

White House Property Begins Transformation

The once-grand Valparaiso mansion, known most recently as the White House restaurant, will be demolished next week after falling into decades of disrepair. “While it’s sad to see the building go, it has been equally sad to see it so long neglected,” said Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy. “As we fondly remember this Valparaiso landmark, we also look forward to seeing new energy at this important corner of Valparaiso’s downtown,” he said.

The 21-room home was built at the close of the Civil War. However, a fire in 1998 left the structure substantially damaged. Prior to demolition, the home has been reviewed by architectural salvage professionals, rescuing notable fixtures, such as chandeliers, woodwork and hardware. It will be developed by Faganel Builders LLC into owner-occupied homes known as Calkins Hill, named after William T. Calkins, the Valparaiso merchant and inventor who originally owned the property.

Calkins Hill will include eight paired townhomes and two detached homes, according to Larry Hitz, Broker/Owner of Berkshire Hathaway Executive Group, who is representing the property. “We’re already seeing a lot of interest from local buyers,” said Hitz.

To facilitate development of the entire corner, Valparaiso’s Redevelopment Commission has purchased the neighboring property at 301 E. Jefferson, which had also fallen into disrepair. The City intends to demolish the aged building currently on the site and later re-sell the property to the developers of Calkins Hill, at the city’s original purchase price, plus any carrying costs, including the cost of demolition. “In this way, we keep the corner looking cohesive and preserve aesthetics and property values downtown,” said Murphy.