

Stamford company's countertop production on the way to Bridgeport

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Marble samples on display at Fordham Marble in Stamford.

Fordham Marble is bringing more than 100 years of history to Bridgeport.

The Stamford-based countertop crafter has purchased the former Norwalk Vault Co. building on 425 Harral Ave. and will move their manufacturing facility there from its current home in the Bronx, N.Y. The 27,058 square-foot building was sold for \$607,000.

It will employ about 20 people.

"We've built a very strong market in the Connecticut-Westchester avenue, and we felt we'd move up to the Bridgeport area which will help service that," owner Mario Sardo said.

The sale follows the expansion and relocation of Norwalk Vault to a larger facility in Watertown, according to Alan Fischer of Fischer Real Estate, which represented the buyer and the seller of the Bridgeport building.

The deal took roughly a year to negotiate. Fordham will maintain its headquarters and showroom in Stamford.

The family-run Fordham has been manufacturing countertops out of marble, granite and quartz since 1905 from its Bronx facility, building a clientele from everyday homeowners to celebrities, Sardo said.

Fordam's current 16,000-square-foot production facility was sold to make way for an affordable housing development. Following the sale, Sardo said he was looking for an upgrade in his new space.

He got that and more with his purchase of the Bridgeport building, which features high ceilings, open space and crane systems that were key features that attracted Sardo to the Park City.

Along with the amenities, Sardo said relocating his production would help add to what he described as the rebirth of manufacturing in Bridgeport. "We picked Bridgeport because the city has become very dynamic lately," Sardo said.

The property was built for Norwalk Vault, which manufactures burial vaults out of concrete. The company started in the early 1930s, serving Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey.

With an expanding business, Fischer said, Norwalk Vault outgrew the space and found a larger production facility in Watertown.

The site still requires renovation, which was reflected in the closing price, Fischer said. Repairs and upgrades need to be made to the roof, window and the heating system. According to Fischer, Sardo said he has no issue making those renovations.

"The buyer could tolerate the fact that the building needed some upgrading and such," Fischer said. "(Sardo) is a no-nonsense New Yorker who knows exactly what he needs and wants and he is going to go in there and turn this into a real palace."

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