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Another major law firm is on the move in downtown D.C.

BY TRISTAN NAVERA
Staff Reporter, Washington Business Journal

One of Greater Washington's largest law firms is building a new office in downtown D.C.

Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox PLLC has signed a lease for 71,705 square feet in the penthouse at 1101 K St. NW. The law firm is relocating its headquarters from about two blocks away at 1100 New York Ave. NW. COO Robert Burger said the firm is downsizing – its current home is 122,000 square feet – but in doing so, it's planning a smarter office.

"K Street is good for us because it's a very unique space," Burger said. "It's the highlight at the top of the building in an actual penthouse, and it lends itself to be designed to allow us to work however we want."

Sterne Kessler is the region's 28th-largest law firm with 382 employees including 156 attorneys, according to Washington Business Journal research. It works extensively with patents and trademarks for the electronics, health care, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals industries.

The company isn't likely to pay much more per foot – both buildings are among the most expensive in Greater Washington, with 1101 K seeing asking rents at \$69 per square foot, compared to \$68.50 at 1100 New York, according to Washington Business Journal research. But that doesn't account for any concessions made in the deal, which were not made public.

The firm said it knew what it wanted when it started its search – a penthouse space with outdoor access and lots of natural light, gender-neutral restrooms and building amenities like a gym, bike storage and space for a large conference room and lounge. It's engaged Gensler as architect and doesn't have a timeline on when it will move in but hopes for designs to be completed by the end of the year.

"We like our space, but we have to be thinking about the future, so we're designing for down the road," Burger said. "It's got to be a flexible space and one that's remote-enabled. We were thinking about it for some time – the pandemic only accelerated our thinking."

That means the firm is leaning into more remote work. The new office will have a wider variety of spaces including more small areas to allow for huddles, plus small meeting rooms designed for people who are connecting with others via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. "It's going to be rare that all of the employees need the office at the same time," Burger said, "though many will be circulating through part of the time during the week."



Sterne Kessler is moving to K Street NW.



Robert Burger, COO of Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox PLLC.

"This is the way that law firms are heading, and we have to be there," Burger said. "We want to think about how work is going to be 10 years from now. A lot of law firms and other companies are curious how that's going to look."

A joint venture of Allianz Real Estate and Manulife Financial Corp. own the 509,000-square-foot Greyhound building at 1100 New York. They declined to comment. This is the building's second major tenant to leave this summer, following government-focused nonprofit The Partnership for Public Service, which moved to 26,615 square feet at Hamilton Square at 600 14th St. NW.

Greg McCavera of JLL and Mark Pirone and Kurt Phillipson of C2C Project Management advised Sterne Kessler in site selection and lease negotiations. Greg Tomasso and Eli Barnes of Avison Young and Brent Hall of UBS Realty Investors represented the firm's new landlord, UBS.