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Abbott plans high-end rehab for building near KC's City Hall

Kansas City Business Journal - by [Jim Davis](#) Staff Writer

Matt Abbott has bought a mostly vacant office building across from Kansas City's City Hall.

Abbott paid \$2 million on May 13 for the Interstate Building at 13th and Locust streets, Jackson County records show.

The purchase price, nearly \$50 a square foot, is in line with prices paid a few years ago for larger downtown office towers such as City Center Square, Ten Main Center and Commerce Tower.

Abbott plans a high-end restoration of the nearly century-old, seven-story structure but said he hasn't set a budget or timetable. Work could start in four to six months, he said.

The building includes 55 surface parking spaces.

Abbott said he hopes to attract law firms and other professionals who would benefit from being near government offices.

"Because of the finishes I anticipate (using) and the location, we can fill a niche," he said. "Buildings nearby don't have as high-end finishes."

But the downtown office market has been weak for most of this decade.

The vacancy rate for Class B space rose by 1.7 percentage points in the first quarter of the year to 29 percent, according to **Colliers Turley Martin Tucker**. This market contains more than 4 million square feet in 40 buildings.

Slightly more than half of Abbott's money for the deal came in a loan from **Mulvane State Bank**. The rural Kansas bank has a loan production office in Downtown.

Patrick Meraz of Harbinger Property Group LLC in Leawood, who represented the building owner with fellow Harbinger broker Nathan Anderson, said the building's offering price was \$2.5 million. William Pickett had owned the building since 1982.

The property was on the market for 45 days and attracted four offers, Meraz said. The first floor is occupied by a restaurant and office tenant. Other floors are empty.

Abbott came to Kansas City in 2002, when he bought the long-vacant Law Building, 1207 Grand Blvd. His proposed mixed-use makeover never happened, despite a tax abatement and support from the **Economic Development Corp. of Kansas City**.

The building has been demolished, but Abbott continues to own the vacant lot.

In 2004, he paid \$7 million for a high-rise apartment building at 700 E. Eighth St. The building, converted into residential condominiums, is now called The Manhattan.

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