

## The Cannery Building – A Richmond Gem Comes Back to Life

The historic Cannery Building at 1200 Harbour Way, located just blocks away from Richmond's beautiful Marina Bay, is enjoying a new lease on life. The 70,000-square foot property, which features an Art Deco façade flanked by two large palm trees, previously housed the Felice and Perrelli Canning Company. Current tenants include: Fastenal Industrial and Construction Supplies; Ocean Export, Inc., a company that ships American products to China; a clothing



Women would wait in line during the Great Depression for work at the Felice and Perrelli Canning Company where their jobs paid more than those available to men.

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distribution company; a dance studio; Maroc Painting, a wood shop, and an artist's studio among others. All of the current tenants are pleased with their choice to locate in this fast growing, diverse use area in Richmond.

One of the most respected and successful canneries in the East Bay, the company began operation at the building upon its completion in 1930, during the Great Depression. Hiring 700 employees, mostly women, helped ease the sting of economic hardship for local residents. "You stood at the gate and waited until they took you in," explained a former worker at the Cannery. The former worker also said that as a woman, "you had no other choice" than to work for the factory. The starting wage was \$0.20 an hour for men

but \$0.33 an hour for women, because they were considered better suited for the meticulous assembly line work performed in a cannery operation.

By the late 50s, the Felice and Perrelli Canning Company was facing competition from frozen foods, as well as many other canning companies. The property was sold to the California Canners and Growers Association, or Cal-Can, in 1958. When Cal-Can filed for bankruptcy in 1983 it was forced to sell the building. The ownership later changed hands to the Richmond Redevelopment Agency in 1995.

In 2000, the Cannery Building was sold to John Ziegler of STG Asset Management. STG stripped away additions and small buildings on the site and separated the original Cannery from the warehouse section providing access and parking for the now two buildings known as Marina A on Marina Way South and Marina B

"The Cannery" on Harbor Way South. Extensive remodeling was done to create areas for flex space and warehousing. Structural repairs including seismic retrofitting were also completed, as well as the installation of new flooring, a fresh paint job, and brand new ADA compliant bathrooms. After further modifications to maximize the leasing capability of the space, the building began its present incarnation as a multi-use facility.

An additional bonus to any company that occupies this building now or in the future is the fact that it is located in a California Enterprise Zone. The California Enterprise Zone Program strives to create and sustain economic expansion in certain communities by encouraging entrepreneurship and employment growth. The program is designed to encourage business investment and promote the creation of new jobs in designated areas by using special state and local tax incentives. Among the benefits available to businesses within an Enterprise Zone is \$31,234 or more in tax credits for each qualified employee hired and sales tax credits on purchases of qualified machinery. According to Jeff Shea of

### Great Lease Opportunities:

Some of the features available in the multi-use building are grade-level roll-up doors for dock high or drive-in loading with a 16-foot clear height, floor drains and trenches, skylights, utility sinks, new glass storefronts, and three-phase heavy duty commercial power on separate electric meters. The modern skylights and replaced translucent window coverings along with glass filled roll up doors bring abundant natural light into the suites and remaining large North Wing. Suites

can also be combined or customized for the needs of a particular business if necessary. Since the area is zoned for R&D/Business usage, the Cannery Building provides an optimal location for light assembly, light manufacturing, light distributing or food processing companies. Other uses permitted by the code include warehousing, fabrication, construction industries, as well as a distribution facility with a retail storefront. The North Wing is a portion of the building that would be the perfect location for a brewpub with a production facility. This space provides proper floor

drainage and loading docks in the back; a restaurant located in the front would service local employees in the rapidly growing area, including those in the 517,000-square foot Ford Point Building next door. Even small businesses looking for office space will find that the easy freeway access, plentiful parking and two-block walk to the waterfront make this an attractive place to set up a business.

Behind the main Cannery Building is an additional structure called Marina Center A that was constructed and used as a warehouse by the Felice and Perrelli Canning Company. This second

building is 80,000 square feet and is currently partially occupied by the Contra Costa County Employment Development Department and Guaranteed Glass. Almost 20,000 square feet of addition space is also available for leasing in this second building. There are also three vacant lots on the property prime for future development that could be custom built for the right tenant.

### For More Information Contact:

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Recently, the Richmond Historical Preservation Committee presented a proposal to the City Council to have the Cannery Building registered and designated as a Historic Building. It was proposed for City Council acceptance based on three points: the architectural Art Deco Style; the historic regional significance of the canning company, a major employer and purchaser of cans, boxes and fruit from other California businesses with a market reach across the USA and beyond; and the wartime contribution, as Kaiser-leased yard space for materials used in building the Victory Ships on the property during World War II. A decision on the building’s status should be forthcoming.



According to Jeff Shea of ATS Products, a long-time, Richmond-based business, “ATS has received significant tax benefits because our business is located within Richmond’s Enterprise Zone. It’s the real thing.”



The Cannery Building has been through many owners’ hands, but until the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency took control, the building was only used to can fruits and vegetables. This building now provides a sense of wonder, but most of all, people hold a deep appreciation for the cannery and its historical background. The history of this beautiful structure has been written about many times. As this latest chapter continues to unfold, it still holds true that it is an absolutely amazing building that’s beginning a whole new life!

**PHOTOS:**

**Top** – The 70,000 square foot Cannery Building features an Art Deco façade flanked by two large palm trees.

**Middle** – The remaining large North Wing features abundant natural light.

**Bottom** – Almost 20,000 square feet is currently available in the 80,000 square foot Marina Center A. All photos by Joel Williams.



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