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Featured Property of the Month: Hamilton Company to modernize Twin Donuts in Allston's Union Square

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Twin Donuts, a 1950s landmark in Allston's Union Square that has been serving local patrons an early morning breakfast for more than a half century, will finally undergo a major facelift.

Hamilton Company, which purchased the 3,212 s/f property at 501 Cambridge St. for \$250,000 in 1985, will spend almost as much this spring to renovate the building, which will include a bright new, retro-1950s façade.

Samara Tilkin, the architect on the project, said the restoration is being done to coincide with Hamilton Company's upcoming celebration of its 60th year as a real estate powerhouse in Boston. Hamilton Company was founded by Harold Brown in 1954 and has amassed more than \$1 billion in assets.

Tilkin noted that the new façade "will have a retro-1950s feel to it which is in keeping with current mid-century modern design trends with a nod to the past." The renovations will begin this summer.

Harold Brown has always had a soft-spot for donut shops. Before he founded Hamilton Company, Brown was the owner/operator of 3 donut shops in the Greater Boston area and part-owner of another in Moline, Illinois. Brown sold the properties when he was re-called into military service during the Korean conflict after having served in World War II.

"Twin Donuts is very dear to Harold," said Hamilton president Carl Valeri. "He loves the location, the concept and the service it provides."

Indeed, Twin Donuts, now operated by Sou Pang, who bought the business from the previous owners with her late husband in 2001 and leases the property from Hamilton, has survived challenges from a nearby Dunkin Donuts and Tedeschi Food Shop.

Patrons are drawn to Twin Donuts, which opens at 4 a.m. because of its cheap, delicious donuts and its old-fashioned diner offerings of coffee, breakfast, pastry and sandwiches.

Brown, who at 89 still gets up before dawn to exercise and begin his workday, has a suggestion for donut lovers: "If you like donuts and a good cup of coffee, you'll like Twin Donuts. But get there early, the donuts have a way of disappearing fast."

Brown recently formed the Hamilton Company Charitable Trust which will provide millions of dollars in contributions and rent proceeds to charitable organizations in the Greater Boston area in perpetuity.

While the Twin Donuts project is not part of the Charitable Trust, Tilkin said, "The Twin Donuts restoration is another great way to commemorate Hamilton's investment in this city and in this neighborhood."