

Beer Run owners to open new restaurant at Coca-Cola Building  
written by Newspark Team | September 10, 2014



Seventy-five years after the Coca-Cola Co. began bottling soft drinks in an Art Deco building on Preston Avenue, the owners of Beer Run are planning to transform the front part of the property into a venue that will highlight another beverage.

“We want to turn it into a really beautiful garden space much like a European beer garden,” said Joshua Hunt, who owns Beer Run with his brother John Woodruff.

The pair will be the first new tenants of the redeveloped Coca-Cola Building, a 38,000 square foot structure that was built in 1939. Riverbend Development purchased the property in 2013 and is retrofitting it as part of a retail and office complex.

“We’re restoring a Charlottesville landmark and the goal is to fill it with only Charlottesville-based local tenants,” said John Pritzlaff, a leasing agent with Riverbend.



*Rendering of the proposed Beer Hall & Garden (larger version)*  
*Credit: Riverbend Development*

Hunt and Woodruff will continue operating Beer Run, which opened on Carlton Road in late 2007. Their new venture will be called the Kardinal Beer Hall & Garden and will have 250 inside seats and 150

seats on an outdoor patio with a bocce court.

"We wanted to create something that we felt really didn't exist here," Hunt said.

The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. That means any new construction must be approved by the state agency that oversees historic preservation.

"We're working with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources," said Joe Simpson, Riverbend's vice president of construction.

"Any finish that is exposed has to remain exposed," Simpson added. "If it was previously painted, we can repaint it. If it is bare brick, it has to remain bare. The floors have to remain exposed."

On the exterior, the original brick and the original windows must stay.

"Where you see windows blocked up, those will all be new custom windows," Pritzlaff said.

The Coca-Cola logo engraved into the concrete on the northeast corner must also remain, though it will be cleaned up.

Mary Joy Scala, the city's historic preservation planner, said the Coca-Cola building is just one of several local examples of the Art Deco movement.

"The style was modern and cool [and] generally popular between the two world wars," Scala said. "It was characterized by a rich variety of decoration, mostly geometric, that was informed by interest in new technologies and materials, streamlining inspired by automobiles, and also the Egyptian discoveries of the 1920s."

Scala said other Art Deco buildings include the Mono Loco on Water Street and Richmond Camera on Meade Avenue. Both were originally service stations.

The Kardinal Beer Hall & Garden will occupy the front of the building with office spaces in the back. Visitors will pass through the historic elevator shaft as they enter the restaurant.

Retail establishments and offices will fill out the rest of the space. In the middle of the building is a taller space of about 8,000 square feet. This section was built in the 1980's when Coca-Cola converted the building from a bottling plant to a distribution center.

Pritzlaff said this space can provide a "creative loft" that is not a typical office box with drop ceilings.

An 87-space parking lot will be constructed on pervious pavers, a feature that Riverbend officials say is relatively new to Charlottesville.

"Stormwater runoff is a big issue in the city, and what our paver system allows us to do is have a retention system," Simpson said. "The water goes into the pavers and there is a permeable basin underneath where the water will sit there. The peak run-off will be delayed over time."

The redevelopment follows the recent adaptive reuse of a portion of the former Monticello Dairy into the Three Notch'd Brewery, which opened in 2013.

"We're kind of giving a brand to the corridor as its redeveloped," Pritzlaff said. The street includes local staples such as Bodo's Bagels, Sticks Kebab Shop and Integral Yoga.

Riverbend is betting that Preston Avenue will become a destination.

"Preston has been a sleeping giant for a long time and having Kardinal here and the next tenants we'll announce will add some retail vibrancy and help to facilitate the rest of the development of the corridor," said Riverbend president Alan Taylor.

The project has already received site plan approval and a certificate of appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review.

Hunt said he is aiming to open in the spring, and Taylor said he is hoping the office spaces will open soon after.

"With the interest in the building, we're probably going to [construct] the thing at the same time and I'm hoping that we'll be at least 100 percent leased up before we finish construction," Taylor said.