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New owner to restore historic Worcester firehouse

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Raymond James Simoncini, new owner of the Quinsigamond Village Firehouse and president of Raymond James Restoration Inc., poses in front of the firehouse. [T&G Staff/Christine Peterson]

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WORCESTER - It's got a very wide front door, high ceilings and a basement trough for laying out fire hose. And the new owner of the Quinsigamond Village Firehouse hopes

that, after a historic renovation, the building's features will attract retail and residential tenants and help revitalize a neighborhood.

"I love this building, it is one of the last firehouses left," said Raymond James Simoncini, new owner of the Quinsigamond Village Firehouse and president of Raymond James Restoration Inc. "I think it would be nice to bring the building back."

The circa 1891 Quinsigamond Village Firehouse at 15 Blackstone River Road has been mostly untouched since 1994 when it was closed with the opening of the McKeon Road Fire Station. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1980, the firehouse's most recent owner bought the building in July 2013 with plans to convert it into offices. But the plans never materialized and the building was placed on the market.

Mr. Simoncini, who goes by Raymond James and is also a member of the board of Preservation Worcester, bought the building Feb. 20 for \$125,000. He plans a \$600,000 renovation to restore the building to its original condition, but not to its original use. Mr. Simoncini is planning ground-level retail and two apartments, one on the second and one on the attic floor.

"Our goal is to bring it back to what it was, keeping everything as much as possible," he said.

Indeed, the second floor of the building is already set up as a living area with two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom (including a closet-sized shower) and common room where the firefighters would await calls.

And despite years of neglect, architectural and firehouse features remain.

Tin ceilings and wooden floors run throughout the second floor. In the former living area, "lockers" are closets with built-in wooden drawers. Alas, there are no fire poles.

The exterior will also undergo a significant cleaning and refreshing, and a small addition will be removed, Mr. Simoncini said.