

A developer whose projects include a hotel conversion and new apartments is planning to buy Johnson Controls' downtown Milwaukee complex

Jul 30, 2021

Story by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



By Tom Daykin
July 30, 2021

Brengel Technology Center is part of Johnson Controls' downtown Milwaukee complex that will be sold, with the employees shifting to the company's Glendale campus.

A developer whose projects include building new apartments and converting a historic building into a hotel is planning to buy Johnson Controls' downtown Milwaukee complex.

Bear Development LLC President S.R. Mills said his firm has a purchase option for the buildings, which total more than 420,000 square feet.

That includes the seven-story, 120,000-square-foot Brengel Technology Center, which opened in 2000 at 507 E. Michigan St., and six older buildings.

Mills expects to complete the pending purchase agreement by early fall.

He's still evaluating various uses for the site, ranging from "another corporate headquarters to a combination of office, hotel and multifamily."

Mills has a while to figure it out.

Johnson Controls will continue to occupy the buildings for two years, he said.

The company in January said it would close its downtown offices.

The company, which makes heating, air conditioning, fire protection, security systems and other equipment for hospitals, schools, military facilities, public housing and other buildings, has nearly 1,300 workers at the downtown complex.



They will eventually relocate to the company's Glendale campus, 5757 N. Green Bay Ave.

The Glendale buildings total 458,000 square feet on 33 acres.

Johnson Controls has just 680 employees based there — leaving ample space for the consolidated operations.

Bear Development's projects include the 214-unit Mariner Apartments, which opened in 2019 at 4000 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis, and the 2017 conversion of the historic Button Block Building into a 94-room Homewood Suites hotel, 500 N. Water St.