

# Franklin Street open to change

## Downtown lots expected to be filled

BY WILL HARRISON  
SENIOR WRITER

JULY 17 — Franklin Street patrons have seen the balance between new development and business closures tip heavily toward empty storefronts in recent months, but new renovations to the former site of Kerr Drug and the addition of a health-friendly fast food restaurant are sparks of progress for Chapel Hill's most famous street.

109. E. Franklin St.

Once the location of the Kerr Drug that closed in January 2007, 109 E. Franklin St. is now only about eight weeks away from the completion of its extensive renovation.

Michael Brader-Araje, the building's owner and founder of the Michael and Laura Brader-Araje Foundation, said the space will house three separate tenants

— two retailers on the lower floor and office space upstairs.

"I really wanted to attract a kind of tenant that would be an additive value to Franklin Street," said Brader-Araje, who added that this will not likely include a restaurant, as he sees the area as having plenty of dining options already available.

Brader-Araje said he wants to offer space to tenants who help improve the overall economy of Franklin Street, and he decided to open the building up to multiple tenants after having trouble renting such a large space to a single tenant.

"My initial goal, for the 5,800 square feet downstairs, was to find one tenant to create an anchor store for downtown. That proved a little bit too difficult to do," Brader-Araje said.

Exterior construction kicked into high gear in June, and the

building's new look will feature a light-colored brick exterior with black canopies and two separate arched entranceways for the retailers.

Brader-Araje said he wanted the building's interior to be updated, but stay true to the heritage of Franklin Street.

"The entire inside has been brought to shell; it looks fantastic. There's exposed brick, exposed beams," he said.

Brader-Araje said he is optimistic that the building will be fully rented by sometime this fall.

EVOS

Burger fans now have a new, healthier option for their fast-food fix at EVOS, the purveyor of "feel great fast food" that opened July 11 in the Eastgate Shopping Center near Trader Joe's.

The restaurant features a striking green and white interior and offers a new twist on the classic fast food menu.

Rakesh Sethi, manager of the EVOS, said the restaurant is unique because it offers flavorful fast food without resorting to greasy grills, deep fryers or artificial ingredients.

"We don't use antibiotics, (the food) is healthy because we cook it differently," Sethi said. "EVOS is fast food evolved."

EVOS features several types of burgers, including steak, soy, trout and chicken, as well as wraps, salads, shakes and fries.

EVOS' air-baked chicken strips and fries have 50 percent to 70 percent less fat than other fast food restaurants, and Sethi said the restaurant's milkshakes are completely organic.

"I don't see any other place that sells organic milkshakes."

As of July 17, EVOS had been open for less than a week and had already seen huge crowds. The restaurant is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu)

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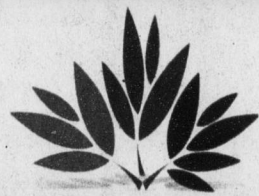


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