ALL RISE: Courthouse Lofts Nearly Ready for Tenants

By Aviva Luttrell, Correspondent

When Trinity Financial was selected to redevelop the former Worcester County Courthouse into a mixed-income housing community three years ago, the Boston-based company knew an exciting yet ambitious challenge lay ahead.

The iconic downtown Worcester building, which dates back to the 1840s, had been vacant for a decade. It had undergone numerous renovations in the past, including a substantial expansion in the 1950s. And when construction crews finally arrived on site, they discovered a myriad of unforeseen conditions.

“There are all these different parts of the building that are mismatched together, and the building had sat empty for years before we got involved,” said Michael Lozano, vice president of development at Trinity Financial. “The state and the city really maintained it and all the details are still there, but it was in difficult condition.”

Over the past several years, Trinity worked with various historical committees and organizations to restore the 214,000-square-foot building’s original grandeur and adapt it into a modern residential living space for households of all incomes. The developer, who specializes in complex urban projects, preserved many historic details - from judges’ benches to original signage - and incorporated them into the building’s overall design.

Now, the company is preparing to begin leasing the first of the Court- house Lofts as soon as early October. The phased opening will begin with the section of building originally constructed in the 1950s, followed by the rest of the complex in January. The development will also include a public museum dedicated to American cyclist Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor, who trained and competed on the streets of Worcester, going on to become the second Black world-champion athlete in history and breaking seven world records.

Assistant Project Manager Aaron Horne said the development will include a public museum featuring cable-hung panels that tell Taylor’s story in chronological order through vivid imagery and text. The space will also include interactive screens with images and videos about Taylor’s life, as well as a bicycle-racing station that allows visitors to find out whether they can keep up with his record-setting pace.

When the city originally put out a request for proposals for the building, Lozano said officials hoped to see a retail component incorporated into the design. It quickly became apparent that the former courthouse, which is set back from the street, wouldn’t lend itself well to that use. When Trinity Financial was selected as the developer, Lee, who had previously become acquainted with Taylor’s story, suggested that the non-residential component honor the cyclist.

“He said, ‘This is something really important – we should look into the possibility of making a space honoring this figure that a lot of people don’t know about,’ ” Lozano said. “It started as a small idea and grew into something really impressive.”

The museum will also allow members of the public to step inside part of the historic building - an opportu