

‘People want to know what’s going on,’ says resident of building next to collapsed Welland condo

Neighbour to Upper Vista says security no longer appears to be on site

By **Kris Dubé** Tribune Reporter
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Graham Archibald has a nice view of the recreational canal when he steps onto his balcony and looks to the east.

But if he looks straight to the south, he’s faced with the Upper Vista Welland condominium building and everything taking place at the Prince Charles Drive site since two partial collapses to its south tower eight days apart in February.

Archibald lives on the ground floor of the Seaway Pointe condo, which was completed in 2010. His unit is about seven metres from the north side of the Upper Vista building.

Subject of a Ministry of Labour investigation, a stop-work order was lifted at the five-storey, 266-unit site being built by Evertrust Development on March 8.

In an interview Thursday, Archibald said he sees about three people on weekdays starting in the morning, working until late afternoon and evening. He is unsure if they are from the ministry, the city, or are part of a crew working on remedies at the site, which has a construction value of \$55 million.

Before the collapses, Archibald and other residents of the neighbouring building voiced concerns about traffic and parking they believed would result from the incoming project.

But after the collapses, their attention turned to safety concerns, and whether they are in harm’s way if further problems occur.

A letter was sent to the local government, and Archibald said a response was provided assuring them there were no safety risks.

Other than that, there has been a “lack of communication” from governments and parties involved in the development and the investigation surrounding it.

“People want to know what’s going on,” he said.

The ministry, the city, and Evertrust have all been tight-lipped on what has been carried out at the site as the investigation continues.

One difference Archibald said he’s noticed recently is security is no longer seems to be posted at the site, although it was for weeks after the collapses.

“They don’t police it at all,” he said.

The city cordoned the area back to the nearby trail to the east of both buildings, but Archibald suspects it would be possible for people to get close to the under-construction building by going through the fence.

“Safety is obviously on our mind,” he said.

Archibald is also bothered by an excavated area near the Seaway Pointe building that has filled with water, which he said has the potential to become a “breeding ground for mosquitoes” now that the weather is warming up.

Joyce Morocco, a contracted spokesperson for the developer, recently said a clean up of the ground had taken place, but did not specify details.

She did not respond to emailed questions Friday about security at the site, as well as a request for an update on what work has taken place.

Morocco said earlier in the week that a news release would be issued in the next few days with an update on the project. The release had not been issued by press time Friday.

Brad Taylor, the city’s deputy chief building official, who has been in his role for only two months, was unaware who is responsible for bringing in security.

“I don’t believe the Building Code has any requirements for security to be on site,” he said.

Taylor also said he doesn’t “know of any real issues” related to the north side of the Upper Vista structure.