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The London Free Press

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6 / 12 - Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Edition: Final

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Section: News Page: A3

This youth home needs a name YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

Most Londoners know the building at York and Richmond streets by one of its many incarnations as a bar.

Now, you have a chance to name the landmark hotel building that dates back more than 100 years ago, courtesy of its newest occupant, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU).

"We have a high stake in London having a stake in this building," said Steve Cordes, the executive director of YOU, which operates programs for youth and is the building's latest occupant.

The organization bought the building, at 332 to 336 Richmond St., almost two years ago. There are 28 housing units -- bachelor, one-bedroom and two-bedroom -- in the landmark, which bills itself as supportive housing for city youth.

When it's all finished, the building will house the apartment units and a cafe with Internet access operated by youth, an alternative school and other supports for young people.

The building was built as a hotel in 1879. First known as American House, it was renamed the Grigg Hotel after the original innkeeper, Samuel Grigg, in 1883.

Famous for its luxury and opulence, it was the city's first with running water and was built to ease pressure on the Tecumseh House, a hotel across the street -- most recently, the GT's night club.

Since then, Grigg House has been known as the Clifton Arms, Champs, Rickies and by the names of a number different bars.

"It's the hub for youth in the downtown," Cordes said.

The building also boasts a rooftop garden and youth drop-in centre.

Youth Opportunities Unlimited is working to restore the building's ground level to its original look, so the outside ground floor fits in with the second-storey architecture.

"Outside, we want to restore the original look. Inside, it's ultra-modern. But we want to recognize that it is a historic building," Cordes said.

Some youth living in the building have been thinking of names.

"I want to see some of the history so I can see what it was and then maybe use that along with what it's becoming, or else I would base (the naming) totally on what it's becoming," said Daniel Denomy.

To suggest a name, people can drop by the current YOU office at 141 Dundas St. or email info@you.on.ca with the name and an explanation of why it should be chosen.

The contest closes June 15.