
Midtown may undergo makeover

H.G. Hill Realty has proposal for Hill Center Broadway

2:14 AM, Feb. 2, 2011

H.G. Hill Realty Co. is planning a project that could bring 9,000 square feet of retail, restaurants or office space to midtown.

The proposed Hill Center Broadway will come to the building that housed The Great Escape used collectibles store for 33 years. A discount tobacco and beer store still occupies a portion of the building and is operating on a month-to-month lease.

Once a tenant is secured, the realty company that owns the land will raze the current 3,625-square-foot structure and create a building with up to two levels, patios, a mezzanine and 25 on-site parking spaces, said Jon Petty, an affiliate broker with [Southeast Venture](#), which is designing the project.

Parking constraints on the 0.3-acre site will prohibit apartments or condos from going there.

"We are very early in the preliminary stages of the process, but it will be a small, mixed-use building. We are taking our time on interviewing candidates and finding the best tenants that will work for us and the changing concept of midtown," Petty said.

[H.G. Hill Realty](#) CEO Jimmy Granbery declined to elaborate on the project, saying only that it has no exact time frame and the company has considered options.

The Great Escape — known as a go-to location for a wide variety of movies, vintage music, TV shows and classic comics — bid farewell to the building at 1929 Broadway in October and expanded its Charlotte Avenue store.

Rising real estate prices near West End forced it to leave the location last year, said Great Escape owner Gary Walker.

"There is a lot of demand in the midtown area with its proximity to downtown and Vanderbilt (University)," Petty said.

Less than a block east of the Hill property, restaurateur Chris Hyndman is renovating his former Lime restaurant into Tavern, a pub-inspired restaurant with a casual concept and weekend brunch.

"Midtown is basically going to go through — not a gentrification — but changes that will bring a new type of customer there. What you see is a lot of old buildings, and it is the natural progression for new development and more high-profile restaurants and retail to come to the area," Petty added.

Contact Juanita Cousins at 615-259-8287, jcousins@tennessean.com or [Twitter.com/talljournalist](https://twitter.com/talljournalist).