

First Look: New office development set for former CPS building

New owners of the downtown real estate believe they can tap into big changes at La Villita and Hemisfair



By [W. Scott Bailey](#) – Senior Reporter, San Antonio Business Journal

A downtown building that dates back to 1968 and San Antonio's World's Fair is about to undergo a makeover more than a year after it was bought from CPS Energy.

BH Properties plans to redevelop and reposition the 10-story structure at 146 Navarro Street into institutional-quality, Class A office space designed for a single tenant or multiple businesses.

The transformation of what will be rebranded as 146 NAV is expected to cost roughly \$32 million, including the \$22 million BH Properties paid for the real estate. It will include enhanced connectivity with the nearby San Antonio River Walk and with historic La Villita immediate to the east.

“We had been chasing this deal,” said [Brian Park](#), executive managing director for BH Properties, explaining that it had been under contract with another party prior to the pandemic but that deal fell through. “We ended up closing on the transaction in February of 2021.”

The structure includes a seven-story parking garage with some 600 spaces beneath three floors of office space added in the late 1980s spanning roughly 100,000 square feet. The property also includes 14,500-square feet of street level and second-floor office and retail space that was part of an annex previously occupied by CPS, which vacated the site in 2020.

“There’s a great opportunity to really reposition it, create something special,” said [Jim Shelton](#), design director and senior associate for Bay Area-based design and architecture firm Gensler.

Shelton said the redesign will include the repurposing of some of the lower-level space to accommodate restaurant or retail development. Ground level will also include a new pocket park facing La Villita.

“It's not just about repositioning an office building, but about creating a new district and tying into what's going on at Hemisfair, La Villita and this part of the river,” he said.

Planned improvements include a renovation of building’s balconies and a redesign of public spaces. The parking structure will also be upgraded with new technology, including the addition of EV charging stations.

BH Properties officials said what they plan to deliver is a reimagined office and retail development that’s never been available on the open market before.

“We think this is going to be an iconic property,” BH Properties’ Park said. “This project is going to stand out.”

Construction is expected to begin in mid-March and the project will take roughly 12 to 14 months to complete.

Park expects that there will also be some relationship with a multistory building across the street as its new owner, Blueprint Hospitality, plans to convert it into a hotel. There is already a skybridge in place connecting the two structures.

“We are in discussions with them,” he said.