

BB&T sells high-profile building in downtown Durham



The five-story BB&T office building at 505 S. Duke St. in Durham was sold for \$1.3... [more](#)

PICTOMETRY C/O DURHAM COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION



By [Amanda Hoyle](#)
Staff Writer , Triangle Business Journal
8 days ago

BB&T bank has sold its five-story, city branch building at 505 [S. Duke St.](#) in downtown Durham to New York real estate investment group Hem + Spire.

The firm's founder, [Maxwell Joseph](#), says the building will soon be undergoing a “substantial” renovation.

Joseph’s company paid \$1.3 million for the 32,500-square-foot building and 1.7-acre lot, which is about a 70 percent discount from the property’s \$4.3 million property tax value, according to Durham County’s tax administration records.

BB&T has signed a long-term lease contract to keep its branch office with about 40 employees on the building’s bottom two floors, bank spokesman [David White](#) confirms.

Joseph says the plan is to find other office tenants to fill the remaining three floors once renovations are complete. “We think it’s a great space and a great location,” he says.

Joseph acknowledges that the property, which is located midway between the American Tobacco Historic Campus and downtown Durham’s central district, is a potential site for redevelopment, but he says they have no immediate plans to substantially change the site since BB&T wants to remain a tenant. “Down the road, we probably would be interested in a development opportunity,” he says.

Joseph, a New York native and 2015 graduate of Duke University, started Hem + Spire shortly thereafter and has so far built a portfolio that also includes three other high-profile properties in downtown Durham. He purchased the creative 211 Rigsbee Ave. building in 2015 for \$1.4 million; the historic, six-story [Snow Building at 331 W. Main St. for \\$3.6 million](#) in 2016; and the yellow-infused building at 433 W. Main St. in January for \$2.16 million.

“The BB&T building is a fantastic add for our portfolio,” he says. “We are very interested in downtown Durham. We love the area. We love the growth, and we’re very bullish about downtown as a whole.”

Edwin Yarbrough of [Savills Studley](#) in Raleigh represented BB&T in the sale-leaseback transaction, and Billie Redmond of [Trademark Properties](#) in Raleigh represented the buyer.