

Word on the Street: Pacific Southwest building owner unveils upgraded ballroom

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When he bought the old Security Bank building on the Fulton Mall in downtown Fresno in 2011, Sevak Khatchadourian promised a number of upgrades for the 1920s-era edifice — including a facelift for the aging, dated Bankers Ballroom.

In recent months, Khatchadourian has spent an estimated \$300,000 on upgrades to the ballroom, now renamed the [Fresno Ballroom](#), inside his [Pacific Southwest Building](#). It now glitters under the light from five new chandeliers and new wall sconces. New carpeting covers the floors, new paint adorns the walls, new drapes flank the windows. As for the bathrooms, which previously showed their age — well, let's just say if you've got to go, you might be hard pressed to find a better, brighter place to do so. Workers have outfitted the restrooms with new tile, new paint and new plumbing fixtures.

“Everything you see here is new,” Khatchadourian said, sweeping his arm in a wide arc across the ballroom. “We’ve spent a lot of money to make it something special.”

Still, the design of the new lighting fixtures combine with the drapes, the gold-gilded ceiling and other touches to evoke a Roaring Twenties feeling, harkening back to when the 16-story building opened in 1925 as the Pacific Southwest Bank building at the corner of Fulton and Mariposa streets.

Khatchadourian formally unveiled the renovated ballroom at a ribbon-cutting on May 20 with more than 100 guests, including Mayor Ashley Swearingin and members of the Fresno City Council.

The improvements also extend to the mezzanine overlooking the ballroom, which had mostly been relegated to storage. Now it's being spruced up with new paint and carpeting, and a bar is being installed to serve drinks and cocktails. An anteroom with its own powder room has been restored with period molding and woodworking and furnished with overstuffed chairs and a couch to serve as an area for bridal parties to dress and do their last-minute touch-ups when the ballroom is rented for weddings and receptions.

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