

Mixed-use development project Ironworks ready for business in SoNo

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NORWALK -- Ironworks, a 140,000 square-foot mixed-use development project in SoNo, is not even completely built but it's already buzzing with activity.

The apartments -- there will be 108 in all -- are about 60 percent leased and many are occupied already, restaurant Harlan Publick is open, and the public courtyard, complete with a large water feature, attracts curious passersby off Washington Street. In the coming months, Ironworks will also include the steakhouse Washington Prime, a yoga studio, a computer repair shop and the headquarters of its developer, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners.

"Ironworks is a very important new addition to SoNo," Kim Morque, president of Spinnaker, said. "It's providing a new energy."

Ironworks, designed with a strong industrial motif, used some of the material from the original structure. Located at the corner of Washington and North Water streets, Ironworks stands where The Norwalk Company stood for years. The industrial feel of the development is a nod to the building's manufacturing roots.

Award-winning architect Bruce Beinfield designed the project. He has worked with Spinnaker on other South Norwalk developments as well.

The lobby includes framed photographs of graffiti that was found during the renovation -- "It's all part of the story," Morque said. Large iron signs loom over the entrances to the development.

"We wanted to build and strengthen the community here," Morque said. "Having a residential community helps all of SoNo. The additional restaurants and retail space held provide amenities for residents.

"You look at the history of the area and the history of this site. There's a strong industrial history here," he added. "One of the early businesses here was called Ironworks so we thought it was appropriate to use that name again. Some of the material we reused dates back to probably the late 1800s."

Ironworks features 21,000 square-foot of retail space and has 240 parking spaces --to be used by residents, patrons of the Ironworks retailers, and by the general public if spaces are available. There is also 4,000 square-feet of ammenities, including a fitness center, media room, events kitchen, lobby, and

roof deck with grills and views of SoNo and Long Island Sound.

According to project manager Matthew Edvardsen, Ironworks is mostly completed, except for the build-out of the individual retail spaces on the street level.

"We're generally on schedule, but it was a tough winter," he said. "We are happy with where we are. We're already 60 percent leased and we hope to be fully leased in the next couple months."

Spinnaker purchased the property in 1994. At the time it housed The Norwalk Company, which made compressors. The Norwalk Company moved to Stratford in 2005. The building had been vacant until Spinnaker started construction.

"You walked by a year ago and there was nothing; you walk by now and there's something new and different," Morque said. "Overall we're pleased with how the building turned out and fits into the streetscapes of Washington and North Water streets."

On the Web:

www.ironworkssono.com