

## Is Linode's 'Real World' house now the coolest tech office in the city?

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By Roberto Torres / contributor

It took several years of planning, but a smiling **Chris Aker**, CEO of bootstrapped cloud hosting company **Linode**, finally got to see staffers chat casually in the stairwells of his company's newly-opened Old City offices.

The freshly-cut green ribbon hit the ground at Linode's 15,000-square-foot offices on Monday, sliced with a pair of golden scissors guided by Aker and Philadelphia Mayor **Jim Kenney**, who dropped by the ceremony to celebrate the official landing of the South Jersey-founded company within city limits.

"We're at a high poverty rate," Kenney said. "And the only way we'll get rid of that poverty rate is through education and access to jobs like this. We want to thank you and congratulate for helping spread that."

The company's relocation to the old **Corn Exchange Building** — an ornate neoclassical former bank that "has always stood out in Old City," per *Inquirer* architecture critic **Inga Saffron** — was a long time coming. After a two-year buying process peppered with roadblocks, the \$5 million deal became official in December of 2015, when restoration work began.

Now, with the company's team of 150 working out of the 200 block of Arch Street, a stroll through the corporate HQ will reveal a contrast of high-end server equipment with exposed red brick dating back at least a century.

"This feels amazing," a beaming Aker told **Technical.ly** on Monday, as over 100 event-goers mingled in the building's main hall. "You're still working on the things you talked about and planned for over a year and a half prior, but they really don't come into play until you see people in the space. That for me was one of the most rewarding things."



Linode is now officially housed inside this neoclassical beauty on Arch Street. (Photo courtesy of Jeremy Messler)

In February, the exec moved his office into the new space. Staffers trickled in as the restoration work, entrusted to architecture firm **Ballinger**, wrapped up in recent months. The building, once the gaudy backdrop to the Philly edition of *MTV's Real World* series, is now a sleek tech office.

“As people started to roll in here, you got to see it working,” Aker said. “Seeing people having conversations in the stairwell like you hoped would happen.”



 **Danielle Cohn** 🚀  
@daniellecohn

Congratulations + much success to @linode that bootstrapped their way to 150 employees + just renovated one of the coolest buildings in @oldcityphilly #getup #startup #LIFT

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Despite all that new space, Linode finds itself exploring how work-from-home policies could ease the demand for physical space at the new HQ, already at capacity per Aker, as Linode work to meet demand.

“I’ve often joked that how I justified a project this expensive is that we would finally get ahead of the curve with regards to office space demand given our growth,” Aker said. “The irony is that it took longer than expected to pull one of these off so, by the time we moved in here, we’re still under that threshold.”



 **Richard Myers**  
@rickatlinode

We’re celebrating our 15 year anniversary and grand opening of our new Philly HQ @linode tonight!

14 7:35 PM - Jun 11, 2018

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The company, which boasts of serving 400,000 clients, cites CreativeCommons, The Onion and WP Engine as customers.

“We’re growing the top line year over year,” Aker said. “We have years and years of margins to work with and we’re making significant investments in headcount, salaries and benefits which feels good. This is by no means the end of it for us.”