

## WILLIAMSON A.M.

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## Neighbors happy to see 1960s print shop go

Third Avenue North offices, condos rise

By HARRIET VAUGHAN

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**FRANKLIN** — Bernie Butler, founder of D9 Development, says he's determined to preserve the history and character of Historic Downtown Franklin.

He's already off to a good start by finishing up the much-talked-about Brownstone town house project. He recently started on his second downtown development, the 131 Third Ave. Building on Third Avenue North.

The \$7.5 million project will house two condos and 10 office

spaces. The building will also include fireplaces, 10-foot-high ceilings, a private courtyard, private showers and baths and an on-site exercise facility.

"I bought a bad and ugly building to build something beautiful," Butler said.

The new building will take the place of an old one-story building that was built in 1960 for S&W Printing. Neighboring business owners describe the 6,000-square-foot building as an eyesore that didn't match the rest of the street's historic



STEVEN S. HARMAN / THE TENNESSEAN  
The 131 Third Ave. Building is under construction in downtown Franklin.

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## Development: Business already placing bids to purchase space at 131 Third Ave.

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buildings, which were built in the 1800s. The new building will be 18,000 square feet.

"I wasn't too sad to see the building go. I'm sure it's going to look nicer than before," said Joe Roberts, manager of Shuff's Music store, which is across the street from the development.

The 131 Third Ave. Building is expected to be complete in August 2009.

When Butler speaks of his new pet project, he uses the words "high end" and "over-the-top elegance." He purchased the property nearly two years ago and went through a multitude of red tape with city agencies requiring he build according to historic design specifications, right down to the type of brick.

That's a process that downtown residents such as Dan and Liz Plattsmier appreciate.

The couple has lived in their downtown home with a view of the site for 11 years.

"I think it'll be a big improve-

ment by building over there. It (the former building) didn't fit in," Dan Plattsmier said.

But not everyone is excited about the development. C.D. Berry, who practices law in the building located on the right side of the construction site, says although he thinks it may ultimately be good for downtown, he's "not a person who likes change."

However, he admits the work so far has been quiet and peaceful.

Construction began three months ago with the building demolition that took three days to complete. Neighboring business people and residents say the demolition went smoothly, without excessive noise or traffic problems.

## Businesses covet area

Butler says businesses are already placing bids to purchase one of the spaces. He says owners of businesses in Cool Springs and Maryland Farms who have dreamed of being in downtown Franklin

started contacting him nearly one year ago.

That's not surprising for Nancy Williams of the Downtown Franklin Association. She says the area is a destination location. Currently, 150 buildings fall within the federally designated, 15-block historic district. She says she's looking forward to their new neighbor.

"Residential space in downtown Franklin has gotten very expensive. This creates another option for those who want to live downtown. It is very healthy for downtown to have more residents. We also need more office space down here," she said.

Starting price for office and condo space at the 131 Third Ave. Building is \$500,000.

Butler says he's looking for serious professionals who appreciate the spirit of downtown and the craftsmanship of the building.

"Two hundred years from now, I want people saying that's a beautiful property," Butler said.

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