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Downtown project to see late spring completion

177 Main Street to have five apartments and two new retail stores

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By *Lauren Garcia*

MANASQUAN — By the end of spring, Main Street should be featuring a new storefront and a few more residential spaces, A Trubuilders Inc. revealed on Tuesday.

According to Gary Olson, president and owner of A Trubuilders Inc., a Lanoka Harbor based business, the project has been going very well. It will now be four stories with the first floor dedicated to retail, a second floor with two units, a third with three units, each with a loft leading to a mezzanine area, which serves as a fourth floor.

The mezzanine area, Mr. Olsen said, will be styled similarly to a New York City studio apartment.

Mr. Olson said that by the end of Tuesday, March 22, the building will be roofed. He added that 50 percent of the interior mechanicals were completed and on Monday, March 28, siding would begin.

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“We’re confident to be ready for June,” Mr. Olson said. “And to turn the keys over sometime by May or the end of June. We’re happy to be here.”

Last fall, construction to renovate 177 Main St., which used to be a two-floor florist and apartment, began. Although builders initially attempted to preserve some of the historical value of the old structure, a weakness was discovered in the two-story building.

“There were no footings under the existing building at all,” Mr. Olson said. “It was block on top of dirt. So we ended up having to take the entire structure down to the ground.”

Footings, Mr. Olson explained, are dried concrete that blockwork is placed on top of. When the building was first put up, builders dug down to what was believed to be stable soil and built the structure, he said.

“What footings do is keep the walls from settling,” he said. “But we couldn’t put up a four story structure without footings.”

Last fall, borough code enforcement supervisor, Frank DiRoma, called the method of starting from scratch common and more cost-effective than performing renovations on an existing structure.

“They reviewed the existing foundation and then they found it was structurally unsound,” Mr. DiRoma said on Tuesday. “So they tore it out and built everything new.”

According to Mr. Olson, this redesign set the project back about two months, mostly due to the engineering and the architecture.

“But we’re extremely happy,” he said. “And the owners are happy.”

Photos

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A Trubuilders Inc. had to tear down the existing structure at 177 Main St. and rebuild atop the space, setting the project back two months. President Gary Olson expects a late May, early June completion date. *Photo by SALLIE HAAS, STAR NEWS GROUP*

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Currently, the property is owned by Andy and Eileen Laszlo.

According to the application submitted to the planning board, the previous building that housed the Manasquan Florist and second floor apartment only covered 30 percent of the lot and only 89.7 percent of the lot was being used.

In addition to the four floors with the two retail spaces and five residential units, the new structure, according to Mr. Olson, will also feature spiral stairs leading up to the lofts, a 20 foot cathedral ceiling in the middle section and a large circle barrel window where the spiral stairs come up.

“It’s a nice design when you look out from the top of the spiral staircase,” Mr. Olson said. “The circle window is right there.”

He said workers standing on the roof of the unfinished building “can see ocean across the horizon.”

The building will feature vinyl cedar shake siding and a rubber roof along the flat areas and Timberline Ultra shingles on the main roof. Another interesting feature will be the two decks at the mezzanine area.

“When on the fourth floor level, you step out from a triple slider and out onto a 150 square foot deck on each side,” he said.

So far, Mr. Olson said, the owners of the building have two prospects for the retail businesses. One may be a garment boutique store and the other may be a holistic healing massage business. Also, Mr. Olson said tenants have been lined up for three of the five apartment units.

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