

Workers turning 120-year-old former Syracuse sauce factory into apartments







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The PB&H Molding Co. building can be seen in the distance on the left in 1916. Built about 1896 at 373 Spencer St. in Syracuse, the building was later occupied by Ventre Packing Co. and is undergoing a redevelopment by Montreal Construction Co. into apartments and office space.

(Onondaga Historical Association)

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Syracuse, N.Y. — Montreal Construction Co. has begun turning a former pasta sauce factory, one of the oldest buildings in Syracuse's lakefront area, into apartments and office space.

Workers have begun building out 14 apartments on the upper two floors of the former Ventre Packing Co. building at 373 Spencer St., on the east side of Onondaga Creek. The first floor of the three-story building will contain 9,000 square feet of office space.

The building was erected around 1896, making it one of the oldest buildings in the area south of Onondaga Lake and older by a few years than most of the buildings in nearby Franklin Square, said Dennis Connors, curator of history for the [Onondaga Historical Association](#).

It originally housed the PB&H Molding Co., a manufacturer of picture frames and wood molding founded in 1888 by moulders George Papworth and Philip Burkhart and financier Edward Hall, Connors said. The company moved to DeWitt in 1976 and only [ceased operations](#) in 2012.

Ventre, a maker of pasta sauces including the Enrico's brand, occupied the building after PB&H left. It moved to DeWitt in 1992 and was acquired by [Giovanni Food Co.](#) in 2010.

The apartments will feature stainless steel appliances, granite countertops in the kitchens and bathrooms, full-size washers and dryers, and windows that are 12 feet wide and 9 feet tall, said Len Montreal, president of Montreal Construction and one of the busiest developers in the lakefront area.

On the top floor, the apartments will have exposed wooden ceiling beams. All of the building's brick interior walls, however, will be covered with insulation and drywall for energy efficiency and soundproofing, Montreal said.

Tenants won't have to walk far to get to the Onondaga Creekwalk, a pedestrian walkway that connects Onondaga Lake with Franklin Square,

downtown Syracuse and Armory Square. The creekwalk is just a few feet down Spencer Street.

One-bedroom units will range in size from 800 to 950 square feet, and two-bedroom units will range from 1,156 to 1,280 square feet. Rents will range from \$1,200 to \$1,850 a month.

Montreal said the apartments will be available for lease in the spring of 2017. (Anyone interested in leasing one of the units can call Marisa Montreal, principal broker at Allegiance Realty, at (315) 391-0265.)

[Montreal Construction](#) plans to move its offices from another one of its redevelopment projects, the former [American Bag & Metal Co. site](#) at 400 Spencer St., to the former Ventre Packing building. Montreal said the company is close to leasing out the office space it now occupies at 400 Spencer St. It will occupy 2,500 square feet of the 9,000 square feet of office space that will be on the first floor of the former Ventre building, he said.

Montreal added a second floor to the former American Bag & Metal Co. building and built five apartments on it. The apartments became available earlier this year and leased up within five weeks.

The company plans to begin construction later this year on yet another project in the area — turning the former D.R. Casey Construction Co. building at 405 Spencer St., on the west side of Onondaga Creek, into restaurants. After more than a year of work, he has obtained the necessary zoning, site plan and engineering approvals from the city for the project.

He said the Casey building will contain up to three restaurant tenants. Danny Vault, owner of the The York restaurant in Armory Square, has said he is interested in opening a [Bavarian pub](#) in the building.

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