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Chrysler Museum's Sale Pending

Two local businessmen have reached tentative agreement with Walter P. Chrysler Jr. to purchase the former Chrysler Art Museum and a second building which once housed the museum's Sandwich glass collection.

The two, Jules Brenner of Provincetown, and Fred Jungmann of Truro and New York City, said Wednesday they came to terms with Chrysler this week.

The sale completion date is November 30.

Brenner, who already owns a Commercial Street art gallery and jewelry store, said the terms of the sale are secret. He said he and his partner would be the sole owners of the building, and any financing would be by one of several Cape Cod banks with which he and his partner are now negotiating.

The sale was confirmed by Provincetown realtor Phyllis Temple of Roslyn Garfield Associates, who handled the sale negotiations.

Brenner and Jungmann said they have no definite plans for the building's use.

They said they won't apply for a liquor license. "We've ruled out any discotheques," Brenner said. "We don't want to make it honkytonk."

Jungmann said, "We will develop it gradually, keeping in character with the aesthetics of the building."

Brenner said the building would probably house several enterprises, adding, there will probably be some problems with community acceptance of a new use of the building, no matter what alternative is finally decided on.

"If it became a church, there would be no problem. If it became a museum, there would be no problem," Brenner said. The Chrysler building was originally the town's Methodist Church, before it was sold to Chrysler in 1959.

The museum was closed by Chrysler in 1969. He later moved his collection to Norfolk, Virginia, leaving the building vacant for the past three years.

Brenner and Jungmann said they plan to preserve the exterior of the building, making extensive repairs on it.

"It's been let go," Brenner said. "We'll tighten it up, do some weatherproofing... Our primary job now is to make it safe."

The two men said the roof would be repaired first. They called it a "sieve."

Brenner and Jungmann said the building, or at least part of it, would be open for business by next summer.

The Chrysler building was almost sold early this summer to a New York City businessman named William "Sonny" Tobin. Tobin wanted to start a bar and restaurant.

When the Selectmen denied him a liquor license for the premises, Tobin refused to complete the sale.

After Tobin dropped out, the Advocate, in its July 5 issue, reported that Chrysler had ordered the former museum to be torn down. Chrysler's wife later denied it, but Brenner said the demolition threat had spurred him to quickly realize what had been a fantasy of his for some time.

Brenner has been in business in Provincetown for 18 years. Until this year, he ran a summer art gallery and jewelry store in Provincetown, and spent his winters in New York City operating another jewelry store.



Fred Jungmann (left) and Jules Brenner, soon to be the new owners of the Chrysler Art Museum.

He now lives year-round in Provincetown and this summer was elected a trustee of the Provincetown Art Association.

Jungmann is a home owner in Truro, and describes himself as "a consultant in personnel and management training." For the past year, he has been self-employed in New York City. He said he and Brenner have been friends for four years, and developed the idea of purchasing the building together.

Jungmann said he had been spending summers in Truro, but "this should change the balance of time I spend here."

The cost of the Commercial Street museum and the Bradford Street glass museum building ("a package deal," said Jungmann) is likely in excess of \$200,000. The Town Assessors' valuation of the property in 1970 was \$168,000—\$125,200 of that being the art museum and its 14,972 square-foot lot.

Brenner said the glass museum building (a red brick building across Bradford Street from the Town Hall) would be sold.

"We don't want to develop that," Brenner said.