

Cliff Inn making way for a new medical center

by Ben Wright/ www.newspapertree.com

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"We are grateful to have the opportunity to drastically change the environment in which El Pasoans receive their health care services," said Charles Garrett, President and CEO for TVO Development, which is in charge of the project which will run between three and five years. The Cliff Inn is currently being gutted as asbestos is removed ahead of its demolition next week. TVO Development describes the hotel as "a less-than-dignified example of El Paso's proud medical history."

"The Cliff inn has a historic tie to El Paso's medical community," said Kelly Jameson, who is directing public relations for the project, adding that it has "one of the most striking views in the city." But according to Jameson, the hotel has "fallen into disrepair" and is now both "ugly" and an "eye sore."

Indeed, the travel website www.tripadvisor.com has 10 reviews for the Cliff Inn of which seven give it a rating of only 1 or 2 stars out of a possible 5. However, the New York Times travel guide praises the hotel as both "elegant with a touch of eclectic kitsch" and "brimming with antiques, tapestries, and furnishings from all over the world."

The project has been in the pipeline for quite some time, at least the last six months, said Jameson. When completed the 16-acre site, set atop the Golden Hills Terrace neighborhood in Central El Paso, will house a new medical campus called City View Medical Plaza. The plaza will comprise medical offices, a food court and space for shops.

"It's more than just a health care destination, it's a lifestyle destination," said Jameson. TVO Development is a subsidiary of TVO North America, founded by El Paso businessman Russell A. Vandenburg. TVO first got into medical real estate in 2006 and has similar projects in Hurst, Houston and Dallas.

"We look forward to returning this important site to its previous position of being the preferred location to deliver and receive medical related services," said Garrett.