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PROJECT

3801 Falls Road

In an effort to attract more of its hallmark “food and fashion” vendors to Baltimore’s Hampden neighborhood, developers have turned their attention to what JBL Real Estate partner Jeff Landsman calls the area’s “red-headed stepchild” – Falls Road. JBL’s redevelopment at 3801 Falls Rd., a new, two-story building that will be leased as restaurant, retail and office space, is set to break ground this month and marks the first of four projects the developer has in the offing between “The Avenue” on 36th Street and the Rotunda and 41st Street shopping center, anchored by SuperFresh, to the north.

“We are working with other property owners and the city to create a new streetscape and façade improvements to really enhance the experience of going down Falls Road,” Landsman says. “This is so important because Hampden, which has become a shopping Mecca, has three distinct shopping areas, and to go between them, you have to go north or south on Falls Road. And from my perspective, Falls Road has been looked at by others as a red-headed stepchild of Hampden – it gets no respect.”

Aside from a relatively new self-storage facility, Landsman says not much has been done to update the façades along this high-traffic commuter route,

which is dominated by fast-food and auto-related chains. “People have just accepted the status quo that Falls Road doesn’t have the commercial opportunities and that drug dealers and hookers have taken over the street, and I believe that that can all be changed,” Landsman says.

The 8,000-square-foot, \$1.5 million redevelopment at 3801 Falls Rd. will replace an underused one-story building previously occupied by the Improved Order of Red Men. Prior to that, the site had housed a gas station between the 1950s and 1970s. Project architects L2M, Inc., designed the new building to mesh with Hampden’s eclectic aesthetic.

“The brickwork and the projecting bay windows on the second floor give it that ‘funky’ feel and max out the space,” says L2M principal and co-founder Jeffrey Mahler. “It gives it a street scale and almost a row-house feel. We wanted to continue that fabric of the smaller neighborhood business



ADDRESS: 3801 Falls Rd., Hampden

DESCRIPTION: Mixed-use two-story building that will be leased as restaurant, retail and office space

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE: 8,000-square-foot

ESTIMATED COST: \$1.5 million

DEVELOPER: JBL Real Estate

ARCHITECT: L2M Inc.

LEASE AGENT: JBL Real Estate Services

PARKING: Eight off-street spaces

GROUNDBREAKING DATE: November 2008

COMPLETION DATE: March 2009

to WATCH

A facelift for Hampden's
'red-headed stepchild'



Image courtesy of L2M, Inc.

instead of building a retail strip or big box store that looks like it dropped from the sky."

Landsman says that JBL hopes to unify the look of Hampden's commercial corridor. "I believe in harmony and I think if you build a distinct, unique building that sticks out like a sore thumb, you have a soloist," he says. "We want to improve upon the lack of existing character on Falls Road – which really is a hodge-podge – because there is an architectural character that enhances the shopping experience. So we are trying to blend in with the character on The Avenue and the Rotunda."

Mahler said that up to eight tenants could potentially occupy 80-foot-wide building. The first floor is designed for retailers or a restaurant, while the second floor could function as office or retail space. The site also includes eight off-street parking spaces.

JBL Real Estate Services, which is leasing the property, is looking to attract regional or national retailers who may have shied away from a Hampden location in the past due to

low traffic on 41st Street or The Avenue, according to Landsman, who says that approximately 20,000 cars travel Falls Road each day.

Landsman expects an enhanced Fall Road will create synergy between Hampden's shopping areas, as well as Clipper Mill, Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse's development to the west of Falls Road. JBL is taking a similar approach with its redevelopments in the Arbutus-Halethorpe area of Baltimore County and between the 3500 and 5500 block of Harford Road. "We are about improving on commercial areas that have underperformed in markets where the residential market has done well; our urban approach is connecting the dots," Landsman says. "When you connect the dots, one and one equals three. With our Falls Road projects, we are enhancing the marketing entrance for business districts in the Hampden area.

"It's exciting for everyone because when people start making positive changes to an area, it's contagious," Landsman says.

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