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From the Tampa Bay Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2021/10/26/orange-station-demolition-officially-underway.html>

Developers vow Orange Station will connect St. Pete's history with evolving future of the Edge district

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Demolition of the site of the old St. Petersburg Police Department headquarters on Central Avenue began Tuesday afternoon, paving the way for the upcoming Orange Station at the EDGE mixed-use development.

Edge Central Development Partners, a joint venture of local companies including



J Square Developers, DDA Development

NOLA LALEYE

and Backstreets Capital LLC, is the

developer of Orange Station. Demolition is expected to take approximately three to four months.

Jay Miller, president of J Square Developers, acted as emcee for the ceremony and walked attendees through the historical significance of the project as well as detailing the intricacies of the development that will ensure Orange Station makes its mark on the community.

"We are really thrilled to participate in the growth and evolution of our hometown," Miller said. "Today's event is about looking forward to an exciting new project here on this site and also about looking backward to our history."

The project will be comprised of five buildings totaling 130,000 square feet of residential units, 50,000 square feet of Class A office space and 14,000 square feet of retail space. In total there will be 103 residential units — 61 condominiums and 42 workforce apartments — broken up into two locations.

Building one will be called The Residences at Orange Station. It will have 61 condominiums on floors six to 16 that range from 1,150 to 1,800 square feet in one-to three-bedroom floorplans. The penthouse-level condos will be 1,800 to 2,400 square feet. A separate building will feature the 42 workforce housing units. There will also be a parking garage and a building dedicated entirely to offices.

"Orange Station brings much-needed Class A office space to downtown St. Pete," said J.P. DuBuque, president and CEO of the Greater St. Pete Area Economic Development Corp. "Between the 50,000 square feet of office space and the build-to-suit 60,000 square feet opportunity in one of the city's most vibrant districts, it is a great headquarters location. We couldn't be happier that Jay Miller of J2 Developers, who grew up in St. Pete, has partnered with Bowen Arnold and John Schilling at DDA Development, the families of Backstreets Capital, and the real estate talents at Cushman & Wakefield and Smith & Associates to create the largest mixed-use development in Pinellas County in three decades."

The five buildings will encircle a public plaza with outdoor cafes that will also serve as a SunRunner Bus Rapid Transit line station.

The developers ended up naming the massive project Orange Station as an homage to the Orange Belt Railway — later known as the Sandford & St. Petersburg Railroad — that brought the first pioneers to St. Pete.

For decades the St. Petersburg Police used the site as its headquarters. When the police department planned to relocate its operations, a new tenant arrived: 97 city hall employees. Mayor [Rick Kriseman](#) explained to attendees at the demolition that when city hall had to undergo \$6.1 million worth of “much-needed renovations,” staff from the building temporarily relocated to the former police station.

“It was worth it because we saved a lot of money by coming here, but we were also very, very glad to leave this building and the only people who know better than us that it’s time for something new here on this site are those in our police department,” Kriseman said. “So, I’d say we’ll miss this building, but I can’t. It’s probably better we say good riddance. It had a great life and it’s time for it to leave.”

Within the plaza will be a public art tribute to “The Courageous 12,” the 12 Black St. Petersburg police officers who sued the city in the 1960s to fight to obtain the same rights as their white counterparts. The piece will be created by renowned local artist [Ya La’Ford](#). La’Ford titled the piece, “The Badge of Justice” and said she hopes that as the city moves forward and grows that people take the time to recognize and learn from the city’s history.

Miller said the team intends to engage other local artists to “add special touches” to Orange Station throughout the project.

The groundbreaking for Orange Station is slated for June 2022. The developers intend to create the entire project — the five buildings including the residential and commercial spaces, a parking garage, an office building and the plaza — in two phases. Miller said the goal is to have the first wave of residents moving in by the end of 2023.

A sales office, led by Smith & Associates, is expected to open by the end of the year with contracts available in early 2022. Cushman & Wakefield will manage the office leasing. SiteWorks Retail Real Estate will oversee retail leasing.

Breanne Williams

Reporter

Tampa Bay Business Journal

