

Las Vegas casino implosions may be coming with demolitions planned

Written by Administrator
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Las Vegas is known as a place to gamble, party and cut loose.

It also has a long history of blowing up buildings to clear space for new ones. And now, a pipeline of big demolitions is set to remake parts of the Strip and other pockets of Southern Nevada.

It's too early to say whether the buildings will be torn down Vegas-style — setting off fireworks as onlookers cheer an implosion. But collectively, the current and planned teardowns are a reminder that property owners have often had no qualms about toppling old real estate to build something new in Southern Nevada, an ever-competitive, always-expanding market.

Most recently, Houston billionaire Tilman Fertitta received approvals this month for a [43-story hotel-casino](#) at Las Vegas Boulevard and Harmon Avenue.

Clark County issued demolition permits the same day the County Commission approved Fertitta's proposed high-rise. The 6-acre site is occupied by a restaurant building, souvenir shops and a shuttered motel property.

'Celebrate blowing it up'

This summer, New York investment firm Gindi Capital also landed county approvals for a three-story retail complex on 9.5 acres just south of Fertitta's spread. It would span more than 300,000 square feet and replace a cluster of existing properties, including the now-shuttered Hawaiian Marketplace.

Station Casinos parent Red Rock Resorts announced this summer that it would demolish Texas Station, Fiesta Rancho and Fiesta Henderson — all of which had been closed since the onset of the pandemic — and sell the sites. The locals-focused chain later unveiled plans to [tear down the small Wild Wild West](#)

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near the Strip and redevelop the site.

Reno real estate firm Tolles Development Co. secured approvals in February for a [nearly 2 million-square-foot industrial park](#) in Jean — a project that would flatten a shuttered hotel-casino in the remote outpost some 25 miles south of the Strip.

Tolles partner Cory Hunt previously told the Review-Journal that the Terrible’s hotel-casino, which occupies a portion of the property acquired by Tolles, would be torn down a couple of years into the development. He also said the developers would love for a [motion-picture crew](#) to come “help us celebrate blowing it up.”

“If we do implode it, we’ll do it up Vegas style,” he said.

Explosive history

Michael Green, associate professor of history at UNLV, told me this week that Las Vegas is better at historic preservation than it used to be. He pointed to the Neon Museum, whose visitors’ center is inside the 1960s-era, shell-shaped La Concha Motel lobby.

Green said as someone who grew up in Las Vegas, it’s been tough for him “to see the classic places go down,” adding his dad was a casino dealer who worked at hotels that were imploded.

But older hotels may have had asbestos or weren’t built with future expansion in mind and may not have been able to compete, he noted.

“Things are going to have to change, like it or not, and sometimes we don’t like it,” Green said.

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Las Vegas had a [series of casino implosions](#) in the 1990s and 2000s as developers set out to pack the Strip with new megaresorts. Over the course of almost 15 years, America's gambling capital bid explosive farewells to hotels including the Dunes, Sands, Desert Inn, Stardust and New Frontier.

Eventually, the economy imploded, and construction largely ground to a halt in Southern Nevada. But as the real estate market rebounded, other buildings faced an explosive ending.

One was a never-finished condo tower in the southwest Las Vegas Valley. A crowd of onlookers showed up to watch the [Sunday morning spectacle](#) in February 2015, and bloody mary cocktails and mimosas were offered to guests a safe distance from the blast site.

Last month, Station started demolishing Texas Station and Fiesta Henderson [without fanfare](#) . But if other owners opt for an implosion party, get ready for a very Vegas event.

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