

# Former Kerry building to be made into apartment complex

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BELOIT — More housing is coming to downtown Beloit.

The former Kerry Ingredients manufacturing building on West Grand Avenue will be remodeled into about 70 apartments that could be available as soon as late 2017, according to Hendricks Commercial Properties President and CEO Rob Gerbitz.

He said the units will be market rate and “a little bit more affordable” than the ones in the Phoenix building. The company already owns the building and is currently in the design phase, he said.

The architects currently are laser scanning the space to create a 3D model of it on a computer, he said. And the finished apartments likely won't be available to lease until late 2017.

The company also has designs on the former Kerry Ingredients headquarters building, which juts out over the east side of the Rock River on Grand Avenue supported by stone columns that rise from the water. It has for the last few years housed the office of FatWallet.com, but FatWallet.com recently announced a move into Hendricks Commercial Properties' Ironworks complex.

The City of Beloit currently owns the former Kerry Ingredients headquarters building, but Gerbitz said his company will soon take over ownership.

But there are no final plans in place for its eventual use.

“We've looked at varying things,” Gerbitz said. “It's such a prominent location downtown.”

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has long had complaints about how the building was constructed over the river but is expected to allow it to continue in its present form until at least the 2040s, so long as it's well maintained, according to Gerbitz.

“Clearly it needs work,” he said. “You just have to take care of it and maintain it.”

The Hendricks company's ongoing Ironworks complex project in downtown Beloit still has plenty of space left for business and industry, according to Gerbitz.

“We could have upwards of 500,000 square feet, but it's going to be tenant driven,” Gerbitz said.

As he explained, the building is versatile. The company refurbishes the exterior walls and the front door beforehand and later finishes remodeling the interior differently depending on each tenant's

prospective use. If a prospective tenant wants high ceilings, they can eliminate a floor to accommodate. But the tradeoff is a reduction in total square footage.