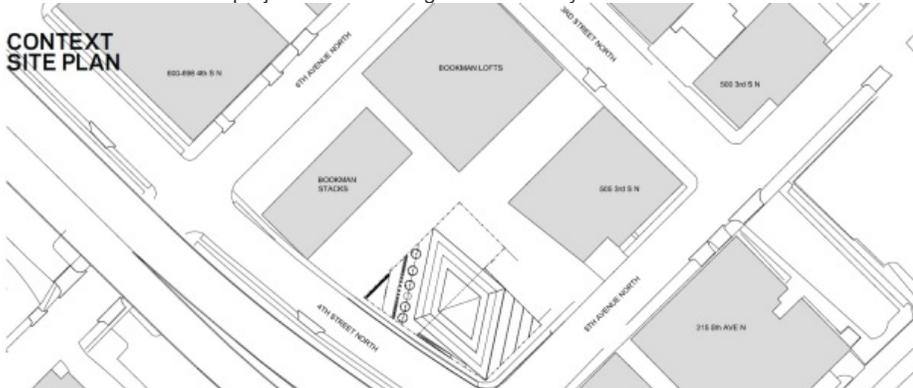
Renderings show that the building would use green shipping containers from the massive Taiwan-based shipping company Evergreen. The exterior of the building would feature diagonal windows sliced into the containers.

Petinga hopes to have it complete by May 2015. Among the major obstacles is assembling 60 identical containers, at least some of which will originate in the Twin Cities. He hopes to do more with containers, however, and founded a foundation that aims to build a single-family home for less than \$100 a square foot.

"It's actually stronger, stronger more sustainable, more economical at the end of the day," Petinga said.

Akquracy is currently housed at the former John Deere tractor factory building on 8th Avenue North and Washington Avenue. They have other offices across the country.

Plans have been submitted to the city planning commission's committee of the whole. The committee will discuss the project at it's meeting next Thursday.



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