

Calgary school board has 'super-exciting' vision for its corner of East Village

Booth Centre was heavily damaged by the 2013 flood

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The CBE plans to demolish the Booth Centre and replace it with a new development. (Scott Dippel/CBC)

It's a shabby building on the eastern edge of the East Village.

The building's going to go but something new and somewhat unique is expected to rise.

Few people would know that the Calgary Board of Education actually owns the Booth Centre, which is at the corner of Seventh Ave and Sixth Street S.E.

The block — which was built in the 1970s — was owned by the Salvation Army until 2011.

- The board acquired it but the centre suffered irreparable flood damage in 2013.
- It has sat empty ever since.
- The school board has a plan to redevelop the site. Tentatively called the Innovation Centre, the CBE intends to build a tower with residential and commercial space.
- Those uses will help it fund the rest of the building's operations. The board envisions a place for special education, arts and instructional opportunities.
- City council approved the rezoning at its Oct. 4 meeting.
- Coun. Druh Farrell jokingly said "I want to be the first one to implode it."



Farrell went on to say she's thrilled with the CBE's plan which she hopes will produce a remarkable development for the East Village.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi called it a "super-exciting" redevelopment, one that his office will be actively monitoring.

"One shouldn't say the flood gave us an interesting opportunity but this is certainly a much more interesting opportunity than the originally anticipated renovation of the Booth Centre," he said.