

Acme Building Revived as Home for KC Artists Coalition and Apartments

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The historic Acme building at 3200 Gillham Road will be the new home of the KC Artists Coalition. (Photo by Exact Partners)

By Kevin Collison

A once-battered and empty building at 3200 Gillham Road will be the new home of the Kansas City Artists Coalition, part of a \$4.8 million historic renovation project that also includes 27 apartments.

The former Acme Cleaning Co. building, vacant for more than seven years, was [redeveloped by Exact Partners](#) and already has seven of its apartments occupied with leases signed for an additional 16. Four of the units are reserved as Airbnbs.

The center piece of the Acme project will be the new home of the [KC Artists Coalition](#) which will occupy the first floor and basement/ground level. The Coalition has been searching for new space since its current building in the River Market was sold last fall.

Marissa Starke, Coalition executive director, said her organization is locating in what's known as the [Tower East](#) area because of its growing reputation as a grassroots arts community.

The name comes from the 1,000-foot broadcast tower at 31st and Grand, a longtime landmark.

An annual [Wanderfest](#) event in late spring that includes area small businesses, galleries and artist studios attracts several thousand people.

"We've been watching the grassroots vibe with all the locally owned restaurants, innovators, creatives and arts people creating this community and thought it would be great to find a space in that neighborhood," Starke said.

In the meantime, [Exact Partners](#), who are Caleb Buland and Ilan Salzburg of Denver, were reviving what Buland referred to as a "handsome piece of architecture." It first opened as the Acme Fur Co. in 1925.

Buland said the developers also were drawn to the building because of its location at the frontier between greater downtown and midtown.

It's a short walk from the new apartments developed in the historic buildings along Armour Boulevard and Union Hill, with the Martini Corners district close by as well.

"It's the center where a lot of people live and work," Buland said. "We hope this project and others stitch together all that's happened along Armour Boulevard and Union Hill."

The Artist Coalition is scheduled to have its grand opening on Sept. 12 and its first exhibition opens the next day. It will feature a juried exhibition of work done by members of the Kansas City Society of Contemporary Photography.

Starke said the first floor space will be used for offices and gallery space to host local and regional artist exhibitions. The basement level will be used to provide affordable studio space, at a cost of \$100- to \$300 per month, for up to 10 artists.

The rest of the building is mostly one-bedroom apartments. Buland said monthly rents range from \$800- to \$1,300 and the size of the units range from 500- to 1,200 square-feet.

The developer anticipated the apartments will be 100 percent occupied by the end of the month.