



Michael Smoak, Andrew Viapiano, and Bob Munnich

First anchor tenants signed at Rock Hill development to bring brewery, bar and food hall

By Jennifer Thomas – Senior Staff Writer, Charlotte Business Journal
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This \$18 million adaptive-reuse project in Rock Hill has snagged its first anchor tenants.

The Power House — part of Rock Hill's University Center — has landed Middle James Brewing Co. The Pineville brewery will open its second location — and its first in South Carolina.

Longtime restaurateur Bob Munnich has also signed onto that project with plans for a 500-square-foot craft cocktail bar.

Both are expected to open later this year.

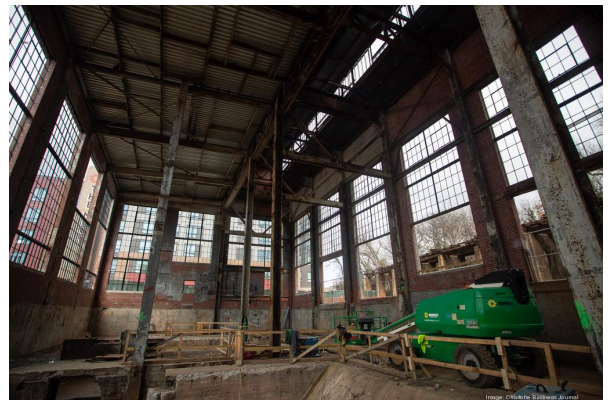
The Sherbert Group is behind efforts to restore and reinvigorate the 58,000-square-foot building.

“We want it to be very impactful for the community,” says Tara Sherbert, CEO.

The Power House was built in 1929 and served as the power plant for the mill campus with numerous additions over the years. Wall-to-wall, four-story boilers filled that space until recently.

Exposed brick, two historic smoke stacks and the building's original windows — all restored — play a prominent role in its revamp. Other pieces of the building's history have been preserved and will be repurposed. For example, Middle James' space features a crane that will be incorporated into the design.

“We were left with a beautiful shell of a building,” Sherbert says.
atrium filled with sunlight.



Tara Sherbert, CEO of The Sherbert Group

Eight food stalls — each about 600 square feet — and 12,000 square feet of gathering space will be on the first level. Efforts are ongoing to curate a tenant mix, with a focus on creative and independent culinary concepts.

“We really thought long and hard on finding operators that share our commitment to work as a team and to create community impact,” Sherbert says.

Middle James was drawn to Rock Hill’s growth — and The Power House’s character, says Mike Smoake.

“We loved the spirit of this project,” he says.

He and head brewer Andrew Viapiano are behind that brand. Middle James’ first location opened in Pineville in August 2019. It is named for their matching middle names.

The new taproom will be 2,800 square feet, with a patio. Expect Middle James’ flagship brews to be on tap, such as the Hour Mark IPA or the Great Musa, a wheat beer. A one-barrel system will provide opportunities for experimental brews.



“It allows you to use unique ingredients that would be more difficult to get,” Viapiano says. “There will be options you can only get at this taproom.”

Wes Tuttle, with The Tuttle Co., represented Middle James on the deal.

Expect Munnich’s bar serve the food stalls, dialing in on craft cocktails, wines and bourbons.

He also operates Dray Bar and Grille in Drayton, South Carolina. It’s part of another Sherbert adaptive-reuse venture called Drayton Mills, which has become an integral part of that community.

“I see the same sort of opportunity here,” Munnich says. “I think this project really represents the heart and soul of the community.”

The Power House project is the latest piece in ongoing efforts to revamp the historic mill property in Rock Hill, at an estimated cost of \$220 million.

Whiting-Turner is the general contractor.

