



# Realtor says renovation of Pascagoula building will boost downtown development



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PASCAGOULA, MS (WLOX) - The new owners of the Hancock Plaza building told WLOX News they haven't made any definite decisions yet for the Pascagoula property. Still, a South Mississippi realtor said he's glad to see a building he calls the flagship of the downtown being given the chance to shine again.



Realtor Mark Cumbest said the building was originally the home of Pascagoula Moss Point bank, which later merged with Hancock Bank.

"This was, you might say, the flagship in downtown Pascagoula



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because it's four story elevation and the design was very innovative," said Cumbest. "The award winning Perry Langston was the award winning architect who designed it. A lot of people around the community have good memories from coming into the bank lobby and looking around."

Cumbest said Hancock Bank sold the property a few years ago to another owner. After that owner lost the property to foreclosure, the building belonged to Community Bank.

Cumbest handled the sale on behalf of the bank to Pascagoula City Centre LLC., which he says plans to renovate the four story structure.

"It's wonderful. I love history. I'm a preservationist," Cumbest said. "It does me good to see people who will come in and who will renovate and do work on the building when the simple alternative is to demolish buildings. Over the years, I think of on the Gulf Coast and the beautiful buildings that we've lost as much through hurricanes as people doing the demolition and building something new."

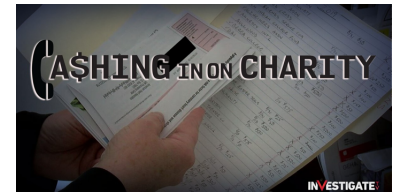
Cumbest said, "I don't know what percentage they're going to preserve of the original style and architecture, but I do know it's going to be good to see it up to new use, because it is in the very heart of Pascagoula."

Cumbest said he's banking on renovations to this 55-year-old building having a positive effect on the whole downtown.

"I think this may be the catalyst to help make things speed things further toward renovation and revitalization of the downtown," said Cumbest.

The upper floors of the Hancock Plaza building serve as office space. Cumbest said there are not as many tenants as in years past, but he's hopeful upgrades to the building will change that.

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