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BELOIT — Beloit was once home to a luxury downtown hotel in the mid-19th century. A recent effort to restore a historic space on Pleasant Street looks to bring another premiere business and tourism lodging option to the city with a modern twist.

The Goodwin Hotel and accompanying Velvet Buffalo Cafe will add 34-rooms and a new foodie haunt to 419 Pleasant St. The cafe will feature a wood-fire oven and offer a vast selection of wine and beverage options, focusing on smaller plates and artisan dishes.

The Hendricks Commercial Properties effort was born earlier this year as the acquisitions and property management company sought to complement the successful, 54-room Ironworks Hotel and Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint.

In terms of pricing, officials said the cafe's menu would focus on using local ingredients and be affordable. The hotel will also include two suites, a fitness center and rooftop meeting space with an outdoor terrace, according to Geronimo Hospitality Group officials.

The development push looks to stand out from the Ironworks Hotel in style and scope, set to bring a "warm, contemporary feel," according to Hendricks Commercial Properties CEO Rob Gerbitz.

"We knew the building had a higher capacity than just office space downtown," Gerbitz said. "The hotel was a great option for us because we wanted to bring a new restaurant in town that's going to be more eclectic feel and something a bit different from what's around."

The building was constructed in 1923, seeing office tenants circulate up until the mid-2000s when Beloit 2020 engineered a renovation effort of the first floor to move the Vision Beloit partners - Downtown Beloit Association, Visit Beloit and Greater Beloit Economic Development Corp - to the heart of downtown.

All partners will still be housed in the building with the renovations adding additional office space for the groups. The Vision partners relocated in 2007. Vision Beloit CEO Celestino Ruffini said the renovations were prompted in part to better suit the needs of the groups working to market and grow the city.

“Through the growth of many sectors, but primarily in the hospitality and tourism industry, the birth of Hotel Goodwin and the Velvet Buffalo Café were born,” Ruffini said. “The new hotel and restaurant are joining a stable of high-quality, successful businesses in Beloit and are furthering our community’s efforts in attracting new residents and visitors to come and appreciate all that there is to do here.”

Gerbitz said keeping the Vision partners in the space was vital to the project, noting that the efforts of Beloit 2020 to renovate the first floor would have made the project more difficult.

“We wouldn’t be where we are today without 2020,” Gerbitz said. “If they wouldn’t have redone the space, we wouldn’t have known what it could be. It’s amazing for everybody.”

The original Goodwin Hotel and Opera House were located on the property of what is now First National Bank & Trust Plaza. The historic hotel was built in 1868 after Samuel J. Goodwin relocated to Beloit from New York, according to The History of Rock County, Wisconsin: Early Settlement, Growth and Development.

Goodwin was elected mayor of Beloit in 1870, according to the historical record. The hotel and opera house were destroyed in a fire in 1904. The adaptive reuse is central to Hendricks Commercial Properties’ vision, with the Beloit Ironworks campus now home to 45 businesses and startups after lying dormant following the demise of the once-mighty Beloit Corporation.

Gerbitz stressed the development was part of the downtown revitalization of Beloit, hoping the new offerings would spur future growth.

“The downtown has evolved, but we haven’t even scratched the surface of where we think this is going to be,” Gerbitz said. “When I say we, I don’t just mean Hendricks Commercial Properties. I mean all of the stakeholders, from Beloit 2020 to all of the businesses.”

Ruffini said the renovation plan represented another successful entry in the next chapter of Beloit’s evolving downtown.

“The space will continue to be a place where the ideas of the future can be generated and can be shared by all who look to move Beloit forward with positive momentum.”

The hotel and restaurant are expected to open in May 2018. Hendricks Commercial Properties also is in the process of renovating the former Kerry Ingredients plant, 200 W. Grand Ave., into a 70-unit apartment building.

A pedestrian bridge being built near Heritage Place, spanning the Rock River to the Ironworks business campus is now open.