

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

# Project gets unofficial unveiling: Sneak peek at big skyscraper

## Passerby snaps drawing on sign; copy on Internet

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Artist's rendering of proposed skyscraper  
(HANDOUT)

Winnipeggers got an early peek at what a massive new downtown skyscraper will look like after a photograph showing an artist's rendering of the structure appeared on the Internet a day before it was to be officially unveiled.

The project's two Ontario-based developers -- Fortress Real Developments Inc. and Mady Development Corp. -- had planned to unveil a giant, billboard-size version of the drawing at a splashy news conference planned for 11 a.m. today at the Graham Avenue development site.

But those plans were spoiled when a sharp-eyed passerby took a picture of the signage -- presumably with a smartphone -- while it was being installed on the site Thursday afternoon and before workers had a chance to cover it with a tarp.

A copy of the photo was subsequently posted on a local skyscraper website and also forwarded to the Free Press.

When the developers were told the photo was already on the Internet, they hastily revised their plans and issued a new media advisory last evening that included a high-resolution image of the artist's rendering. The advisory did not explain why the image was being released in advance of the official unveiling.

It said Fortress president and CEO Jawad Rathore and Mady Development CEO Charles Mady will release further details about the project at the news conference today. They will also unveil the new signage and announce the launching of a naming contest for the building.

When they first revealed the project last May, Rathore and Mady vowed the mixed-use, retail/office/condominium complex would be the tallest free-standing structure between Toronto and Calgary -- possibly as high as 42 storeys. The

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*The property at the northwest corner of Graham Avenue and Smith Street, where Ontario developers plan to build what may be the tallest structure in the city, at a possible 42 storeys high. (MIKE DEAL / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS)*

Photo Store



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*Sign (above) shows an artist's drawing (right) of the proposed skyscraper. (JAMIE DAVID EXCHANGE / SKYSCRAPERPAGE.COM)*

city's tallest building now is the 33-storey office tower on the northwest corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street.

They said the exact size will be determined by the number of condos they pre-sell and the amount of office and retail space they can pre-lease.

But they said they expect it to be at least a half-million square feet in size and to include a multi-level, underground parkade, up to 70,000 square feet of retail space on the first two floors, between 40,000 and 100,000 square feet of office space on the next few floors and 300 to 400 condominiums on the remaining floors.

They hoped to finalize the design plans and begin pre-selling the condos by the end of this year or early next year and to have the building ready for occupancy in 2017.

Rathore said they also hope to attract a large grocery store --- possibly up to 25,000 square feet in size -- as the anchor retail tenant, along with several restaurants, some clothing stores and maybe a financial institution.

He said the condos will be designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of buyers. That includes everybody from first-timers looking for smaller units in the 500-to-600-square-foot range and priced at "well under \$200,000," to well-heeled buyers looking for a spacious penthouse unit with luxury finishes.

The developers said they would need to pre-sell 40 to 50 per cent of the condos and pre-lease about the same percentage of retail and office space for the project to proceed. But they expressed confidence those targets would be reached.

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