

# THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## A DEVELOPER AIMS TO TURN FORMER L.A. TIMES PLANT IN COSTA MESA INTO CREATIVE CAMPUS

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By Joanna Clay



The Press is envisioned as a place for one or a few tenants to work in a modern, collaborative floor plan that would have creative campus amenities popular with tech companies such as Google.

Holdings, with plans for a “Silicon Valley-esque” creative campus called “The Press” in the former plant off Sunflower Avenue.

It wouldn't be a co-working space, but rather a place for one or a few tenants to work in a modern, collaborative floor plan with creative campus amenities that tech companies such as Google recently mainstreamed.

Those amenities include outside spaces, such as volleyball courts and barbecue areas.

“There is literally nothing to this scale in Orange County that I can think of,” said Hoonie Kang, partner at Kearny Real Estate. “A couple of examples are in L.A. County – the Arts District is doing a conversion of this type and Playa Vista with the old hangar and the (former) post office.”

Initial renderings for the roughly \$100 million project show an ode to the former life of the building, with images of the printing presses on panels inside. It's light, airy and takes advantage of the high ceilings. There are outdoor spaces, an indoor lounge and separate levels

A developer has plans to turn the former Los Angeles Times building in Costa Mesa into a creative office environment – maybe even with volleyball courts and barbecue pits.

The project is a joint venture between developer [Kearny Real Estate](#) and Tribune Real Estate

of open-plan office space. Glassed-in rooms that remain from the newspaper's days could become private alcoves for meetings.

"The way tenants occupy space has dramatically changed," said Rick Kaplan of Cushman and Wakefield, a broker for the property. "They want a more collaborative environment."

The first phase of the proposed project would be 300,000 square feet, but ultimately the developer says they could expand it to 650,000 square feet.

Kaplan's team is tasked with finding tenants for the project, which they're marketing as a hip, historical property in Costa Mesa's eclectic commercial scene, a stone's throw from The OC Mix/Soco and a short drive from The Lab, The Camp and East 17th Street.

"It's a very important building, and what we're doing is keeping the legacy of it, if you will," he said.

The plant had a long history in the county, serving as the home of the Los Angeles Times' former Orange County edition and later the headquarters of the Daily Pilot.

When it was fully functioning, it had a helipad, a gym, a cafeteria and even an on-site doctor, recalls former Daily Pilot Publisher Tom Johnson.

It was also an exciting time to be in the field, hearing the train pull up on the tracks in the back with paper and seeing the papers come off the presses.

"You rubbed elbows with people that went on to be leaders in the field of journalism," Johnson said. "Marty Baron was the Orange County editor at one point and rose up to be the editor of the Boston Globe, behind the whole movie 'Spotlight'."

He said he's excited at the prospect of bringing the building back alive.

"To me it was pretty sad to see the dilapidation of the building (in recent years)," he said. "When I heard the news of this new group going in, I was really excited because it is a special place with a long history in Orange County of serving the people."

Kaplan and Kang said Costa Mesa is a natural spot for businesses to call home, with Kaplan noting shoemaker Vans announced it was moving its headquarters from Los Angeles County to Costa Mesa next year.