

REAL ESTATE



The Tallman Block building, seen here from West Fayette Street in Armory Square, had a fourth floor that was demolished in the 1930s. The building's upper two floors are being turned into apartments. Rick Moriarty, rmoriarty@syracuse.com

Tallman Block joins the trend

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Work is underway to transform the long-vacant upper floors of the historic Tallman Block building in Syracuse's Armory Square into apartments.

Owners Michael Wicker, James Leana and Donald McMasters are turning the top two floors of the 146-year-old building into 16 one-bedroom apartments.

Work started on the \$3.1 million project in April and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

Designed by famed Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell, the Tallman Block building opened in 1871 as a mixed-use commercial building on three parcels known then as 225 W. Fayette St., but today as 215 W. Fayette St.

It was built for owner Charles Tallman, the founding president of the nearby Syracuse and Geddes Railroad, and fronts both West Fayette and Walton streets. Henry Frank Leather Co. occupied the first floor from 1960 until 1991.

The building originally had a four-story wing on West Fayette Street containing three retail storefronts and an entrance to a hotel that operated on floors 2 through 4. The fourth floor and an Italianate metal cornice that crowned it were removed in the 1930s due to disrepair.

The remaining two upper floors have been vacant for about 40 years.

Wicker said four of the apartments on the second floor will have private rear terraces off a courtyard in the middle of the building. Other tenants of the building will share a central terrace.

The apartments will have granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, tile backsplashes, under-counter lighting and exposed brick walls. The building will be equipped with electronic access and security cameras and a new elevator accessed from the main entrance off West Fayette Street.

Wainscoting and a banister from the hotel that once operated in the building have been saved and will be used in the lobby.



The Tallman Block building circa 1978. Onondaga Historical Association

The apartments range from 500 to 850 square feet. Monthly rents will range from \$975 for the smallest units to \$1,500 for the larger ones with the private terraces. Rents for most of the apartments will be in the \$1,200 to \$1,400 range, Wicker said.

Pets are allowed, while smoking isn't. Parking is available for \$100 a month in the nearby Atrium garage on West Fayette Street.

Aster Pantry & Parlor restaurant will continue to occupy the building's first floor.

Converting vacant or underused office and warehouse space into apartments has been a major trend in downtown Syracuse. The trend started more than 20 years ago in Armory Square, a former warehouse district that has been transformed into restaurants, bars, boutiques and apartments.

"This is definitely where it began," said Wicker.