

Violent, property crimes
increase from 2017 to
2018 in Vancouver
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Downtown Vancouver Redevelopment

Webber Building faces uncertain future

Century-old landmark sits
in middle of key Waterfront
Gateway Properties project

By **CALLEY HAIR**
Columbian staff writer

A century-old landmark in downtown Vancouver faces an uncertain future due to its location in the center of a public redevelopment project.

The Webber Building, a sturdy brick structure at 400 Columbia St., has a storied history — it was home to a blacksmith, and then a machine company, before it eventually became an office space.

It also sits on the Waterfront Gateway Properties, a strategic swath of

city-owned land that Vancouver leaders view as key to connecting the city's historic downtown core to its new development along the Columbia River waterfront.

John Collum, the city's principal planner, told The Columbian that the eventual master planners for the Waterfront Gateway Properties will need to "look at how the building might fit in with a redevelopment scenario, or how it might impede a redevelopment scenario."

The Webber Building will stick around through at least 2022, when a lease on the space expires, Collum said. But right now, it's unknown whether the Webber Building will remain stand-



The century-old Webber Building in downtown Vancouver is pictured on Tuesday. The city is soliciting feedback on the future of the Waterfront Gateway Properties, a 6.4-acre parcel next to City Hall, which includes the Webber Building.

AMANDA COWAN/
The Columbian

BUILDING, Page A2

EAGLE
CAM:

Soaring bird of prey films crumbling Alpine glaciers



Eagle Wings Foundation/Chopard

Aerial footage shot by a camera attached to an eagle shows a glacier in Western Europe. A white-tailed eagle named Victor will embark upon a series of flights over the Alps this week. Organizers hope his bird's-eye footage will prompt people to take action on climate change.

Project's organizers hope high-flying footage will shake climate-change apathy

By **CLAIRE PARKER**
and **JOHN LEICESTER**
Associated Press

PARIS — The images will be stunningly beautiful yet also hint of dire future consequences. Filmed with a camera mounted between his majestic wings, they'll show how a white-tailed eagle named Victor sees the world as

help jolt the world out of climate-change apathy and toward swifter action to combat its effects.

His handler hopes that seeing the world as an eagle sees it will also convince viewers of the importance of protecting birds and their environments, especially after a devastating recent report chronicled their decline.

"We hope that once more, people are going to see nature from a totally different perspective and just reconnect to it and realize that wow, it's actually something that is

Heart issue sidelines Sanders

Presidential hopeful
cancels appearances
while hospitalized

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**
and **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bernie Sanders' campaign said Wednesday that the Democratic presidential candidate had a heart procedure for a blocked artery and was canceling events and appearances "until further notice."

The 78-year-old Vermont senator experienced chest discomfort during a campaign event Tuesday and sought medical evaluation. Two stents were "successfully inserted," and Sanders "is conversing and in good spirits," according to the campaign. He's recovering at a Las Vegas hospital.

Sanders tweeted on Wednesday afternoon that he was "feeling good. I'm fortunate to have good health care and great doctors and nurses helping me to recover."



Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

Had two stents inserted after chest discomfort

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ing through the redevelopment of the property.

That uncertain future motivated local historian Pat Jollota to post on a Facebook group, "Growing Up in Vancouver, WA."

"Times change. The building became converted to office space and is still a handsome part of Columbia Street," Jollota wrote. "It is also the only structure of historic value in that area. It deserves to be saved. It deserves to be used."

The post generated more than 50 comments, many from locals who shared their own memories of the building. Others wanted to know what they could do to save it.

Long history

The building has a rich, if occasionally morbid, history.

Joseph Webber and his family ran a blacksmith shop out of the building starting in 1909. When World War I started, Webber and his sons left to work for Standifer Shipyards, Jollota said.

Once the war ended, Webber returned to his blacksmith business, but with the advent of cars, blacksmiths were struggling. So he and his family converted their business to a machine company; "WEBBER MACHINE WORKS" remains emblazoned on the building's exterior today.

In 1946, Jollota said, Webber wrote his family a note: "Getting to be a burden, Goodbye." He sat on a workbench and shot himself in the head.

Webber's sons continued the machinery business for several years. It's since been converted to office space.

Jollota said in an interview with The Columbian



The Webber Building has a rich history, and has housed a blacksmith, a machine company and office space. This is a view of the west side of the building. AMANDA COWAN/The Columbian

that longtime residents still remember when the building housed a machinery company.

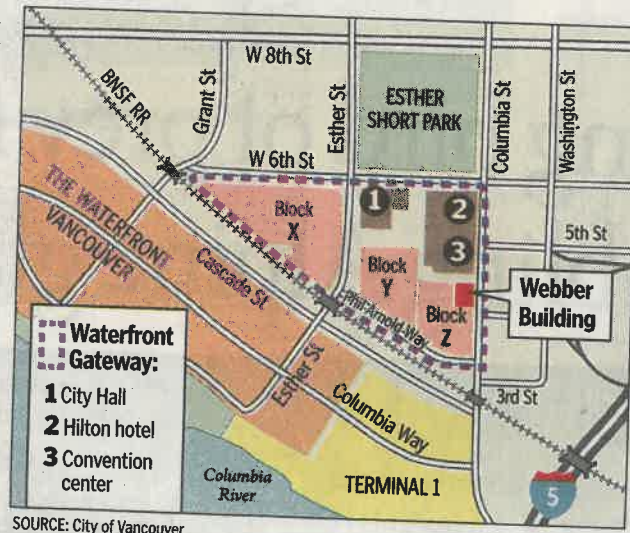
"It was so popular with kids, because if parts of their bike would break, they could have a duplicate part made. They'd do it for them right there," Jollota said. "Older folks still talk about being able to go there and get parts made for various machines and such."

Though the building is regarded as a piece of Vancouver history informally, it's not officially listed as a historic structure; not with the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission, nor the state registry.

Brad Richardson, chair of the Clark County Historical Society, said he hoped to get involved with the Waterfront Gateway Properties redevelopment project in some way.

Speaking for himself and not for the CCHS, he added that he hoped that the Webber Building could stay.

"Preserving historic buildings is always something I'm very interested in, especially if they can be



SOURCE: City of Vancouver

reused for new purposes," Richardson said. "These historic buildings are irreplaceable in their nature."

The gateway project

The Waterfront Gateway Properties encompass 6.4 acres owned by the city, directly south of City Hall and spanning from Grant Street to Columbia Street. In addition to the Webber Building, the land is being used for city staff parking. About a

third of it is covered by vacant, grassy fields.

The land's strategic location is in its name — it's a gateway to The Waterfront Vancouver development from historic downtown, and is nearly equidistant between Esther Short Park and Waterfront Park.

Chad Eiken, the city's community and economic development director, said in a September city council workshop that he hopes the property can transform into

a site that Vancouver residents and tourists will "want to visit and revisit."

In that workshop, the Vancouver City Council reviewed their goals for the area: they hope the area's development will result in "a branded destination district that connects other key downtown activity areas. ... Active, urban, inviting and mixed-use with cross-site pedestrian connectivity," according to the project intent statement.

The city council may also decide to pass the project to the City Center Redevelopment Authority, a board that steers major development projects in downtown Vancouver. The CCRA will likely manage the planning and development of the Waterfront Gateway Properties, with the city council retaining final approval of any decisions.

Based on a tentative timeline for the property's redevelopment, the city hopes to complete visioning workshops by the end of this year, select a master developer in the first half of 2020 and approve a master development package in the first half of 2021.

Vancouver is accepting public feedback on the Waterfront Gateway Project through an online portal until Oct. 7. Anyone who wants to comment can do so at beheardvancouver.org/waterfrontgateway.

After that deadline, Colium encouraged anyone interested in commenting on the project to email him directly at john.collum@cityofvancouver.us.

Still standing

This isn't the first time

the Webber Building faced an uncertain future.

In the 1990s, when the city was looking for a place to build a convention center, original plans would have required the structure's demolition. Vancouver's development director announced in 1998 that the city would be able to draw around it to construct what's now the Hilton Vancouver Washington.

Six years later, the city bought the building so it would eventually have space to expand the convention center. It leased the space to Kramer Gehlen & Associates, a structural engineering firm, who remains in the building today.

Decades before the convention center saga, the building had barely survived demolition, Jollota said.

"We tore so much down in the '60s, we had urban renewal," Jollota said. "I call it 'urban removal.' They basically just tore everything down in 40 acres. Just leveled everything to the ground."

There were a few exceptions, she added — the Webber Building, as well as the Slocum House in the southeast corner of Esther Short Park.

"It was a manufacturing era, and area, and that's the only thing that's left of that. The shipyard's gone, the paper mill is gone, the other machine company is gone. And that good old solid brick building is the only one left," Jollota said. "I'd love to see it preserved."

Pat Jollota
Local historian

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Eagle cam

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back over such distances and such vistas, and see how he flies."

"How can you convince people to protect the birds and their environment if you never show them what the birds see?" he added.

Weather permitting, the 9-year-old Victor will set off today from the top of the Swiss mountain Piz Corvatsch with a 360-degree camera on his back and a GPS to track his progress. He'll fly through Germany, Austria and Italy before ending his mountain tour in France on Oct. 7.

A colleague will release Victor from the top of each

peak. During each flight, the eagle will fly 1.8 to 3.1 miles — and descend 5,000 to 9,800 feet — in search of Travers below.

"I don't have a remote control. So if he doesn't see me and decides not to come to me, he could go anywhere," Travers said.

That's why the flights are weather-dependent. If Victor's vision is obscured by clouds, "he won't come," Travers said. "It's essential that he sees me."

Carrying a camera does slow Victor down.

"It's a bit like putting a washing machine on the roof of your car. You don't go as fast and you use more energy," Travers said.

"It's the same for him. He doesn't fly as fast with that on his back and it demands a greater effort from him."

But Victor's earlier flights over Paris and Burj Khalifa garnered millions of views, and organizers hope the bird's heavy lifting will yield powerful images that make disappearing glaciers impossible to ignore.

Travers has witnessed the melting firsthand during scouting trips ahead of Victor's travels. A German glacier that had hard-packed snow when he first visited last year is now mushy, he said.

"I was stunned," he said. "The difference over a year was incredible."

Disintegrating permafrost, which now glues a glacier's rocks together, can cause them to crumble with potentially devastating consequences.

Victor's flight comes as Italian authorities are scrambling

to respond to fears that part of a large Italian glacier near Mont Blanc is on the verge of collapsing. They've warned that falling ice could endanger homes and people in the Val Ferret area, a popular hiking area.

At the rate the planet is warming, it's too late to save the Alps' glaciers, Freedom Conservation Managing Director Ronald Menzel said. But it's not too late to fight climate change more broadly. He hopes Victor's popularity will spur viewers into action.

"We hope that once more, people are going to see nature from a totally different perspective and just reconnect to it and realize that wow, it's actually something that is amazing and that we want to do something to preserve," he said.

LOTTERIES

Results for Wednesday, Oct. 2

Washington Lotto:

2-6-15-20-45-47

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Saturday

Next jackpot: \$3.9 million

Washington Hit 5: 1-5-21-28-33

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Saturday

Next jackpot: \$160,000

Washington Daily Game: 6-0-4

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Saturday

Next jackpot: \$70 million

Washington Match 4: 11-12-19-21

Powerball: 4-8-10-43-53,

Powerball: 7

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Saturday

Next jackpot: \$70 million

Oregon Megabucks:

2-13-19-26-37-38

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Saturday

Next jackpot: \$3.2 million

Oregon Win for Life: 39-56-67-76

Oregon Pick 4:

1 p.m., 7-8-6-7; 4 p.m., 3-4-6-3;

7 p.m., 7-7-5-3; 10 p.m., 1-6-7-5

Oregon Lucky Lines:

2-6-9-14-17-22-26-31

Result for Tuesday, Oct. 1

Mega Millions: 10-17-39-42-59,

Mega Ball: 3

Jackpot winner? No

Next drawing: Friday

Next jackpot: \$50 million

CORRECTIONS

It is The Columbian's policy to correct errors. Call Lyndsey Hewitt at 360-735-4550.

Vol. 128 Oct. 3, 2019

Issue 359

The Columbian

www.columbian.com

Subscriber services

360-694-2312

Fax: 360-735-4637

Email: circulation@columbian.com

Weekdays: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays:

6:30 to 11 a.m.

DELIVERY DEADLINES:

Weekdays and holidays: Before 5 a.m.

Weekends: Before 6:30 a.m. in most areas.

RATES: \$52 per month by carrier daily, \$25 per month by carrier Sunday Only. By mail to all states, \$75 per month.

For information on The Columbian's Easy Pay program, call Circulation: 360-694-2312 or online at www.columbian.com/subscribe. Temporary suspensions of print home delivery do not extend your paid-through date and are not credited to your account. Payments are due prior to expiration.

Main office:

360-694-3391: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays

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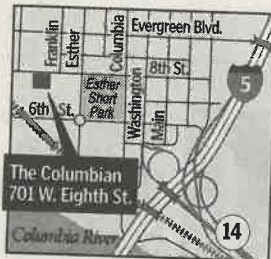
360-735-4497

Commercial classifieds:

360-735-4591

Printed with soy based ink on recycled paper.

For recycling information, call Clark County's recycling office at 360-397-6118, ext. 4352.



Postmasters: Send address changes to The Columbian, Circulation Division, P.O. Box 180, Vancouver, WA 98666. Periodicals postage paid at Vancouver, Wash. Published and copyrighted daily by The Columbian Publishing Co., 701 W. Eighth St., P.O. Box 180, Vancouver, WA 98666. (ISSN 1043-4151)

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