

Lebanon square renovations revitalize hopes for downtown



Co-owner Michael Manous aims to convert the old Arcade into a mixed-used facility with a 150-seat restaurant. The renovation raises hopes that the work can help revitalize Lebanon's town square. / Larry McCormack / The Tennessean

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Written by Andy Humbles -The Tennessean

As they leisurely walk around the storefronts, Mike Tamburrino and his son William describe the look of Lebanon's town square as "a step back in time."

But over their shoulders is a reminder the square is infused with the modern-day rush as motorists make their way through to other parts of town.

The ongoing renovation of two historical structures has raised hopes that the work can transform the square into an attraction for locals and visitors.

The former Arcade, built in 1907 on the southeast corner of the square, is being converted into a mixed-use facility with a 150-seat restaurant as an anchor.

The Capitol Theatre, which opened as a movie theater in 1949 on the west side of the square, is also being renovated for use as a center for private and community events.

“Something like that would stimulate (the square),” said T.A. Bryan, who runs an insurance business just a half block off the square. “I think it would multiply itself.”

The Arcade

The Arcade was constructed to replicate a section of buildings in Milan, Italy, known as the Galleria.

Since it was purchased by Michael Manous and Hal Bone in the fall of 2010, work has mainly focused on stripping the building back to its original design. Over the next several weeks work will be done to remove a panel façade put up in the 1950s and restore the original masonry, Manous said. It was last used as an art business before it was bought by the present owners.

Of the building’s 22,000 square feet, about 17,000 will be available for lease. The restaurant will have about 95 seats downstairs with a sports bar theme and about 60 seats for fine dining.



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The building also has a space upstairs that was once used for banquets that could be used for catering – which Manous believes can be an incentive for a restaurant operator.

“The dream would be a successful Nashville restaurant and expand that name here,” Manous said. Three retail spaces and office space is also planned for additional space available in the building, Manous said.

“We’ve heard rumblings of a restaurant. I love the idea,” said Sterling Buster, owner of Cuz’s Antiques, a long-standing business on the square. “If you have a place for people to eat and shop, they’ll stick around longer.”