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A structural survey of 545 Swan St., the former Mesmer Refrigeration, has just been finished. News file photo

Housing project near Larkinville creeps forward

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Officials from a Cincinnati developer are wrapping up a structural survey of the former Mesmer Refrigeration building near Larkinville in preparation for moving forward with their purchase of the property and an adaptive re-use project.

Miller-Valentine Group plans to spend more than \$26 million to convert the eight-story former A&P warehouse and storage facility at 545 Swan St. into at least 120 apartments, underground parking and first-floor commercial space.

The 238,000-square-foot building would include a mixture of one-, two- and three-bedroom units, with both market-rate and income-restricted "affordable" units that would be subsidized through the use of historic tax credits or other state and federal funding. The first floor would include both tenant parking and other commercial, retail or possibly restaurant space, though specifics are still being determined.

The project was announced in fall 2014 but has yet to move forward, even though Miller-Valentine has had the property under contract and the Buffalo Planning Board approved the project last year.

Architect Steven Carmina, of Carmina Wood Morris PC, said the structural survey should be "done in a week," allowing the developer to go ahead with the purchase and redevelopment. However, he said he expects they will bring the project back to the Planning Board because significant time has elapsed since the original approval.

This is Miller-Valentine's first project in New York. The firm, founded in 1963 as a small general contractor, now provides construction, leasing, property management, brokerage and development services. It has completed projects in 20 states.

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