

Plans unveiled for old Stapleton Air Control tower | 9news.com

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STAPLETON - Residents in Denver's Stapleton neighborhood may soon see renovation of the old air-traffic control tower that has sat as a vacant icon of the community for 18 years.

Forest City, Stapleton's master developer, announced plans earlier in February to renovate the tower, where controllers directed planes into Denver's former Stapleton Airport for decades.

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"Forest City stepped forward and agreed that they would help renovate the tower, become the owners, and then lease the facility back to the [Stapleton] Master Community Association," Denver City Council Member Chris Herndon said.

Herndon, a Stapleton resident, has encouraged a community group to study the various ways to renovate the crumbling facility. Inside, there are holes in the floor and roof, bird carcasses, dust, dirt, and signs of vandalism.

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"But, the building is structurally sound," Herndon said.

Herndon says the three floors of the office building below the tower would become office space for Stapleton's MCA, and potentially theater space, as well to form the Stapleton Tower Community Arts Center.

"During this time, the MCA - the Master Community Association - was also in the process of trying to find additional space," Herndon said.

Forest City Stapleton spokesperson Tom Gleason says the developer is working on a plan to purchase the site of the tower by the end of the year from the Stapleton Development Corporation, which buys the land from Denver International Airport. The agreement is similar to other purchases of land Forest City has made to redevelop the old Stapleton airport, which closed in 1995.

It's still unclear how long construction and renovation would take, Gleason says.

"It's developed around here, a lot and people wanted to know, what's going to happen with it," Jonell Herndon, chairwoman of the Stapleton Airport Tower Committee, said. "It represents what this community was. I am really excited."

The committee met several times to come up with ideas to renovate the space.