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## Norfolk coffee shop Cafe Stella plans expansion downtown

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Cafe Stella on Colonial Avenue in Norfolk is planning an expansion at 116 Granby Street in the downtown area sometime in October.



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Cafe Stella employee Betty Gowans takes a customer's order, while Executive Chef Michael Adames grinds coffee.



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Couple Stella and Mariusz Pomianek, co-owners of Cafe Stella, said the second shop will have more of an urban look and feel and will have many "unexpected" aspects.



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The menu for the second location is expected to have less items, but will feature new pastries.

Norfolk coffee shop Cafe Stella on Colonial Avenue is expanding to the downtown area with hopes of opening sometime in October.

Co-owner Stella Pomianek said the second shop, planned for 116 Granby Street, will have a completely different vibe with an urban look and feel.

“I feel like the space really dictates how we’re designing it ... To put the same look into downtown, it wouldn’t work. The way it is, we can put really high ceilings; we can put art in a retail area because we have the room,” she said. “It’ll still be as artistic and colorful and comfortable ... we are going for a more contemporary look.”

Pomianek said when she and her co-owner and husband, Mariusz Pomianek, were contacted by the owners of the building, they weren’t even looking to open a second shop.

“The spot became available and they had us take a look; and we weren’t really looking at the time,” she said. “We weren’t even excited at that moment to look.” But once they stepped inside the shop, they knew it would be the perfect space for a second location.

The Pomianeks signed the lease for the space April 1 and have since been renovating the space, which used to be home to a cigar shop.

“We could smell the cigars and other things in there that’s obviously been built up over the years,” Stella Pomianek said. “It wasn’t the most desirable space but just looking at it ... It’s a gorgeous, historical building and we needed to change it into a coffee shop cafe.”

The new space will have three floors. The first floor will be a seating area and customers will have to go down a staircase to a lower level to reach the coffee counter and retail area.

The stairs will also feature a small section of stadium seating to one side, Stella Pomianek said.

The third floor is a mezzanine with seating and will be closed in with its original windows overlooking the first floor.

The whole space is 1,200 square feet – much smaller than the current shop which is 2,600 square feet.

Mariusz Pomianek said the space has been entirely gutted and not much could be salvaged. A new kitchen will have to be installed, as well as a larger, renovated bathroom, he said.

The kitchen will be smaller, so the menu will have to be altered slightly, Stella Pomianek said, but the smaller menu will also come with some new pastries. Mariusz Pomianek said they expect to make an investment of around \$200,000 by the time the shop is completed.

“We’re paying more for the renovation than we did this place (Cafe Stella). But we’re not going to lose, because this place was a 12-month delay,” he said. “So that’s a lot of money that we didn’t make. And this time, we have a little more experience.”

He said people shouldn’t expect the same type of place as their current shop, but the coffee, beer, wine and food will be just as good.

“We hope people are going to like us,” he said. “We’re going to provide anything we can and make the best place we can imagine, and then hope people respond like they responded here.”

The shop is planned to be open every day, but hours are still being set.