

TO: LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS AND CITY OF BATH LEADERSHIP AND COUNCIL
FROM: WINDWARD DEVELOPMENT GROUP, LLC
RE: THE GRANT BUILDING NEARS COMPLETION
DATE: JUNE 20, 2023

The Grant Building located at 31 Centre Street, Bath, Maine, situated at the entrance of the historic downtown will reopen its doors in the upcoming weeks. Over the past 2.5 years, The Grant Building has undergone one of the largest and most extensive historic rehabilitations in Bath's downtown history.

The Grant Building is a mixed-use redevelopment regulated by the National Park Service, the State of Maine Historic Preservation Office, and the City of Bath Planning Board and Historic Review. The building will feature four residential units, three commercial spaces, and one of the largest co-working and flex event spaces in Maine.

In 2021, Sean Ireland of Windward Development bought The Grant Building from Sagadahock Real Estate Association ("SREA"). At the time, the building was one of the last parcels left in the Morse Family downtown real estate portfolio and the fourth building in three years to be sold to Ireland.

W.T. Grant Building History and Evolution

The W.T. Grant Building was one of 28 regional department stores and a downtown anchor when it opened its doors in 1936. In the mid-1940s, the building underwent a major addition and operated as Grant's until the store moved to Cook's Corner in the early 1960s. Shortly thereafter, W.T. Grant stores closed as a result of bankruptcy.

The Grant Building was occupied by Bath Iron Works in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s - mostly used as onshore "ships quarters" and pre-commissioning for the Navy and Coast Guard. BIW would "retrofit" the building to meet the needs of the seaman's onshore duties and training while the ship was being built or repaired. Beloved R.M. Tate's took occupancy in 1995, and after their departure in 2014, the building remained largely empty for nearly a decade.

During the COVID pandemic the building was occupied by award winning "Beacon Park" - a public and private partnership that resulted in indoor space open to the public during the COVID pandemic.

Historic and Mixed Use Redevelopment

The Grant Building at almost 22,000 sq. ft. is one of the largest buildings in downtown Bath. Historic redevelopment of that much space required a mixed and multi-use approach, which is the kind of project suited for Ireland. "I don't really consider myself a developer - I'm a 'redeveloper.' I haven't built anything new from the ground up. I'm attracted to historic buildings of significance. They are architecturally beautiful, well-built, located in downtown districts, and incredibly underutilized. This combination satisfies my creative energy and my belief that the thoughtful re-envisioning of the past creates the best possible future opportunities."

The building is split nearly evenly into commercial, retail, and residential space. The lower level will host three commercial spaces and two locker rooms that will serve as an amenity for the entire building. The rooftop features 80 solar panels that will produce over 30% of the buildings energy needs.

Some highlights include:

Professional Theatre. Invulnerable Nothings will open Cellar on Centre, a small, intimate theater for live performances. The performance group recently relocated from Brooklyn, NY and will use the space as their “home base” for performances and rehearsal space.

Four Residential Units. Two – 1-bedrooms. Two - 2-bedrooms. All of the units have been redeveloped with energy efficiency at the forefront. Including fully insulated exterior and interior walls, high efficiency windows and doors and appliances, and heat and cooling from energy efficient mini-splits.

Union + Co Coworking, Art Studio, Flex Event Space. Union + Co Co-Founder and Operations Manager, Mandy Reynolds, is excited to make the move from Front Street to The Grant Building. “We’ve traveled the country and beyond visiting and experiencing coworking spaces. We believe that what we’ve created here at The Grant Building is built to meet what we see as the current and growing future need for remote working and event flex space. During COVID we learned so much about remote working. The need and desire for it – to have private spaces but with access to amenities and a working community. So that’s what we’ve built; a space that is private and dynamic and professional and interesting and offers the flexibility to host a myriad of events that will welcome and engage the community.”

Union + Co offerings will include 19 private offices, 15 dedicated desks, 6 flex desks, 2 conference rooms, 4 phone/zoom booths, technology/copy center with office supplies, a large kitchen, 2 bathrooms, and 4,000 sq. ft. of flex event/member lounge space.

“When folks ask us what we think will be the next big thing to hit Bath, we suggest maybe it’s remote working. Maybe people will move to the southern Midcoast region because they can now work here, and they want to live where they work. Who wouldn’t want to live where it’s naturally beautiful, historically interesting, safe, and is proximate to the goods and services of greater Portland. We wanted to build a “world class” experience that could support these remote workers who we see contributing to the community in significant ways. We don’t think “world class” should only be reserved for shipbuilding when referring to Bath.”

Redeveloping for the Future with Community at the Centre

Sometimes you have to challenge the status quo in order to plan for the future. Ireland says, “What if it wasn’t enough to be the cutest or coolest or most historic little city in Maine? In order to be a successful community you have to be both unique AND relevant – in order to attract the kind of people and businesses that combine to make up a community that will sustain over the long term. Bath is genuinely unique and we’re just trying to do our part to make sure that we’re redeveloping our projects in ways that make our spaces more relevant for future use by the people of our community.”

For more information and to share creative ideas for the property go to www.31centrestreet.com or contact Mandy Reynolds at amlreynolds@kw.com.



PHOTOGRAPH: JOSHUA LANGLAIS

RENDERING BY WOODHULL

