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Lowertown landowner applies to demolish buildings

**CARYS MILLS**[More from Carys Mills \(HTTP://OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/AUTHOR/CARYSLMILLS\)](http://OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/AUTHOR/CARYSLMILLS)

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Lowertown landowner Claude Lauzon wants to demolish his deteriorated and empty residential property on King Edward Avenue, between Murray and Clarence streets, so it can be replaced with a new rental building.

Lauzon hopes to build a six-storey building there, with commercial use on the ground floor, said Murray Chown, a senior project manager at Novatech Engineering, which is working with the Claude Lauzon

Group. Plans for the new development haven't been formally registered with the city yet, although demolition applications have been filed for 260 Murray St. and 261 to 279 King Edward Ave.

Chown said Lauzon's intentions are to file site plan applications in about the next month to seek the city's approval, so construction could start as early as 2015. There is "absolutely" no intention to leave the site vacant, Chown said, but buildings need to be demolished to move forward.

"Some of the existing buildings on that property have deteriorated to a point where they should be demolished rather than trying to repair them in anticipation of this development," Chown said.

The King Edward Avenue building is fenced off, with windows boarded up. Part of a brick facade appears to have collapsed and bricks have been left on the ground. Outside of the Murray Street house, garbage has collected near the demolition application notice.

The city and Lauzon are in a legal battle regarding one of his other properties, a derelict, century-old schoolhouse at 287 Cumberland Ave. As well as concerns about the schoolhouse, Mayor Jim Watson called on Lauzon to fix up several of his properties, at a press conference convened last year outside two of Lauzon's vacant buildings on Beechwood Avenue.

Chown, who is working with the Lauzon group on "a number of projects," said he wouldn't comment on Tuesday about other properties including the school house. "We're working towards moving forward with a very attractive redevelopment of that (King Edward Avenue) site and that's our role in the project," Chown said.

Rideau-Vanier Coun. Mathieu Fleury said he has "mixed feelings" about the demolition application, partially because he's yet to see the full Lauzon plan. "I'm happy because I don't want to see vacant buildings," Fleury said. "I'm worried that whatever they propose, can they do (it) in the near future as they promise? And is it something that the community will like?"

Fleury said Lauzon could ask to demolish without the intention of rebuilding immediately but that the city would likely put restrictions in place to avoid a long-term vacancy.

"It is a prime site and we want to make sure that it just doesn't stay vacant for an extended period of time," Fleury said.

City staff didn't respond by deadline to questions about whether the demolition would require council approval.

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