



Chestnut Hill Local

(/)
Friday, June 28, 2024

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Developer Michael Young buys fire-damaged Hiram Lodge



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[hiram%20lodge.jpg](#))

Hiram Lodge, at 8427 Germantown Ave., has sat vacant since an August 2022 blaze ripped through the property.

Posted Thursday, June 27, 2024 3:53 pm

Carla Robinson

Two years after a devastating fire in the heart of the Chestnut Hill business corridor ravaged the historic Hiram Lodge, developer Michael Young has purchased the property at 8427 Germantown Ave. for \$1.85 million. The acquisition marks a new chapter for the 145-year-old stone structure, which has stood vacant since the August 2022 blaze.

Young, who is currently constructing a mixed-use apartment building at the top of Germantown Avenue, said he plans to restore the Lodge and maintain most of the public parking spaces the site currently offers.

Thus far, he said, his vision includes preserving retail space on the ground floor and converting the upper levels into condominiums. He said he does not currently plan to add additional floors, which current zoning would allow, but is not yet ready to rule that out.

"We're still formulating ideas," Young said, emphasizing the early stages of the project. "It's not going to be more than six condos, and it might be less than six."

The sale concludes a period of uncertainty for the property, which had been listed for \$1.4 million.

Richard Snowden, another prominent local developer who also bid on the property, said he was satisfied with the outcome. "My real ambition was not necessarily to own that property," he said. "It was to make sure that it was restored, and restored properly."

Young noted that restoring a building of such historical significance presents challenges. "To restore that properly and to do it justice, we're going to need to spend more money than we would on new construction," he said.

He is currently working with Chestnut Hill architect Jeff Krieger, whose office is on West Highland Avenue, on design planning for the project.



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Young also said he is considering reconfiguring the ground floor retail area. While restoring the retail space back to its original form – which included a dramatic and large arched window – would be cost-prohibitive, he said, he does want to open it up.

"If I were to guess, I'd say it's going to be one large retail space instead of two," Young said.

Immediate plans include securing the building and addressing weather-related concerns. "We would like to get a good solid roof on it by the end of November," Young said. He aims to complete the entire project by the first quarter of 2026, though he cautions that they are still assessing the structural needs of the building.

Hiram Lodge, while not officially designated as a historic building by the city, holds significant cultural and architectural value. Designed by George T. Pearson, the structure was originally built in 1889 for the Knights of Pythias fraternal order. In 1912, the Hiram Lodge members acquired the building, which has since undergone various alterations, including a significant "colonialization" of its facade in 1960.

The building's mixed-use commercial zoning allows for construction up to 38 feet high, typically accommodating three stories. The property also includes an adjacent rear yard at 8429 Germantown Ave., which could potentially be combined to create a larger, L-shaped parcel.

The sale and planned restoration of the Hiram Lodge represents a significant development for Chestnut Hill's business district. The building has been a point of concern for locals since the 2022 fire, which destroyed the third floor and left the structure in a precarious state.

While the building is not specifically registered with the city as a historic structure, it is a "contributing" building in the Chestnut Hill National Register Historic District.

Meanwhile, Young's 43,000-square-foot project at the top of the hill, near the intersection of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike, is on schedule.

"We will deliver the commercial spaces by the end of the first quarter of 2025, with the apartments coming online by the end of the second quarter," he said. He has already secured a retail tenant for the larger of two commercial spaces, which is 2600 square feet, he said.

OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

Developer Michael Young buys fire-damaged Hiram Lodge (/stories/developer-michael-young-buys-fire-damaged-hiram-lodge,32729)

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LOCAL CALENDAR

<p>Sat, Jul 06 @8:30pm Sponsored (</p> <p>Keithx Comedy Showcase July 6th, @Strangeloves Bar Philly</p> <p>Strangelove's Fri, Jun 28</p> <p>John Prine Night</p> <p>The Royal Fri, Jun 28</p> <p>Circus Week at the Garden Railway</p> <p>Morris Arboretum Fri, Jun 28</p> <p>Broken Arrow + Into The Mystic</p> <p>The Ardmore Music Hall</p> <p>See All Events (https://chestnuthilllocal.com/events/)</p>	<p>Fri, Jun 28 @9:00pm Sponsored (</p> <p>Yellow Days</p> <p>Underground Arts</p> <p>Add Your Event (https://hub.cityspark.com/event/submission/ChestnutHill?utm_medium=internal&utm_source=widge&utm_campaign=add-ev)</p>	<p>Sat, Jun 29 @7:00pm Sponsored (</p> <p>Philadelphia Make New Friends - Online Mixer (56+ group)</p> <p>The Fun Singles Philly</p>
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THE LATEST



Developer Michael Young buys fire-damaged Hiram Lodge (/stories/developer-michael-young-buys-fire-damaged-hiram-lodge,32729)

Developer Michael Young has purchased the property at 8427 Germantown Ave. for \$1.85 million.

(/stories/developer-michael-young-buys-fire-damaged-hiram-lodge,32729)



Wyndmoor teen running successful social media firm (/stories/wyndmoor-teen-running-successful-social-media-firm,32726)

It is no secret that young people today (and lots of older people) are obsessed, and in some cases, even addicted to their phones. Then there is Asher Dahlgren, 16, of Wyndmoor.

(/stories/wyndmoor-teen-running-successful-social-media-firm,32726)



Vox Ama Deus announces upcoming season with local concerts (/stories/vox-ama-deus-announces-upcoming-season-with-local-concerts,32725)

Valentin Radu -- founder, artistic director and conductor of Vox Ama Deus -- has announced the ensemble's 2024-25 season.

(/stories/vox-ama-deus-announces-upcoming-season-with-local-concerts,32725)

Philly Gumbo to bring eclectic grooves to Pastorius Park (/stories/philly-gumbo-to-bring-eclectic-grooves-to-pastorius-park,32724)

The Philadelphia-based band, known for its eclectic mix of music genres, will bring its blend of New Orleans R&B, reggae, blues and Afrobeat to the stage July 3.



(/stories/philly-gumbo-to-bring-eclectic-grooves-to-pastorius-park,32724)



(/stories/a-fistful-of-dollars-inspires-a-hot-cowboy-summer,32723)

'A Fistful of Dollars' inspires a hot cowboy summer (/stories/a-fistful-of-dollars-inspires-a-hot-cowboy-summer,32723)

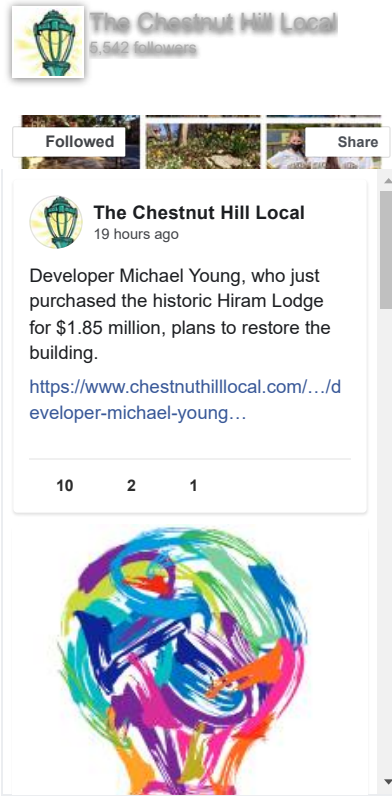
Sweat, tequila, shirts unbuttoned to the navel, and a scintillating playlist are bound to evoke summer vibes.



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