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First Look: Want to work in an old fire truck factory? 'The Fort' opens on the south side

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A 136-year-old warehouse that once housed a fire truck factory is being converted into Columbus' newest office space.

After spending much of the year renovating the former Seagraves building, Justin McAllister said he is ready to welcome some new neighbors. McAllister, owner and president of Fortner Upholstering, bought the properties at 2000-2060 S. High St. for about \$1.1 million last year and began renovating them in the spring.



NAI OHIO EQUITIES

The 230,000-square-foot complex is now called "The Fort." Fortner, which claims to be the largest reupholstery furnishing company in Ohio, took about 60,000 square feet with the intent to lease out about 150,000 square feet. Posy Florals, Menges Design, Nick Fancher Photography, The Leisure Club and others rent about 100,000 square feet.

John Mally with NAI Ohio Equities is marketing the site.

"Conceptually, the structure is fort-like with a courtyard in the middle," said Dylan Menges, who worked with McAllister on re-branding the building. "It creates a community and a safe place to grow businesses."

The buildings were constructed in 1882. Seagrave Fire Truck Manufacturing was a long-time tenant. So was Jet Container.

In April, the city approved an enterprise zone agreement with Fortner for a 10-year, 75-percent tax abatement for the property. The company projected a capital investment of \$2.3 million, retaining 37 jobs, generating \$1.86 million in payroll, and creating six new full-time jobs.

The intention has been to preserve a piece of city history. This building is across the rail line from the Columbus Castings site, which has been torn down and is being prepared for redevelopment.

“Every tenant’s space has been customized to meet their size and function which has created a complementary mix of talents and beauty in this classic space,” Mally said in a statement. “We still have plenty of room and entirely vacant floors patiently waiting for the right concept.”



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