

Work on Mausert Block progressing

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Mausert Block on Park Street in Adams (Gillian Jones/North Adams Transcript)

ADAMS -- Good news for residents who have dreamed of having a Hibachi restaurant in town since it was announced almost a year ago -- the Mausert Block project is nearing completion.

The project developer, REDPM, announced Thursday it is finishing exterior work to the building. Retail tenants -- an Asian fusion restaurant, a dance studio and a pizza joint -- will soon begin moving in, and could be open early next year.

"We're just plugging away," said Stephen Stenson, the developer of the properties between 17 and 23 Park Street.

Apartments above the retail space are also in the process of being renovated.

They should be available for rent by the summer of 2014.

Stenson said that the front of the building, facing Park Street, required minimal work. The rear of the building -- which faces the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail -- has undergone a thorough facelift, including new entrances for the retail businesses.

The businesses were permitted by the zoning board of appeals in February, and the Mausert Block apartments were permitted in July.

"We think we've got the right mix [of tenants]," Stenson said.

REDPM had done outreach to several businesses in the area, such as Wild Oats, to see if they would be interested in renting out the space . But in the end, tenants actually asked REDPM for the space.

"We were surprised," Stenson said. "The tenants actually came to us."

Renovating the apartments, which had been single studios, made sense to Stenson because "there is a mounting demand for good, quality, market rates."

The apartments are attractive to younger people who want to live a more urban lifestyle in Adams. But touches such as a fireplace could also bring in older people who don't want to maintain a whole house.

The 11 apartments will range in size from one to three bedrooms and will be 700- to 1,300-square-feet. Prices are "expected" to start at \$800.

The former Woolworth's store space is slated to become a gourmet pizza shop called "21 Park Pizza." The Asian Fusion restaurant, "Adams Fusion," will set up at 23 Park Street. The Dance Studio will open at 19 Park Street.

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