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Faherty and Caruana buying Astoria's Norblad Building

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By Lexie Banks

Developers Brian Faherty and Paul Caruana are purchasing the Norblad Building in Astoria, located at 443-475 14th St. The transaction is scheduled to close Aug. 15.

The Norblad Building is home to businesses including the Hideaway Inn and formerly the Compleat Photographer.

The building was constructed in 1923, just after the Great Astoria Fire the previous year. The building's ground level and second story total nearly 17,000 sq. ft., with an additional 9,250 sq. ft. in the basement.

According to Caruana, the Hideaway Inn will continue operation upstairs, as will the Astoria Cooperative, insurance agency and vacuum sales shop on the ground floor.

"Rehab for the building is fairly light," said Caruana. "We're going to wash the building, ... give it a historic paint color and bring the storefronts back to their historic layout."

Faherty and Caruana are also the owners of the Shark Rock Center, which is under renovation across the street, and are two of the three owners of the Commodore Hotel.

However, the Commodore Hotel has more in common with the Norblad building than just the owners, which was appealing to Caruana.

"The building has a lot of architectural significance. It has the same architect as the Commodore building, John Wicks," Caruana noted.

John Wicks was a premier local architect who constructed such buildings as the Astoria Fire House No. 2, Gray Elementary, and the Astoria National Bank.

Faherty and Caruana are looking to liven up 14th Street.

"14th Street is attractive. It has wider streets, slower traffic, and a nice blend of residential and commercial. It is more comfortable to walk and drive through compared to Marine [Drive] or Commercial [Street]," Caruana said.

The Norblad Building has six storefronts on the ground floor, each approximately 1,000 sq. ft. The existing shops occupy three of the six spaces, and a dance studio is planned to occupy one storefront.

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Faherty and Caruana are currently interviewing prospective tenants for the remaining two spaces. The storefronts will undergo restoration, and new tenants should be able to move in around September.

Editor's note: Lexie Banks will be a senior at Astoria High School this fall. She has a strong interest and aptitude for journalism, and writes for her high school newspaper, the Astor Post.

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