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INCREASE FONT SIZE **AA+**

\$3 million renovation of Bath's historic Grant Building nearly complete

The former W.T. Grant department store, built in 1936 on Centre Street, has been converted into a mixed-use development that includes coworking space, a theater and apartments.

BY [JASON CLAFFEY](#) TIMES RECORD



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The Grant Building on Centre Street in Bath. *Courtesy of Mandy Reynolds*

One of Downtown Bath’s largest-ever renovation efforts is nearly finished.

The \$3 million overhaul of the 22,000-square-foot Grant Building at 31 Centre St. started in 2021 and is scheduled to wrap up within a month. The art deco-style building was built in 1936 by the W.T. Grant department store company at the site of the former City Hall.

“We have breathed new life back into this,” said Mandy Reynolds, co-owner of Union + Co, a coworking space that is moving into the building’s first floor. “The community is excited.”

Fellow co-owner Sean Ireland, principal of Edward Development, purchased the building for \$200,000 from the Seadebeck Real Estate

Hotel in Portland, Bath Brewing Company and Maine Street Design Co.

“I don’t really consider myself a developer — I’m a ‘redeveloper,’ ” Ireland said. “I haven’t built anything new from the ground up. I’m attracted to historic buildings of significance. They are architecturally beautiful, well-built, located in downtown districts and incredibly underutilized.”

The W.T. Grant department store operated in the Centre Street building until the early 1960s. Bath Iron Works used the building for training sailors in the 1970s through the 1990s. R.M. Tate, a retail salvage store, operated in the building from 1995–2014. It has sat mostly unused since; Ireland in 2020 helped convert it into [Beacon Park](#), a temporary community gathering space during the coronavirus pandemic.

The building includes two one-bedroom apartments and two two-bedroom apartments on the second and third floors that have already been leased out and occupied; rents range from \$1,300–\$3,500. The lower level contains three commercial spaces. One is occupied by [Invulnerable Nothings](#), a performance up that relocated from Brooklyn, New York, and operates [Cellar on Centre](#), a small theater that can fit

the third space has yet to be leased.

Union + Co, which has been located on Front Street, is expected to open in its new space in the next few weeks.

“When folks ask us what we think will be the next big thing to hit Bath, we suggest maybe it’s remote working,” Ireland said. “Maybe people will move to the southern Midcoast region because they can now work here, and they want to live where they work. Who wouldn’t want to live where it’s naturally beautiful, historically interesting, safe, and is proximate to the goods and services of greater Portland?”

Union + Co hosts free events like a [lunch-and-learn series](#). [Tours of the Grant Building](#) are being offered through August, and a grand opening is planned for mid-September.

“It’s been a long two and a half years,” Reynolds said. “We’re really looking forward to be able to welcome the community into it.”

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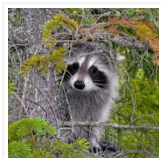
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