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## BUSINESS

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

# Reno highlights old-meets-new look

## Millions spent on Main Street block

By: Murray McNeill

Posted: 10/25/2010 1:00 AM | [Comments: 6](#)



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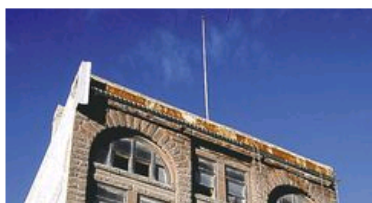


KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS [Enlarge Image](#)

Husband-and-wife team, CEO Mark Buleziuk (left) and vicepresident Shelley Buleziuk, with architect Matt Kessler at 272 Main St.

A local boutique developer is spending several million dollars to restore a nearly century old, long-vacant, south Main Street office building.

Space2Work.com, owned by the husband-and-wife team of Mark and Shelley Buleziuk, recently bought the former Ikon Office Solutions building at 272 Main St. with the intention of extensively renovating it inside and out.



They got the ball rolling by ripping down the metal false facade, which had been installed in the 1960s, in a bid to give the building a more modern look. That exposed the original brick facade and windows, including two stately arched windows on the top floor of the five-storey building.

Inside, they're tearing down the suspended tile ceilings were installed at the same time as the false facade and

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The former Ikon Office Solutions building is being turned inside-out to make way for new tenants. (KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS)

exposing the original soaring ceiling heights -- roughly 5.2 metres to 5.8 metres on the main floor and 3.7 metres on most of the other floors.

Although they'll be re-cladding the perimeter walls (likely inside and out), they'll be removing most of the interior walls, installing new plumbing and electrical systems, new concrete floors, and exposing the original concrete beams and pillars.

"We're trying to expose everything," Mark Buleziuk said during a tour of the building, which is located on the west side of Main just south of Graham Avenue. "It's going to be gutted right out with wide open spaces. We want to keep that raw look and have old-meets-new as the finished product."

Buleziuk said they hope to have the interior demolition completed by Christmas, and to have the main and fifth floors ready for showing to prospective tenants by next spring.

With roughly 6,500 square feet on the main floor (including a mezzanine level) and about 5,500 square feet on each of the other floors, Buleziuk said the building is ideally suited for one commercial tenant per floor. They'll market it to include law

firms, accounting firms and industry associations.

But if a firm wants to rent several floors or the entire building, Buleziuk said they won't turn it down. The main floor could also be converted to a restaurant or other type of retail space.

"We're really going to take opportunities as they come to us."

The Ikon building was built in 1904, heavily damaged by fire the following year, and rebuilt in 1914. It's had a variety of occupants over the years, including Scott Furniture in the early years, North Star Oil in the 1960s, National Typewriter from 1978 to 1999, and Ikon Business Solutions.

John Pearson, a commercial broker with Shindico Realty Inc./C&C Properties Inc. who co-listed the building for lease or sale with fellow Shindico agent Michael Stronger, said it's been vacant since 2001.

Pearson said Winnipeg's Thiessen family, which owned National Typewriter and also owned the building, tried off and on to find a replacement tenant after Ikon left. However, the building needed extensive upgrades, and finally in the spring of this year the family hired Shindico to list it for sale or lease.

Pearson and Stronger said as soon as the building was offered for sale, the calls started coming in. They included inquiries from both local and out-of-province investors, and Space2Work and one other local investor made offers. Space2Work's was the closest to the \$695,000 asking price.

The two Realtors said they weren't surprised by the number of parties interested in buying the building.

"A lot of older buildings in the downtown are being looked at these days (for redevelopment)," Pearson said. The city is encouraging such development and making it easier to obtain the necessary permits and approvals, he said.

Stronger said the fact the Ikon building is only a short walk from Winnipeg Square and Portage and Main also worked in its favour.

They said the Thiessen family has another vacant office building -- the 100-year-old former National Typewriter building at 639 Portage Ave. -- for sale or lease. It's also attracting interest from investors as far away as California and British Columbia.

"But it will likely be a local buyer that buys that one, as well," Pearson predicted, noting they have the advantage of being familiar with the market.

That one is a three-storey building that was designed as office or retail space on the main floor, and apartments above. It's listed for sale at \$499,000, and for rent at \$12 a square foot.

Know of any newsworthy developments in the office, retail, or industrial real estate sectors? Let reporter Murray McNeill know via email or at 697-7254.

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Everything old is new again

Here is some information about Space2Work.com, the Winnipeg boutique development firm owned by auctioneer/real estate developer Mark Buleziuk and his wife, Shelley:

-- Specializes in acquiring and refurbishing/redeveloping downtown heritage buildings

-- Has purchased four buildings since 2001 -- a boutique office building at 179 McDermot Ave., an office/warehouse building at 120 James Ave., a light industrial/office building at 66 King St. and the former Ikon Business Solutions office building at 272 Main St.

-- Recently sold the James Avenue building to a local engineering firm

-- Looking into the feasibility of converting 66 King St. into a retail/residential complex, with retail on the main floor and condominiums and/or apartments on the other six floors

-- "We really like these older buildings and we feel we know the market in the Exchange. It's a

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challenging market but we're finally starting to see some true change." -- Mark Buleziuk

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POSTED BY: **SoberThought**  
OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 4:57 PM

I was driving by that building the other day and I also instantly noticed there was something different about that building but I wasn't sure how it was different as I still don't recall what it looked like before. Clearly not memorable though. Good to see a lot of these projects are building steam. Positive progress. Lets keep it going with such innovative policies as the very smart Tax Increment Financing.

0 0

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POSTED BY: **chanteuse**  
OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 4:28 PM

This is fantastic to see! Way to go! We need to see more of this! Now we need to add some more grocery shopping downtown for added convenience. It's hard to live downtown without a vehicle if you don't have easy access to necessities.

0 0

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POSTED BY: **23117206**  
OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 1:05 PM

I have wanted to see that facade torn down for about 30 years, I knew the original brick work was underneath. My head almost spun out of the car when I saw what they had done. Brilliant.

Good news: There is money in heritage now. Let's get the rest of the heritage buildings back to mint condition.

0 0

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POSTED BY: **WpgReader**  
OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 11:52 AM

Good for these two! Nice to see some business people in Winnipeg are still willing to put their own money into projects.

0 0

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POSTED BY: **The Douche of Earle**  
OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 11:15 AM

Great to see that metal false facade torn down! So many nice looking buildings in Winnipeg have been destroyed by false facades, cheap stucco finishes, metal siding, and terrible paint jobs. Nice to see a developer bringing back a building to its former glory.

0 0

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