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Unico pays \$63.75 million for 1875 Lawrence, plans amenities

by Jill Jamieson-Nichols

Unico Properties LLC continues to be an active buyer in downtown Denver, picking up 1875 Lawrence in an off-market transaction.



Unico Properties
Unico plans to build on renovations at 1875 Lawrence by adding tenant amenities and undertaking energy upgrades.

Public records show Unico paid \$63.75 million, or \$327.69 per square foot, for the 194,541-sf building, which was approximately 80 percent occupied at the time of the sale. Unico plans to invest in tenant amenities and energy savings measures, similar to its investment strategies at 17th and Larimer and Writer Square.

“We worked directly with the seller and its broker, HFF LP, to buy an asset in a location that is growing and evolving from good to really good and getting better,” said Austin Kane, Unico Properties vice president and regional director for Denver and Boulder. “We will invest in 1875 Lawrence to further elevate the building’s image, significantly improve our building amenities and create a premier work environment for a wide range of businesses.” Sellers DPC Development Co. and Bridge Investment Group bought the property for \$46.7 million just over two years ago.

“This was a nice asset for us and a pleasure to own,” said DPC President Chris King. “We purchased the building when it was less than 50 percent leased, made improvements and raised

occupancy to just over 80 percent. After we did the heavy lifting, our partners at Bridge Investment Group and we decided to sell the asset to a group with long-term ownership plans,” he said. “This is a great building with inherent long-term value, and I think this worked out well for all parties,” he said.

DPC Acquisitions Director Justin Lutgen, and HFF’s John Jugl and Mary Sullivan orchestrated the sale.

Unico Properties noted 1875 Lawrence is situated at the confluence of three of Denver’s most dynamic areas: downtown, Lower Downtown and River North.

Built in 1982, the 15-story brick and concrete building has views due to its glass line as well as height restrictions in LoDo. Including a lobby renovation, more than \$4 million has been invested in the building since 2011. Unico Properties plans to build upon prior renovations by adding a new fitness center with locker rooms and showers; bike storage; a conference room; restroom, common corridors and lobby modernization; new lighting and a 24-hour security system; and energy-efficient upgrades. It will pursue LEED certification.

“With other properties we’ve purchased in downtown Denver, we have had to make massive improvements, both cosmetic and back of house. At 1875 Lawrence, we have a core asset with great bones. Our task now is to use our property management, leasing and sustainability expertise and skills to prepare 1875 Lawrence to serve tenants’ needs well into the 21st century,” Kane said.

Some open ceilings and open office space will be created to appeal to technology and creative companies looking for collaborative work environments. The building houses a wide spectrum of tenants, including anchor tenant Ardent Mills, which has its headquarters in approximately 55,000 sf. Unico Properties’ Denver portfolio consists of more than 2 million sf of Class A office and mixed-use properties. Within the last year, it acquired the Elephant Corral and Denver Club in downtown Denver, and Second and Josephine in Cherry Creek North. The company owns an additional 1.4 million sf in Boulder.

Unico Properties will manage 1875 Lawrence.

Unico is a Seattle-based real estate investor and full-service operator focused on office and multifamily assets in the western United States.