

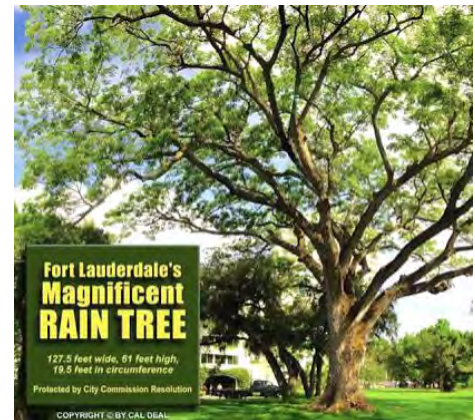
In The News Reading #1: Marina Lofts and the Giant Samaan Tree

Newspaper Article:

Renowned Architect Bjarke Ingels behind bold Marina Lofts proposal
South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com February 4, 2012 by Paul Owers

Project Pictures:

Star Architect Vs. Giant Protected Raintree and City Residents Show down on the New River
www.bizjournals.com/southflorida, February 20, 2013



Downtown Fort Lauderdale is a great urban center with its wonderful tropical modern architecture that supports functionality in both the public and private sectors. So who would not want to add an extremely architecturally designer quality residential tower? Tree huggers, environmentalists, neighboring residents, and even the Fort Lauderdale City Commission since 1987. But as the developer envisions a high density, architecturally stunning, mixed use, high-end residential apartment house the tree must go. Because there is not enough room for his Marina Lofts project, maximum density, billion dollar yearly profit, the tree is in the way and must go. The developer, Asi Cymbal has offered to move the tree and insure it for one million dollars if it should die as a result of the relocation.

The Marina Loft project will be a 150 million dollar development in blighted neighborhood on the South side of the river. From a list of 10 architects worldwide developer Cymbal hired Danish architect Bjarke Ingles, who had won Wall Street Journal's Innovator of the Year award for architecture in 2011. This project could architecturally crown Fort Lauderdale as a significant place to live and bring worldwide attention to the city. No doubt this is a stunning piece of work.

Interestingly developer Cymbal comments on his site like an Urban Designer by understanding the opposition and the ability to be flexible. "Whenever you do something new or different, there's always going to be hesitation and differences of opinion," He says "But I think it's important not to dilute the excitement and creativity in an effort to transform and innovate."



Further comments from social media suggest the ever impact of working within context could actually promote a project and substantially increase profits according to biz-journals.com.

This comment is from Larry Clemons post on biz-journals.com

If the Developers and Their Marketing Team were on Top Of Their Game (I mean, this is the 21 ST Century), They would " Include, This World Class ECO Magnet TREE ", into their Ad Campaign for The Building and it's Future World Living Concept..." Man with Nature ". If they positioned themselves, this way from the Beginning , They would be getting Local, State, National and Worldwide PRESS, for the Storyline and the Architecture ...And, of course, in the Heart Of The Yacht Capitol Of The World, FORT LAUDERDALE, doesn't Hurt. With this CONCEPT of working with the Tree as Importantly as YOU WOULD the Building, your Rents would be able to increase by 20% to 30%...It would actually be a " Wiser " direction, even from a " Strictly Business ", Return on Investment position for the Shareholders....And , think of all the Good Will You would receive from the City, it's People and Our Visitors. Let's All Be Honest, The Waterway, with The Tree, is more VALUABLE from every Level, ...there's " Miles " of that Waterway.

As a tree hugger myself, I think it is important not to lose sight of progress but to find the equilibrium of the built environment with the natural environment. Why is it that developers suggest to build high density tall buildings that take advantage of views beyond their property, but they do not provide or work with the natural environment on their acquired land. I am very familiar with this tree which has been deemed a landmark and is supposedly protected by the Fort Lauderdale City Commission. On one side we have commissioners wanting to be re-elected and then on the other we have a grand project that would eliminate the existence of a significant product of nature.

sun-sentinel.com/fl-lofts-danish-architect-20130202,0,489785.story

South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

Renowned architect Bjarke Ingels behind bold Marina Lofts proposal

But some Fort Lauderdale residents say development would be out of place

By [Paul Owers](#), Sun Sentinel

8:55 AM EST, February 4, 2013

The renderings are striking for Marina Lofts, a \$150 million development proposed for a blighted stretch along the south side of the New River in Fort Lauderdale.

One of the three Lego-like buildings looks as if a lightning bolt tore through it. Several blocks appear to have fallen off the top of another building. The blocks serve as a bridge, allowing pedestrians to cross an existing water basin.

The design for the mix of boutique shops, quaint cafes and 1,000 rentals targeting young professionals is the creation of Bjarke Ingels, a renowned Danish architect.

"Well, you've got to admit, it's not a boring elevation," said Helene Dreiling, president-elect of the American Institute of Architects in Washington, D.C. "That's pretty cool. This is a real opportunity for transformation. This could be the catalyst for other projects that are of a higher design quality."

Developer Asi Cymbal, 43, insists Marina Lofts will be a dramatic addition to the skyline and draw international attention to Fort Lauderdale – if it's approved. Cymbal hopes to get the city's blessing this spring. Construction would begin next year, with the first of three phases opening in 2015.

"We're not interested in building another ordinary box," says Cymbal, a native of Israel and an aficionado of art and architecture.

He put together a list of about 10 architects worldwide and eventually hired Ingels, who won the Wall Street Journal's Innovator of the Year award for architecture in 2011. Ingels, 38, "has a reputation for creating eco-friendly spaces with playful design touches," the paper said.

One of his projects is a large Copenhagen apartment community in the shape of a figure 8. He's also planning a Phoenix observation tower shaped like a honey dipper.

"I like to say, 'Where there is nothing, everything is possible,'" Ingels said. "A lot of South Florida real estate development is characterized by large, preconceived condominiums designed without much response to their surroundings. We're trying to tap into what we see as the heritage or legacy of South Florida."

But some nearby residents aren't impressed, saying the size and unusual design would be out of place in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

"Absolutely ridiculous," said Kevin Barrett, a 58-year-old painter. "This is so Miami. I ain't living by that."

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He and other neighbors also oppose Marina Lofts because it would displace a treasured rain tree.

Cymbal said he can safely move the massive tree a block away to a park he's creating at the entrance to Marina Lofts. Local arborists have said a move could damage or kill the tree, but Cymbal said he's willing to post a \$1 million bond in the event something were to happen.

Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler said the development has the potential to be iconic – but he doesn't want it overshadowing the New River and the riverfront. Seiler said he suggested to Cymbal that he scale back the project.

"It's very unusual for Fort Lauderdale, kind of catchy," Seiler said. "But I don't think any building should overwhelm a property."

Cymbal said he has listened to the concerns of city officials and residents and intends to reduce the size of two buildings from 36 stories to 28. He also plans to move the tallest building, a 33-story structure, further away from the Esplanade condominium, at the request of its homeowner's association.

A marina and water taxi service currently operate from the property. Also on site is the Pirate Republic Seafood Grill & Bar, which replaced the Shirttail Charlie's restaurant that closed in 2007.

Cymbal assumed the leases of the existing businesses and plans to incorporate them into Marina Lofts. He paid \$11.5 million for the property as part of a 2011 bankruptcy sale.

The apartments would range in rent from \$1,100 to \$2,000 a month, a niche that Cymbal calls "affordable luxury." He said a person making \$35,000 a year could afford to live at the project.

The Related Group of Miami, headed by Jorge Perez, recently broke ground on New River Yacht Club, a 249-unit apartment complex just east of Marina Lofts. The two rental developments are expected to help revitalize the south side of the river.

"Whenever you do something new or different, there's always going to be hesitation and differences of opinion," Cymbal said. "But I think it's important not to dilute the excitement and creativity in an effort to transform and innovate."

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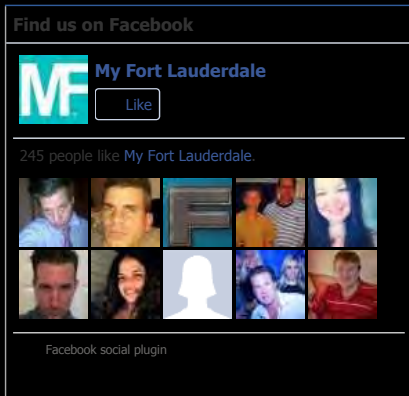
Starchitect Vs. Giant Protected Raintree and City Residents Showdown On The New River



The six-story tall raintree that would be relocated to allow for construction of the three-tower Marina Lofts project in downtown Fort Lauderdale **can** be moved, county commissioners agreed Tuesday. But that doesn't mean that it will be moved, because adamant residents are fighting to protect this beloved rare raintree from being moved, and potentially not surviving the move, despite what the developer has stated..

The Broward County Commission voted 7-2 to reject a request to declare the tree "historical" and prevent its relocation. People opposing the tree's move raised concern about the potential for the tree's loss and the significance of the tree's history at 424 SW Fourth Ave.

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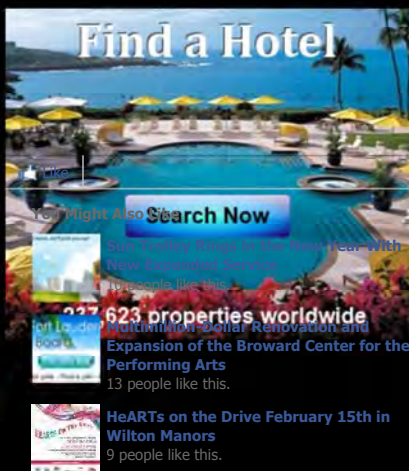
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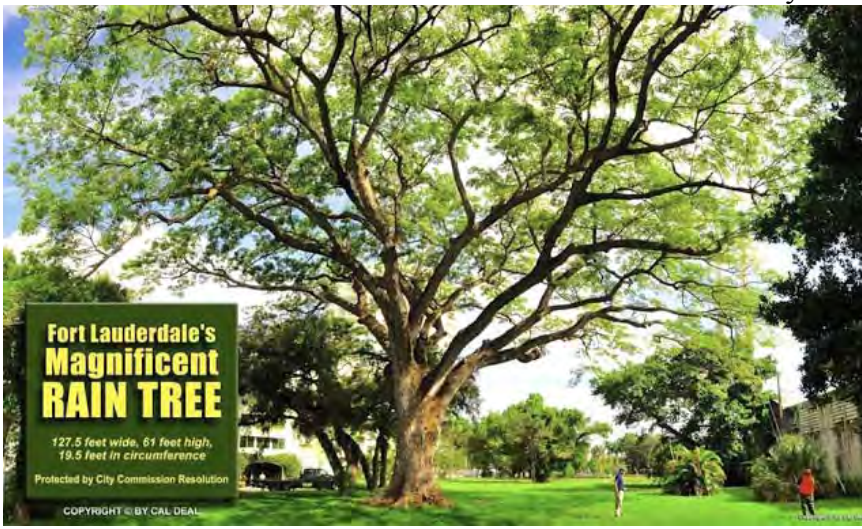
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Expansion of the Broward Center for the Performing Arts

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HeARTs on the Drive February 15th in Wilton Manors

9 people like this.



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The New River site of South Florida's second Bjarke Ingels project, the 1000+ unit Marina Lofts, is already occupied by the mother of all trees, and developer Asi Cymbal is adamant that he wants it moved.

The largest Albizia Saman, or rain tree, in the State of Florida, and probably the entire United States (since they only grow in Florida) commands the six acre plot of land. It's 61 feet high and 127 feet wide, with a root system just as extensive, and a trunk 20 feet around. It's been designated a 'protected tree' by the Fort Lauderdale City Commission since 1987, and a "Florida Champion" (meaning the largest in Florida) since 1982.



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Asi Cymbal, developer of the proposed Marina Lofts project, said that the commission's decision bodes well for the future of the city.

"The commissioners saw the bigger picture and were affected by the warmth and positivity in the room," he said. "That bodes well for the future of Fort Lauderdale and the county."

Cymbal is proposing to build three towers with fewer than 1,000 rental apartments, with retail on the ground floor.

[The project has reignited the debate about Fort Lauderdale's identity](#): On one side are some locals - residents, activists, business-owners - who want to hold-on to the city's small-town roots; on the other are landowners, investors and professionals who want to see Fort Lauderdale become a destination and a 24/7 urban community.

Cymbal has been working with neighborhood residents to address issues including the scale of the project, reducing it from more than 1,000 to less than 1,000 units and has adjusted the heights of the buildings to make them more acceptable.

He has also pledged to post a \$1 million bond that he would lose if the tree were to die.

He said he hired Environmental Design, which relocates the tree the White House uses for its Christmas celebration, to move the rain tree.

"We are relocating and preserving our rain tree in a park specifically designed for it on our property," he explained. "The Raintree Park was specifically selected by the chief arborist of the Fairchild Garden. We're placing it on the southern tip of our property, in an area that will allow for maximum sunlight, and outside the construction zone."

However, residents aren't so sure that this tree will survive the move. The City of Fort Lauderdale once had 36 Protected Trees. It now only has 12 left standing. Proponents who oppose the moving of the tree claim that if the tree is moved, damaged and its sustenance not protected, we may be down to a mere 11 trees should the tree not survive the move.

If you would like to sign this Petition to Save the Raintree, please visit <http://signon.org/sign/save>

No doubt, this is a heated issue between developer and city residents.

Who do you think should win out on this issue? The rain tree or the developer? What are your suggestions? Let us know in the comments below.

Source:

www.bizjournals.com/southflorida

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