

# Questions raised about structural safety of new Vancouver Island tower; tenants given option to move

*The city of Langford has commissioned an independent review of the 11-storey concrete building called Danbrook One, at 2766 Claude Rd., in the city's downtown.*

Author of the article:

Jeff Bell • Cindy E. Harnett

Publishing date:

Dec 19, 2019 • December 19, 2019 • 5 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



Resident Bob Breuker in front of Danbrook One at 2766 Claude Rd. in Langford. PHOTO BY DARREN STONE /TIMES COLONIST

Questions about the structural integrity of Langford's tallest residential rental building prompted the city on Wednesday to offer temporary accommodation to all residents who feel unsafe.

The city of Langford has commissioned an independent review of the 11-storey concrete building called Danbrook One, at 2766 Claude Rd., in the city's downtown. Of the 90 mostly one-and two-bedroom units in the building, 86 are occupied.

"If there's a problem, then Langford will take the lead on it, and, fortunately, we are prepared for moving nobody or moving the whole building," Langford Mayor Stew Young said on Wednesday evening. "I'm prepared for any action."

Residents interviewed Wednesday were taking a wait-and-see approach.

City representatives were in the building's lobby to inform residents about their accommodation options, which include free temporary hotel accommodation provided by the city, and assistance to move to alternative rentals. The city said it has identified a new rental property in the neighbourhood that's ready for occupancy.

Bob Breuker, who has lived in the building since June, said he is staying put for now. "I think the report is coming out on Friday and I think I'll wait until then because there's a lot of stuff to do with moving out," he said. "You've got to get a mover, which will be taken care of, apparently.

"I don't think we should panic, we should see what's going on."

Micheline Saviskas, who also moved in in June, said she felt better about the situation after speaking to a Langford representative. "He's reassured me that the city will be fully on their case to get whatever is the issue rectified, so that's the main thing," she said. "By finding this out, in a way it's somewhat reassuring — stressful at the same time.

"But as long as things are dealt with properly and they make it safe, then we should be fine."

Saviskas said she is staying put. "I don't have the energy to move again."

The building was completed this year, built over 18 months by Design Build Services, which has many projects in the city. The building is owned by Centurion Property Associates.

The Engineering and Geoscientists of B.C. first told the city in April that it had received a professional conduct complaint regarding the project.

The city initiated a third-party probe after it was notified Dec. 3 by the association that an internal review related to the building's "structural design and as-built structure" revealed sufficient evidence to launch a formal probe through an Engineering and Geoscientists of B.C. investigation committee.

"The concerns raised and reviewed internally by the EGBC bring into question whether the building's structural design and as-built structure meet engineering requirements and whether the building's structural design and its as-built structure are sufficient to mitigate risks to health and safety," said the city in a statement.

It might boil down to a disagreement between two engineers, said Young. If, for instance, changes were made during the building's construction, those might have to be reviewed, he said. "There may be no issue here if the engineer who signed off provides all the drawings." Conversely, "that's our first concrete building and, if an engineer made a mistake, they have to fix it."

Preliminary results from a third-party report commissioned by the city have given it reason to heed the Engineering and Geoscientists of B.C.'s initial concern, the city said, but the

investigation is not expected to be completed for another few days. The city said it does not yet know the magnitude of the problems.

“I’m prepared for the best- and the worst-case scenario,” said Young. “Whatever happens, we will find a solution and we’re not going to put our head in the sand. We will own it. We will deal with it. We will fix it. And we will make sure that the residents there are not put out.”

The best-case scenario is the building is deemed by engineers to be structurally sound or as needing minor structural fixes that can be made without tenants having to move out.

The worst-case scenario is that it is at risk of falling over or collapsing in an earthquake.

City councillors voted Tuesday night to move immediately to accommodate residents who choose to move.

Young said he didn’t sleep Tuesday night.

“I’ve been working on it since last night and I said: ‘OK just notify the people, we can’t wait for the report to come in,’ ” said Young.

“We have enough buildings in Langford. We can move that whole building if we have to.”

Langford is known for the rapid pace of its development, but Young said that growth rate is due to zoning, and the structure of buildings is the domain of engineers, not the city. The building was signed off by an engineer when it was completed.

The city said under its legal regulatory framework — the same for all municipalities in the province — “our staff rely upon the project engineer’s professional stamp of approval, which affirms that their engineering designs as presented and executed abide by all of the requirements under the Engineers and Geoscientist Act.”

The city said it has a “legal and moral obligation” to notify all concerned and offer alternate accommodation for those who wish to leave the building until the final reports are in.

Building owner Centurion Property Associates is co-operating with the city and through its building manager will assist tenants who wish to relocate.

Centurion, which owns six rental buildings in the capital region, including four in Langford, will assist residents who choose to relocate. The city said it will also assist with moving expenses when co-ordinated with city-designated movers.

Matthew McKay, co-owner and development manager with Design Build Services, could not be immediately reached for comment on Wednesday evening.

The city said Design Build Services’ other construction projects in the city are wood-frame and have no relation to the current investigation.

City staff were stationed in the lobby of Danbrook One from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday and will be on site 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. today and possibly more days this week.

“I want people to know Langford is there,” said Young.