

Residents to get their say on future of 124th Street landmark

BY BILL MAH, EDMONTON JOURNAL FEBRUARY 25, 2015



A preliminary artist's rendering of the proposed development on the site of the Buena Vista building in Oliver, at 124th Street and 102nd Avenue in Edmonton.

Photograph by: Supplied

EDMONTON - Edmontonians are getting their say on a proposed rezoning that could replace a 103-year-old Oliver landmark with an apartment and commercial tower.

Vancouver's Edgar Development Corp., which bought the Buena Vista building in January 2014 from the operators of the Glenora Bed and Breakfast, plans to tear down the building but dismantle and reassemble the west, north and south facades.

The company wants to incorporate the facades into a 25-storey building that will house as many as 250 residential units, 245 underground parking stalls, and commercial and retail space at street level.

"It's important to note that this is not an historically designated building," said Edgar vice-president Henry Edgar.

"That being said, we recognize that it has a lot of sentimental value to Edmontonians and we see as much value in the building as anyone."

The three-storey, red-brick apartment block at the corner of 124th Street and 102nd Avenue currently houses tenants such as the Glenora Bed and Breakfast Inn, the Glenora Bistro, Cafe Beirut and the Acquired Tastes Tea Company.

Edgar has applied for rezoning. The site is currently zoned for a three-storey building and needs city council to approve any new development. Because the Buena Vista doesn't have city heritage designation, council can't save it for esthetic reasons alone.

If it wins rezoning, Edgar must then apply for development and building permits.

The company's proposal has received mixed reaction, Edgar said.

"The first impulse anyone gets is you can't knock down that building. It's beautiful," Edgar said. "We agree and we want to make sure we keep that building."

The podium that incorporates the old facades will be topped by a tower that is set back from the base.

"A passerby would have much of the same street-scale experience that they would have today. Essentially, what we've done is save the most important parts of the building from what the public sees and we're going to be restoring them to ensure they last another 100 years."

Edgar said the building's internal systems are out-of-date and the roof needs replacing. "To bring it up to code would be a significant investment that financially doesn't make sense."

Edgar Developments is also constructing a 29-storey rental apartment tower in Oliver, The Hendrix, at 9749 111th St.

The City of Edmonton is holding a public meeting on the Buena Vista rezoning March 4 at 7 p.m. at Robertson-Wesley United Church, 10209 123rd St. Edgar officials will be available to answer questions.

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