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## All systems go for A&P warehouse project

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The approval process of transforming a century-old Buffalo warehouse into a residential development has been completed.

The Buffalo Planning Board, as expected, approved a proposal by the Cincinnati-based [Miller-Valentine](#) Group to renovate the former A&P Warehouse, a Swan Street building constructed in 1910 and sitting just on the western edge of the city's Larkin District, into a building with at least 120 market-rate apartments.

The \$26 million-plus project is [Miller-Valentine's](#) first in the Buffalo market and comes at a time when several out-of-town interests have starting advancing local development plans.

"We'd like to get going as quickly as possible," said [Colby Smith](#), Colby Development LLC president and CEO, who is working with [Miller-Valentine](#) on the project.

[Miller-Valentine](#) has also retained **Carmina Wood & Morris P.C.** to serve as the project's architect. The Buffalo architect and engineering firm is also working on securing historic tax credits to help with the project's financing.

Steve Carmina, project architect, said turning the eight-story, 240,000-square-foot building into upscale, market rate apartments is the key.

"It will clearly serve the population of people who work in Larkinville," Carmina said.

The building is currently occupied and owned by Mesmer Refrigeration Inc., who has been there since 1972. Mesmer will be moving to a new, local site after the deal closes.

[Robert Mesmer](#), company president, confirmed the building is under contract to [Miller-Valentine](#), with a closing expected soon.

The deal is the second one proposed in as many years for the historic warehouse. The Buffalo City Mission, last year, considered the site for its planned \$42 million housing project. That project was shifted to the City Mission's current downtown location, which is being expanded.

[Miller-Valentine's](#) interest in the building comes at a time when the Swan and Seneca street areas — just east of the Larkin District — is witnessing a wave of developments, all focused on bringing century-old warehouses back to life.

The Frontier Group of Cos. is investing \$5.4 million converting a building at 550 Seneca Street into 31 market rate apartments and some first floor office space.

Across the street, Frontier and the Savarino Cos. are renovating a building at 500 Seneca Street into a loft-style development with at least 140 units.

The privately-held [Miller-Valentine](#) Group has more than 80 million square feet of space in its real estate portfolio including 13,000 residential units. The company reported revenues of \$216 million last year.

James Fink covers real estate, commercial development and government