

Old CVS will soon be full of flipping and flying gymnasts

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Things will soon be flipping inside a former CVS that has been closed for almost two years.

The shuttered drug store at 3212 Curry Ford Rd. in Conway will be the newest location of Orlando Metro Gymnastics.

“It’s a magnificent building. There are different types of CVS. This one is one of their bigger and more grand [ones] with the red tile roof. It’s a beautiful structure and it has ample parking,” said an excited Jeff Wood, owner and head coach of [Orlando Metro Gymnastics](#), which has five gyms in the Orlando area.

This location will replace the current one at 4915 New Broad Street in Baldwin Park.

“I think [it is] maybe three miles from the Baldwin Park location, so it wouldn’t be much of a disturbance for our customers,” he said.

The 14,128-square-foot commercial property was listed for \$3.95 million and closed at \$3.9 million after about two years on the market. The owners were marketing it for either sale or lease.

“When Orlando Metro Gymnastics came along, they preferred to purchase and our client was at a point where that just made sense. The purchase price made sense, and we really like them as a user,” said listing broker [Brandon Delanois](#) of JLL, who represented sellers [PRG Investment Equities](#), based in California.

“I think one of the more important things that we really liked about it is we really saw it as a great complement to the community and would be embraced by the folks at city hall, as well as, most importantly, the neighborhood that’s around it,” Delanois said.

Finding buyers and new uses for the many available former drug stores like this one can be challenging. CVS alone plans to close 270 stores this year as part of a restructuring plan that calls for closing 900 stores over three years. Walgreens is also winding down more than 1,200 locations nationwide, starting with 500 store closures this year.

“They are a bit larger than a typical retailer, so you have just a finite amount of tenants that can reuse and repurpose the building [and] sometimes, when you look at alternative uses, whether it be medical or for some others, sometimes the parking requirements are different,” Delanois told GrowthSpotter.

This property was particularly difficult because it is not at a hard corner with traffic signals. A developer had a contract on the property a while ago, but plans fell through because of overlay issues with the city of Orlando, prohibiting major changes or rebuilding of the structures on the property without meeting new criteria.

“[The developers] were going to redevelop the site to do a quick serve restaurant with a drive-through, and they were going to try to put in another quick serve coffee restaurant adjacent to it because the parcel itself is big enough. They would knock down that building and kind of redevelop it,” Delanois explained.

Then came the permitting and zoning issues, and the deal fell through.

“So while we were still marketing it to developers to reposition the site, we really were focused on finding an end user that could see value in the building and repurpose it without triggering that new overlay,” he said.

Enter Jeff Wood, who was having his own property issues renewing an expiring lease for the location in Baldwin Park.

“Luckily, we found this [former CVS] building and started exploring and seeing if the ceilings were high enough and everything. It had all the requirements that we needed, and it would be a bigger gym,” Wood said.

Metro needs about 15,000-square-feet, at least 18-foot ceilings, plenty of open space without many columns — each floor apparatus alone is over 1,500 square feet — and enough parking.

“It was a great opportunity and a great price that we negotiated to own it. It will be better for us in the long haul to own our own building,” he said, adding he hopes to be offering classes in the new gym sometime in January.

Between the building itself and the updates, Wood estimated the entire project will be around \$5 million.

“We have to rebuild the building inside for what we want. The ceilings have to be pulled all the way up to the top, different lighting, and our equipment needs to be installed in there,” Wood explained.

They will also add spaces for offices, viewing areas, and places for parties and meetings.

“But the cost is worth it because then we own our own building and we have a little more freedom to do the things we need to do to improve our services.”

Orlando Metro Gymnastics was just the kind of buyer Delanois was looking for — someone who had financing in place and could repurpose the building without triggering the permitting issues.

“We found that needle in a haystack, and that’s part what we have to do with these challenging sites is really finding somebody that can thread the needle through — whether it’s zoning, the size of the space, parking. We really found somebody that checks all those boxes.”

While Metro Gymnastics will use most of the building’s existing amenities, Wood said he just couldn’t find a use for the drive-thru.

“We thought about big tubes, you know, like they used to do with the banks. But I’m sure there are laws that prevent us from sucking the kids into those tubes so I’m not going to do that,” he said with a hearty laugh. “That would be kind of fun for the kids, right?”

Instead, it will be a parking area.