

New apartment project to be finished by Christmas

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Bag Factory, an apartment project of Sandhu Developments, will soon occupy 311 Alexander Ave., a former bag manufacturing building. [Photo Store](#)

A former bag factory in the Centennial neighbourhood is being converted into an apartment building.

Bag Factory, a project of Winnipeg real estate developer Sandhu Developments, will soon occupy 311 Alexander Ave.

Built in 1906, the six storey concrete building was originally the Bemis Bag Building, before Endurapak Inc., an industrial bag manufacturer, moved into the space in the mid-'90s. Endurapak moved to its current 55 Plymouth St. location last October.

"The building is a typical warehouse," said Mike Patel, chief operating officer of Sandhu.

"It's structurally way overbuilt for our use but it's great in that it's concrete, tall ceilings and open, all the things that people look for in a loft apartment."

Patel said the building was actually the first reinforced concrete structure in Winnipeg.

"You could park a tank on it," Patel said. "It's so overbuilt, but then again it's all the things you look for. It reduces noise transmission because of the concrete and you don't get the huge swings in temperature in the building because there's so much concrete. In the winter it stays warm and in summer it stays cool."

According to www.sandhudevelopments.com, Bag Factory will contain 88 rental units, ranging in size from 456 square feet to 753 square feet. Amenities will include a common laundry space, fitness facility and a rooftop lounge with barbecues.

Patel said the building is being completely gutted, with new windows being installed, as well as new heating, plumbing and electrical systems.

"It's essentially a new building. Outside of the structure everything is new, a new roof, a new set of stairs, and on and on. In that sense, it's a new product," Patel said.

Patel said Bag Factory rents will range between \$700 to \$800 a month and \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month. He said the estimated complete date is around Christmas. Patel believes the building will be attractive to students.

"It's close to Red River College and we think a lot of students will be really interested, because they can walk to Red River a block away," Patel said. "We think it will be really attractive to people working downtown or people from out of town who just moved to the city."

Patel said the construction cost for the building is approximately \$8 million, plus the purchase of the property and additional costs, for a total investment of \$12 million.

"It's a significant investment for us, but we think the community is changing," Patel said, noting the nearby Peace Tower housing complex at 260 Princess St.

"This whole neighbourhood is in transition and it's (Bag Factory) really going to start bringing that neighbourhood back, which is a thing we like to do."

Centennial Community Improvement Association vice-president Gord Dong is happy to see Sandhu developing in the area.

"The Centennial Community Improvement Association) is pleased to see that a private business feels it worthwhile to invest in the Centennial neighbourhood," said Dong via email.

"This will add to the revitalization of the area and with the addition of 88 new units, a new group of people will be soon calling Centennial their home. We look forward to our new relationship with the builders and connecting with the future residents."

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