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Luxury retail, fine dining planned for Madison

By MICHAEL SIMMONS, Madison County Journal
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MADISON — A new development similar to a downtown off of Madison Avenue that will accommodate fine dining, luxury retail and office space on nine acres is underway.

Ten buildings are planned on land situated between Magnolia Street to the west, Madison Avenue to the south, and Montgomery Street to the east. In total, 71,000 square feet of space will be included in the development.

Madison attorney, developer and contractor Greg Johnston is excited to get moving with the new Magnolia District.

Johnston grew up on Magnolia Street at his grandparent's antique shop located at 732 Magnolia Street from 1972 until 2002. In 2004, he located his office there.

"My office window overlooks this property and I always envisioned developing it," he said.

Over the years, Johnston and his parents, Brent and Cynthia Johnston of Madison, bought more property and restored five historical buildings in the area.

"I have a lifelong connection to this property and I am passionate about developing this area in a historically accurate way," Johnston said.

Fast forward to November 2018, and Johnston and his development partner Chuck Bell, a Madison pharmaceutical executive and entrepreneur, purchased six acres of land adjacent to his office to turn his dream into reality.

"We really want to create a destination where people want to come, eat and shop," Johnston said. "It will be so aesthetically pleasing people will want to come just to look at the buildings. It will draw people in by virtue of the architecture."

Bell said the architecture will be historical in nature and inspired by architecture from famous southern cities like Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C.

Currently, no tenants have been signed, but Greg said they wanted to wait until the city approved their concept plan before moving forward.

"We're having some preliminary discussions with potential tenants," he said. "We hope by the end of the summer we have some announcements to make."

One thing they hope to secure is a fine dining restaurant for the corner of Madison Avenue and Magnolia Street, where Rock's Barber & Style is currently situated.

Greg said they plan to relocate the historical building Rock's is currently located to somewhere else in the Magnolia District development to clear a site for a new restaurant.

"We think that corner will be a great place for fine dining," he said. "We'll relocate Rock's to another location. We love the idea of having a small-town barbershop since it's an integral part of small-town living."

The Magnolia District is adjacent to property that Madison Mayor Mary Hawkins Butler has dreamed of turning into a downtown for the city.

"I am so excited about the Magnolia District," she said. "I know it will be a beautiful addition to downtown Madison and will be a great complement to our Madison Square project."

Just north of the Magnolia District on Main Street, Bridgeforth Rutledge has been renovating and refurbishing the historical buildings west of the railroad tracks. And down Main Street just a few yards will be a new development, The Village.

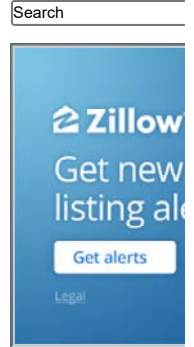
Johnston said all of these developments will become a destination for Madison.

"The work they're doing is excellent," he said of the other developers. "I have a great appreciation for what they are doing and it will compliment what we're doing. The proximity of the city's property to ours will really tie in the Madison Square project and Magnolia District."



The Magnolia District will feature 71,000 square feet of luxury retail, fine dining and professional office space once completed.

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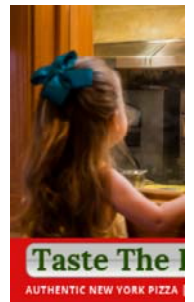


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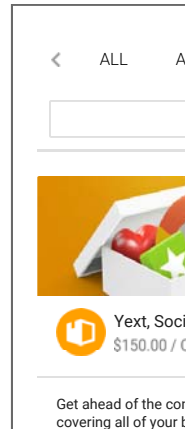
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