



Dave Hansen | Staff photos

David Crowell and Christopher Bender are moving the Stoneacre Pantry to the former Yesterday's building at 28 Washington Square in Newport. The new restaurant will be called 'Stoneacre.'

Past meets present

Construction of new restaurant underway at location of former Yesterday's

By Colin Howarth
Staff writer

NEWPORT — Yesterday met today at 28 Washington Square on Thursday.

After about a six-month demolition process, construction has begun on Stoneacre, a new restaurant at the 5,000-square-foot building that formerly housed Yesterday's restaurant for 42 years.

The owners of Stoneacre Pantry on Thames Street, Christopher Bender and David Crowell, plan to open the brasserie-style restaurant in the early summer.

They plan for the space to feature a restaurant and bar, with a similar menu to Stoneacre Pantry, but with much more space and a wood-fired oven. The menu will be seasonal and support farms and local fishermen.

The restaurant will serve lunch and dinner daily and brunch on the weekends. The



Architectural plans for the new Stoneacre show a new entrance to the 1931 building.

space will also include a sizable "grab-and-go deli" section to offer prepared food, which will open daily at 7 a.m.

Bender said they have signed a 30-year lease with

multiple-year options. The restaurant will accommodate seating for about 95 diners, with room for another 18 around an L-shaped bar. The one-room restaurant will be more open than

it was before, Bender said.

Although the new space is much bigger than the old space on Thames Street, the owners said they "very intentionally didn't want a big restaurant." They liked the cozy feeling of the Pantry, and that remains their inspiration to the much bigger building, they said.

"It's not a small step, more of a leap," Crowell said. "This is a big room, and it's a big responsibility for us to represent Newport."

On Jan. 6, Stoneacre Pantry, 515 Thames St., was re-opened as La Vasca, a Basque-style restaurant serving small plates and appetizers. Bender and Crowell are in the process of selling the Pantry's full liquor license to the Wharf Pub in exchange for its beer and wine license. The application will be heard by the Board of License Commissioners on Wednesday, Jan. 25.

RESTAURANT A5

INSIDE

Ex-lawmaker pleads not guilty to perjury. A5

LOCAL & STATE

OBITUARIES A4 ♦ POLICE & FIRE A4 ♦ COURTS A4 ♦ CALENDAR A5 ♦ LIVE MUSIC A5

PAGE A3
THE NEWPORT DAILY NEWS

January 14-15, 2017
City Editor M. Catherine Callahan
380-2354
CityDesk@NewportRI.com

Restaurant

Continued from A3

"People have responded very well. We've had great feedback so far," Bender said.

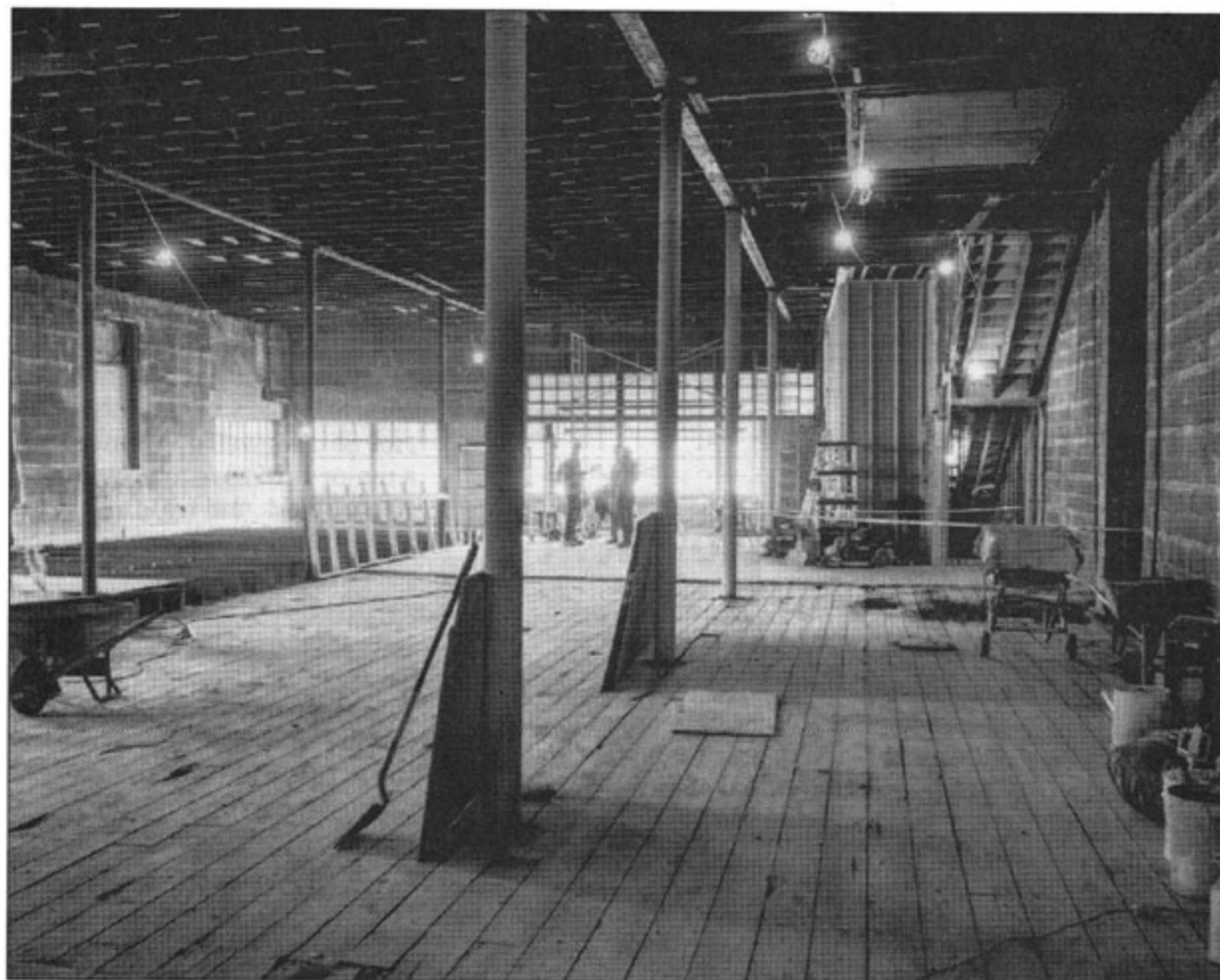
Bender and Crowell moved to Newport four years ago from New York City, where they ran a couple of restaurants together. It was the Yesterday's building that lured them back to Rhode Island. Crowell grew up in Warren and Bender in Branford, Connecticut, before attending Johnson and Wales University.

"When we moved back to town four years ago, our intention was to open at this location," Bender said. "If every location in town was vacant and the prices were all the same, we find this to be the best location in town."

They said they had three goals with the move: live a better quality of life, have a positive impact on the community and create jobs. They currently employ a staff of 25, which will double when Stoneacre opens.

They said they see the Washington Square location as the hub of Newport, where everything comes together. And although they admitted parking in Newport can be difficult to find, they also said the Washington Square area is better than on Thames Street.

For a number of reasons — including their budget — they said the former Yesterday's location wasn't realistic four years ago. But they see it as a blessing in disguise, as much has changed for them. Last year, Bender and Crowell



Dave Hansen | Staff photographer

Stoneacre restaurant owners Christopher Bender and David Crowell say 95 tons of material have been removed from the former Yesterday's restaurant to make way for their latest venture.

purchased Wellington Liquors, 580 Thames St., and started Radish Patch Catering. They have since been able to establish themselves in the community, and build relationships with their customers and the local farming community. Not to mention, the construction of Broadway is finally coming to a close.

Four years later and their dreams of opening up a restaurant in the building is coming

into fruition.

"We find the deal to be very fair," Bender said. "The landlords have been a pleasure to work with. We wouldn't have been able to do this without their help."

Last year, the demolition process began and removed more than 85 tons of debris. Parts of the floor were rotted out and the ceiling was impractical in some areas.

They said the foundation

is in good condition, and the downstairs has potential if they choose to utilize that space in the future. Offices will be upstairs in the building, they said.

They hired two local firms, 2Hands Studio and Herkworks Architecture to design the space from a clean slate. Their goal is to preserve as much from the 1931 building as possible.

Howarth@NewportRI.com