

120 Commercial Building Revealed



By: Mary Louise VanNatta, APR, CAE
Growing up in Salem, one of my favorite places to dine and shop was the historic Reed Opera House. I loved exploring the eclectic collection of restaurants, clothing stores, haircare and everything in between. To this day, the Reed is still incredibly diverse and unique.

Recently, Cumberland Holdings, a westcoast property development firm, purchased both the Reed Opera House, 120 Commercial Building and their adjacent parking lot. Their vision is to remodel and update the properties to become a dynamic, popular part of downtown Salem again.

During the past month, I have been introduced to the renovation and restoration process of the 120 commercial property firsthand. I learned that the building was originally a stable and later housed a variety of tenants ranging from a hardware store to restaurants. Most recently, the building was home to the Spaghetti Warehouse.

On May 17, the owners held a private event at 120 Commercial to unveil the property to the public. As I entered the building, I was struck by how the hollow, gutted property still managed to retain the simple charm and elegance that it always has. In sharp juxtaposition, adorning the first floor were beautiful hanging lights, candle-lit table tops, and stunning depictions and renderings showcasing the future of the building. The hardwood floors and brickwork seemed to come alive with renewed energy. Like the building itself, the attendees were an eclectic mix. Over 150 guests attended to witness firsthand the vision for the properties. The support from city officials, including Mayor Chuck Bennett and Councilperson Tom Andersen were much appreciated. Executive Director of the World Beat (in the Reed Opera House), Kathleen Fish was there with founder Mona Hayes. Friends Debbie McCune, Debra Herring,



WEST FACADE FROM COMMERCIAL

Gayle Caldarazzo-Doty and Nancy Wilson used the time to catch up. Chip Conrad and Stephan Wurzburg, from Co.W, a co-working space in the Reed, also attended to see what was happening in the neighborhood. The owners engaged a trio of talented students from South Salem High School whose soulful jazz music provided the perfect ambiance for the event.

The dynamic event was further complemented by the diverse selection of hors d'oeuvres catered by the owner of Chira's Restaurant, Yuriy Chira. The menu featured exquisite fruits and cheese, chicken skewers, fresh veggies, coconut shrimp and even crab cakes. The desserts, pro-



120 COMMERCIAL BUILDING FRONT

vided by the wonderful Little Cannoli Bakery (also in the Reed), were delicious.

After a short social hour, building owner Scott Chernoff, Gene Bolante of Studio3 Architecture, and Jodie Vaughn of the Pennbrook Company (Property Manager) presented renderings and inspirational concepts to convey what the 120 Commercial property would look like in 2019.

Their vision is quite impressive. The crowd even broke out in applause when renderings were revealed. The building will feature broad windows throughout, multiple entrances, a revitalized parking lot, a well-lit alley, and a cou-

ple of outdoor seating areas with access to a bar or restaurant. Their goal is to have a multitenant facility, with upstairs office spaces, retail opportunities, and a restaurant or two downstairs. The property will change drastically to refresh and energize the Salem community. Pam Rushing of Coldwell Banker Commercial was on-site to talk to potential tenants about leasing the space.

A groundbreaking was held on June 22 to celebrate the commencement of serious renovations. The event also included a hardhat building tour for real estate agents. Keep an eye on the property because it will be changing drasti-

cally in the new few months.

Overall, the event was an elegant introduction, and in many ways, a reassurance to the people of Salem that their historical buildings will be preserved to improve the downtown community. I cannot wait to see which lucky tenants move in and breathe new life into this exciting property.

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