

‘We may have reason to fear for our lives,’ say neighbours of partially-collapsed Welland condos

City says no indication of concern about north side of Upper Vista building

By [Kris Dubé](#) Tribune Reporter
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The Upper Vista Welland Condominiums site, which is subject of a Ministry of Labour investigation into recent collapses, has been a concern for Graham Archibald and others who live in the residential building it sits next to.

The first collapse at the \$55-million luxury condo building occurred Feb. 18 to the south end of the Evertrust Development project. The collapse prompted the city and ministry to prevent anyone getting near it. On Feb. 25 a second collapse occurred.

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

Residents started raising concerns about parking, traffic congestion and views of the Welland Recreational Canal being impeded by Upper Vista in July 2021.

But now they have whole new concern — mostly fear of what would happen were the Upper Vista building to crumble on the north side.

“If that falls down, I’ll have concrete coming through my living room and bedroom,” said Archibald, who has lived in the four-storey, 75-unit Seaway Pointe building for about eight years.

Archibald and some fellow residents of his complex have drafted a letter he said will be sent to city and provincial officials.

“We need to point out that our building is a wood-frame structure which will not stand being impacted by the huge concrete blocks that have fallen,” said

the letter, which was shared with the Tribune and which also claimed large pieces of concrete have slid about 30 metres toward the canal.

Residents said “we may have reason to fear for our lives.”

Archibald said people on the fourth floor felt the building shake when sections of Upper Vista collapsed. He also said there were two collapses on Sunday, about 10 minutes apart.

While the area of the Upper Vista building at 350 Prince Charles Dr. has been cordoned off, the residents’ letter claims public officials have done “nothing to protect” Seaway Pointe.

The residents also say they are “further distressed” to learn that the city’s building inspections are carried out at the request of the permit holder, such as a developer, meaning they call for inspection after work is completed.

Falling under the Ontario Building Code, mandatory inspections of the now partially collapsed Upper Vista Welland Condominiums would have been carried out at specific stages of construction, the city’s corporate communications manager, Marc MacDonald, said recently.

“The number of inspections is determined based on the scope of work included in the building permit,” said MacDonald. “The responsibility for requesting the required inspections is assigned to the person to who the permit was issued.”

Joyce Morocco, a spokesperson contracted by Evertrust Development, said of concerns about the north side of the Upper Vista building, that observations and drone images indicate the latest damage remains “contained to the same section where the original structural damage occurred last week.”

“At this point all we can do is wait until the (ministry) provides us with a report on the structural damage and the cause,” she said in an email.

On Wednesday MacDonald said the city is waiting for the ministry investigation to conclude. After this, the city will review findings and determine its next steps.

“While this process is in motion, until this happens, the city cannot initiate any investigation or enforcement process under the Building Code Act,” he said.

Asked about the north side of the two-tower building, he said “the city has received no indication that there are concerns.”

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, city staff are deemed workers and, therefore, “unable to enter the site for any reason.”

Asked about no one being able to access the site, ministry spokesperson Anu Dhar said Wednesday the “top priority is the health and safety of workers at the project.”

Dhar said the builder is formulating a safe work plan to comply with a ministry order.

“Once the safe work plan is in place they will be able to proceed to stabilize the structure,” said Dhar, adding the length of the investigation will depend on the complexity of the case.

Since the first collapse, the ministry has issued four orders and five requirements to Evertrust Development, but are withholding details as its investigation is ongoing.

Asked if there are concerns about Upper Vista’s north section, Dhar said concerns about the building’s structure should be directed to the city.