

REAL ESTATE

A lesson in development

Blighted old Draper School to be converted into apartments

By Eric Anderson



John Carl D'Annibale / Times Union

Above, the exterior of the oldest section of the former Draper School on Friday in Rotterdam. The old school is slated to be renovated into 111 apartments.



Provided photo At right, a rendering of what the exterior of the restored Draper will look like.

Rotterdam

Vandals have had their way with the abandoned Draper School. Windows were smashed, copper stripped out, and graffiti sprayed on the walls.

But next Friday, developers and local officials will break ground for a \$12.5 million



John Carl D'Annibale / Times Union Neighbors are glad that the damaged building will be converted into residential spaces.

project that will turn the vacant eyesore into 111 apartments, ranging in size from 650 square feet to 1,400 square feet.

Rents will range from \$800 to \$1,800 a month.

Draper Lofts is being developed by a team headed by Sunrise Capital Partners, the majority owner of Draper Lofts LLC. The development team also includes Bob Bucher of Design Logic Architects and Jim Mesko of JPM Contractors.



John Carl d'Annibale / times union Smashed glass and busted doors inside the former draper School in rotterdam will be a thing of the past after Sunrise Capital Partners has its way with new apartments.

They previously worked together to convert a school in Sand Lake into apartments. That project, Homeroom Lofts, held its grand opening last month.

Neighbors by all accounts are thrilled that the old school will be renovated and restored.

One woman stopped developer Jesse Holland as he walked outside the building with a reporter and photographer to tell him how happy she was and how the building had been a detriment to the surrounding neighborhood.

"Next week starts the rebirth," he told her.

The groundbreaking will be held at 11 a.m. next Friday, with a fundraising effort to benefit the Mohonasen Foundation for Excellence to follow.

From 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. retired teachers and alumni will lead tours through the school and reminisce about their days there. Admission to the tours is a suggested donation; in return, donors will receive a souvenir piece of the school's auditorium curtain.

Other salvaged items, including classroom doors and seatbacks, will also be for sale. Tops American Grill, a popular restaurant in the town, will offer snacks and beverages with proceeds going to the foundation.

Tops owner Evan Christou is among those who attended Draper.

The first apartments will be ready in 18 to 24 months.

Draper closed after the district was absorbed by the Mohonasen school district in 1986. A charter school occupied part of the Draper building from 2006 to 2008 but was closed by state education officials.

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