

Reunion Building to be revamped in mixed-use project that includes about 80 apartments

\$9 million going toward mixed-use project

By Rhett Morgan Tulsa World Sep 28, 2018

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A pedestrian is silhouetted as he passes the Reunion Center building at the intersection of Fourth and Main streets. Developers announced a \$9 million conversion of the 10-story Reunion Building into apartments and retail space. MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World
MIKE SIMONS

A historic Tulsa structure is preparing to start its second century with a bang.

Rose Rock Development Partners and downtown attorney and proprietor Ken Brune are teaming up on about a \$9 million conversion of the Reunion Building into apartments and retail. The 10-story fixture at the northeast corner of Fourth and Main streets was built in 1917.

“It’s always been my dream since I’ve owned the building that it would be mixed use and I would get some wonderful neighbors in the building with me since I’m the only resident,” said Brune, who resides and has a law practice on the ninth floor.

Plans calls for the construction of about 80 apartments and a workout facility by summer 2020. The rooftop will feature a lounge, pool (1½- to 2-foot-deep) and lower rooftop terrace that caters to dog owners, said Steven Watts, managing partner of Rose Rock Development Partners, which has offices in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

The building’s first floor commercial tenants will remain. A new tenant is being sought to occupy about 5,800 square feet of ground-floor space that was formerly home to a bank.

Brune, who will continue to live and work in the penthouse, purchased Reunion in 2004. Under the partnership with Rose Rock, he hands over majority interest in the building while retaining an interest in the redevelopment, he said.

Two blocks directly west of Reunion on Fourth Street, Rose Rock also is converting the historic Adams Building into mixed use, a project that is set for completion next summer. Watts said the Reunion Building concept actually pre-dated the Adams Building proposal.

“We weren’t really intending to undertake two projects, but it worked out that way,” he said. “Sometimes, that’s the way fate happens. I think they are both great projects.”

The new Reunion units will range from studio to three-bedroom apartments and start at about \$700-\$800, Watts said.

“All the new apartments that have come online have done really well, especially the high-end ones, which is what we are targeting this building to be,” he said. “From a price standpoint, we will have an ability for people to get in the building who want to.”

Watts said the first floor is an optimal spot for a retail component. Reunion Center was erected in 1917 as home of the First National Bank of Tulsa, also known as “The Oilman’s Bank.” Its grand lobby, where the bank was located, had tall, arched windows, 13-foot-high ceilings trimmed in terra cotta and gold, with marble columns and walls and terrazzo floors. Some features were covered up decades ago during a renovation.

“We really think a destination user would be best down there, something that the majority of the public can interact with,” Watts said. “With its prime location, we think we should have a prime user.”

Tulsa-based Studio 45 Architects is designing the revamped Reunion, which will seek federal and state historic renovation tax credits, Watts said.

Construction is to start in April on the building, which is home to about two dozen tenants, Brune said.

“If you ask the tenants here, we’re kind of a family-oriented building,” he said. “They don’t want to move. But we’re looking to get them in the same kind of environment.”

Brune moved to Reunion before the 2008 opening of the BOK Center helped launch an influx of redevelopment. That lure remains today, he said.

“The attraction of this building to all of downtown is that it is probably at the center, the building itself,” Brune said. “Being on Main Street, it has that charm of being a Main Street building, even though the address is Fourth Street.

“The building itself, from a living standpoint, just has the best accessibility to all the features of downtown.”