

NEWS

Realtor has faith Gothic Arches will sell



The Gothic Arches on Saint John's central peninsula.
Photo: Vanja Lakic/Telegraph-Journal

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Michael Robinson | Telegraph-Journal

SAINT JOHN • The sale of an historic south end church, now known as Gothic Arches, is in the works.

Bob McVicar, a realtor with Sutton Realty who specializes in uptown historic properties, said he hopes some outstanding legal issues will be resolved within the coming days.

"It's going to be a fantastic story," he said. "We are all just eager to talk about it."

McVicar said neither he nor the buyer – who has not yet been identified – are in a position to discuss details of a sale until legalities have been completed.

But McVicar said the historic structure "really supports" a market opportunity for the city's uptown.

"I can tell you clearly, echoing the words of Develop Saint John, the biggest challenge – especially as a realtor – is a long list of people who want to live or buy a house uptown tomorrow," he said. "And we just don't have what people need."

McVicar stressed more development uptown is needed to meet demand.

"We need people building things ... the restoration efforts going on aren't just enough anymore," he said, adding that buyers aren't looking for fixer-uppers in the area, preferring turn-key properties.

The vacant stone building's lot fronts across three streets and is located at the highest point of land in the city's centre.

Saint Johner Barry Ogden was a member of the building's former congregation and both his sons were baptized there.

"I was there all my life until it closed," he said of the structure with its steeply-pitched roof, gothic arches and stained-glass windows.

Ogden said "everyone who went there remembers the organ."

"You could barely wrap your arms around the central pipes," he said. "They were huge.

"This was the wealthiest church in the city."

During his time as a teacher at Saint John High School, Ogden would take his students for walks uptown and while passing by the Gothic Arches, tell them about the church's origins and architecture.

"The good news about this church, if it is re-purposed, that we won't lose it," he said. "It would be one of the greatest real estate sales the city has had in a long time, a very positive one."

It was originally built in the late 1800s to replace the original Centenary Methodist Church destroyed by the Great Fire. Its stone stature was meant to symbolize strength and resilience.

According to propertize.ca, the property was sold in 2011 for one dollar before being sold again in 2012 with a \$100,000 price tag. The property was assessed at \$75,000 in 2019.

McVicar said past owners had plans that unfortunately never got off the ground.

Previous Brunswick News reports have detailed that a Toronto developer had hoped to turn the 95 Wentworth Street property into condominiums.

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Mike_Mullen_ 1 day ago (Edited)

Great news, but just to erase any confusion as to the status of the pipe organ, it was sold off years ago and shipped to a church congregation south of the 49th parallel.

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Report

Raymond_Bungay_ 2 days ago

I hope the Heritage Board allows for leeway on fixing the building up for another use. Wanting the repairs done strictly to Heritage standards could backfire on them if the buyer decided to walk away.

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Colin_Seeley_ 2 days ago

Good that it will be repurposed.

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