

Building booms in downtown core

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20 January 2012 03:46

U of W

After completing projects such as the Buhler Centre, the Richardson College for the Environment and Science Complex and McFeetors Hall: Great-West Life Student Residence as part of its Campus Development Plan, the University of Winnipeg has more in store for downtown in 2012.

"We see ourselves as being part of the energy that is occurring in the downtown," said Jeremy Read, the school's senior executive officer. "The breaking down between the university and the community plays a large role in that."

To help blend the school with the downtown, the university and Winnipeg Transit are finishing renovations on the former Greyhound bus depot to turn it into the AnX, a downtown hub for buses and a 42,000-square-foot space for retail, including the school's newly opened 6,000-square-foot bookstore, a Starbucks and a new pub-style restaurant.

The building will be a cost-recovery operation for the U of W once it opens later this month.

Also in the works is a new athletic and wellness centre to be built onto the school's already existing Duckworth Centre on Spence Street.

The new athletic centre, expected to be operational by September 2013, will house a full-sized indoor field, food services, a training gym, a multi-purpose space for dance and yoga, and a new parkade development. Work is slated to begin this spring pending board approval.

The Forks

Down by The Forks, construction on the exterior of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) continues despite budget trouble.

Late last year, the board announced its budget had grown to \$351 million from the original price tag of \$265 million in 2007, and the \$310 million quoted in 2009.

Despite original plans to have the exhibits set up and the building open to the public in 2013, CMHR spokesperson Angela Cassie says the cost overruns mean the grand opening isn't expected until at least 2014.

The federal government has said it won't supply more funds, so the board is now looking outside of the city and province to bring in what's needed.

When work wraps up this year on building the exterior, interior walls will be finished and all the fixtures inside will be done. The group needs to wait for more funding before completing the actual exhibit components.

Main Street

On Main Street, work to transform the former Union Bank Building into Red River College's new Paterson Global Foods Institute is just wrapping up, although the college had originally expected to have it open by last September.

"With a heritage building it's a little more complicated than doing new construction," explained Red River spokesperson Colin Fast of the delay. "We're trying as hard as we can to preserve some of the heritage features of the building."

Fast says the scope of the project has also changed, with an extra four floors of student residences added to the three originally planned.

Work on the main floor of the building — which will house a restaurant with a menu prepared by students — and the classrooms in the new extension that looks out over Old Market Square is nearly complete, and seven floors of residential space should be completed by spring.



The Canadian Museum of Human Rights expects to have the base building completed by the end of this year.

Metro Winnipeg