

State gives \$150,000 historic preservation tax credit to Samter's building project

BY JIM LOCKWOOD, STAFF WRITER / PUBLISHED: AUGUST 10, 2018

SCRANTON — A renovation of the former Samter's building into apartments and retail space received a \$150,000 historic preservation tax credit from the state.

The award, announced Thursday by [Gov. Tom Wolf](#), is among 21 projects statewide receiving a total of \$3 million in historic preservation tax credits for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Developer Charles Jefferson is renovating the vacant, five-story former department store at Penn and Lackawanna avenues downtown into Samter's Lofts, with 24 apartments on upper floors and retail space on the first floor.

A Jefferson company, Scranton-Samter LP, bought the century-old, 43,712-square-foot Samter's building for \$500,000 in December 2016. Built as the Samter's clothing store for men and boys, it closed in 1977. The building later contained state government offices but was empty for years.

Attempts to reach Jefferson were unsuccessful Thursday.

Earlier this year, Jefferson's Samter's project received an \$800,000 [state grant from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program](#). A different redevelopment project by Jefferson — a plan to relocate the Scranton Counseling Center from the 300 block of Adams Avenue downtown to a

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TIMES-TRIBUNE FILE A crane lifts drywall into Samter's Lofts in downtown Scranton during renovations June 1.

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former button factory in South Scranton — also received a \$2 million state RACP grant earlier this year.

The RACP program requires a dollar-for-dollar match in non-state funding in a project, and all project-related expenses must be incurred and satisfied in advance of approved reimbursements from the state.

The Historic Preservation Tax Credit program provides tax credits for restoration of a historic structure into an income-producing property. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission must approve projects. Credits may be applied against tax liabilities of an individual or business, and cannot exceed 25 percent of expenditures or \$500,000 in a fiscal year.

Since 2013, this tax credit program has invested more than \$15 million to rehabilitate 81 historic buildings leveraging an estimated \$1.3 billion in construction expenditures.

The 21 projects statewide getting tax credits in the 2017-18 round have an estimated total of \$257 million in construction expenditures.

The Samter's construction expenditures are estimated at \$803,382.

“The economic benefits of historic rehabilitation and the impact of the historic tax credit program go far beyond one building and has the potential to spur reinvestment and revitalization in historic communities across the state,” Wolf said in a statement.

“These types of projects, which take vacant or abandoned properties and rehabilitate them for new use, are absolutely the types of local economic development that Pennsylvania should be supporting,” state Rep. Marty Flynn, D-113, Scranton, said in a statement.

The tax credit for the Samter's project was the only one given in Lackawanna County for 2017-18.

Wolf also authorized a \$10,000 tax credit for the rehabilitation of the historic Welles Mansion in Wilkes-Barre into a boutique hotel/bed-and-breakfast. Renovation of this mansion in Wilkes-Barre's River Street Historic District in Luzerne County has construction costs estimated at \$99,500.

Contact the writer:

jlockwood@timeshamrock.com;

570-348-9100 x5185;

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