

Edmonton residents get glimpse at plans for Buena Vista Apartments



By Caley Ramsay Web Producer
Global News

Watch above: Another historic Edmonton building could be on the chopping block. The Buena Vista Apartment building was built in 1912, but as the developers who purchased it recently put it “it’s in bad shape. Eric Szeto has more on what’s in store.

EDMONTON – Edmontonians have been given a closer look at what could one day sit on the corner of 124 Street and 102 Avenue if a Vancouver-based development company has its way.



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An open house was held by Edgar Development Corporation Wednesday night to discuss the future of Buena Vista Apartments. The landmark building has called the popular corner home since 1912.

Henry Edgar, VP of Edgar Development Corporation, says the plan is to build a 25-storey residential building, with commercial space at the street level.

“We think that it’s a really desirable place to live and this is *the* corner to live on.”

While Edgar says developers plan to preserve as much as the outer brick façade as possible, reaction to the project has been mixed.

“I think a lot of people are really concerned about the building and I hope that we’ve reassured them that the building does matter to us as well, and that we’re doing our best to save as much of the building as we can,” Edgar said.

“We see that historic building as a huge asset to our development.”

David Howatt, who lives in the area, says he worked hard to oppose a similar project on the same site 10 years ago, but admits the time may have come for redevelopment. However, it doesn’t mean he isn’t concerned about the current plans.

“If this goes ahead it should tie in with the neighbourhood beyond the main floor, even beyond the third floor,” said Howatt. “What I’m seeing so far is two brick walls; and the upper part needs a lot of work.”

Lesley Vaage, who describes the building as “a cornerstone for the community” says when it comes to incorporating the old building into the new design – the more the better.

“The Glenora Bed and Breakfast has really nice esthetic and nostalgic value for the community,” she said. “I hope that they continue to incorporate at least the façade, hopefully more.”

“A lot of people have memories in that corner – going to brunch with their families,” Vaage said. “Whatever it is, there’s a lot of memories, there’s a lot of sentiment wrapped up in that location.”

While it’s an important piece to many residents, the century-old building has had ongoing heating, electrical and plumbing issues.

“It looks good on the outside,” said Normand Campbell, owner of the Glenora Bistro, “but on the inside, it’s really old and decrepit.”

Campbell says he’s put in tens of thousands of dollars over the past seven years to repair the old structure and keep it up to code. He believes the new development will benefit the entire neighbourhood.

“I feel, honestly, people are really upset now and I respect that, but at the same time once the new building gets built and it’s open, they’ll have forgotten about this,” he said. “It’s not going to mean a lot when they see the new high rise.”

“It’s an old building. What are you keeping?”

Wednesday’s open house was the first of many public consultation sessions.

At this point Edgar Development Corporation does not have a cost estimate for the project. Developers hope to get approval for the site within the next year and have shovels in the ground by 2016.

With files from Eric Szeto, Global News.



Edgar Development Corporation’s plans for Buena Vista Apartments as of Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2014.

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