

Turning back time

Local architect plans historic restoration of downtown building

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ELKO — A 96-year-old building is going to return to its youth.

Catherine Wines, a fifth-generation Nevadan, architect and new owner of the Taber Building, said she is planning to make it look much as it did in 1919.

"I feel like I can hear the building speaking to me," Wines said. "I believe it is begging me to make it beautiful again."

Since purchasing the building, she has undergone a process of discovery in the upstairs flooring.

"It just needs a whole bunch of layers taken off so you can get to the original," Wines said.

An upstairs office once belonging to Wines' uncle, Chuck Armuth, is going to be her own office soon enough. Wines said she discovered the original Douglas Fir hardwood flooring in the office only after removing layers of glued-down commercial carpet, a particle board sub-floor, linoleum and tar paper. The flooring is similar in all 11 offices upstairs.

"The building needs a little love and a lot of money — and love I've got," Wines said.

Honoring history

The Taber Building on Railroad Street was built by James Errol Livingston Taber, a local attorney who became the Chief Justice of the Nevada



Heather Kennison, Elko Daily Free Press

Architect Catherine Wines stands in front of the Taber Building on Railroad Street.

Supreme Court before his death in 1947. The structure is even older than its neighbor, the Henderson Bank Building.

For many years, the building housed The Palm saloon. Evidence of that time can still be seen on a section of brick wall at the back of the building, where patrons painted their names and quotes.

At an open house Thursday, Wines invited the public to come and tour the Taber Building, currently home to Elko County Art Gallery, Barbers Den, Mechanical Engineer Bill Steeves, Graphic Designer Julie Eardley and Ruby Crest Medical Billing.

"(The tenants) all seem really excited about what's happening,"

Wines said.

The historical restoration will include "saying goodbye to the 1960s" by removing the aluminum siding at the front of the building. Wines hopes to have significant progress made on the exterior renovations by 2019, the building's 100th birthday.

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Architect Catherine Wines points to names on a wall at the back of the Taber Building, which housed The Palm saloon for many years.

Restoration...

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She will also be replacing the original bay windows on the second floor, restoring the wood and glass storefront on the ground floor, restoring the original hardwood floors, replacing windows, switching out the swamp coolers with air conditioning, and adding an exterior wheelchair lift at the back porch.

"Historical preservation is really a labor of love," Wines said.

As an architect, she has an appreciation for architectural history.

"I want to honor the building's history and the intent of the original architect of the building," Wines said. "I hope to return it to its prominence as one of the signature buildings in downtown Elko."

Staying in tune with the building's past is tricky, however, without a lot of pictures to go off of. Wines said she wants to make the balcony off the second-floor "New Orleans-style," and replace the brick wall underneath with a wrought-iron fence. She intends to preserve the

section with the names of The Palm's patrons.

The basement is another part of the building Wines wants to keep the same for historical purposes.

"I think it's too cool to cover anything up," she said.

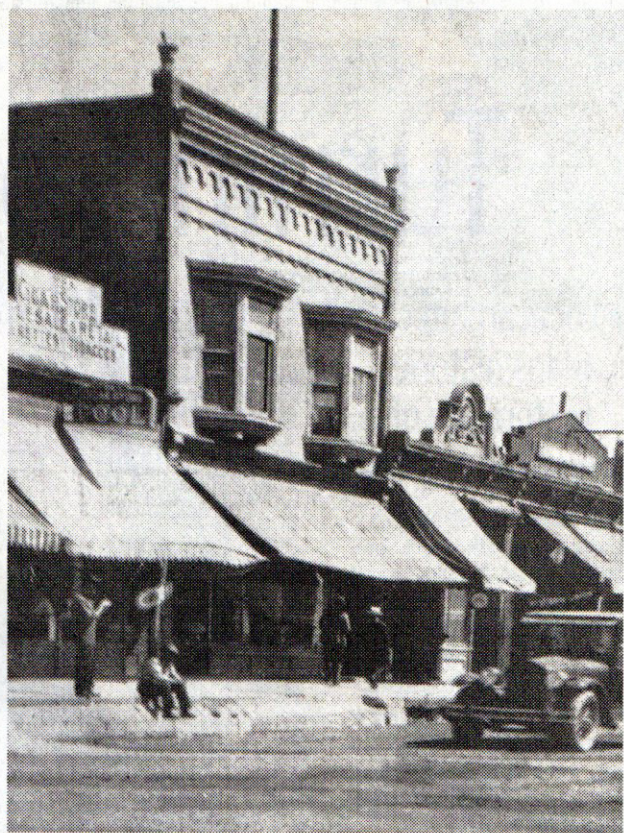
Open house attendees were invited to view an old coal room, boiler and a mysterious brick wall with arched openings near the front foundation wall. Wines speculated that this could be a passageway to the rumored Elko Chinese tunnels. The original rock foundation of the building is in excellent condition, she said.

Wines owns R6Studio and has experience in historical preservation projects, such as the Minden Inn and the Nevada State Museum, formerly the Carson City Mint. This is the first time she is doing a project of this scope on something she owns.

"This is brand new for me," Wines said.

Forming partnerships

Wines is grateful for the people she's worked with to purchase the building: Lina Blohm and Jim Winer with Coldwell Banker, and Doug Schwartz and Tessa Deml with the Elko Federal Credit Union. She also thanks her family, and especially her



Submitted

A photo of the Taber Building, taken around the time when it was built in 1919.

mother, Claudia Wines, for their support.

"She gave me an appreciation for history and helped me from the very beginning of this journey, which started when my parents put me through architecture school," Wines said.

As for the upcoming restoration, it may be a long journey ahead. Still, she isn't alone.

"This is exactly what we need — property owners who care and have a good sense of what downtown is all about," said Elko City Planner Rick Magness.

The City and the Henderson Bank Building next door will partner with Wines to repair the Railroad Street sidewalk in front of the Taber building. But the partnerships don't end there.

According to Magness, the City will have a storefront grant program in place this summer. Wines will be eligible for a

community development block grant in the restoration of the front of the Taber Building.

"This is a perfect candidate," Magness said. "... She could apply for that program and receive half of the cost, up to about \$50,000."

Wines said she is anxious to get started.

"There are a lot of big things happening in the downtown with redevelopment," she said.

When complete, Wines will use two of the upstairs offices for her business. Four others will be ready for new tenants. She has already requested the Elko Rotary Club make its annual Christmas ornament in 2019 the Taber Building, in honor of its 100th birthday.

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to own and restore a piece of Elko's history and be a part of downtown's exciting future," she said.