

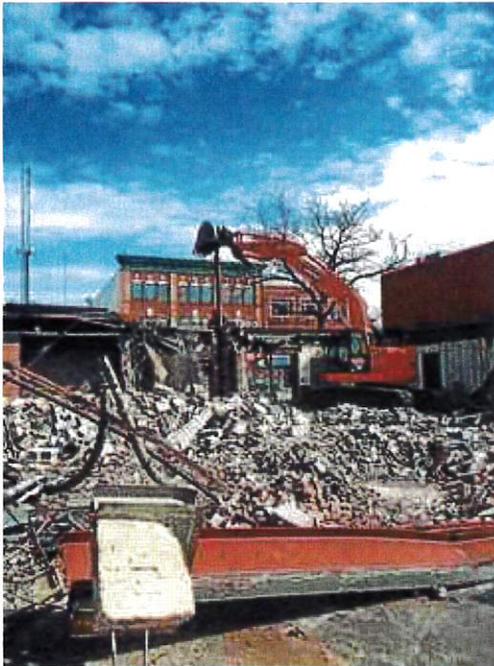
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Royal Oak's downtown getting new restaurant, retail and office building at former Citizens Bank site

Long-vacant Citizens Bank demolished this week on Main Street

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A vacant bank building in the heart of downtown Royal Oak has been torn down to make way for a new development to include a restaurant, retail and office space.

A two-story building with 19,000 square feet of space is planned for the site of the former Citizens Bank building at 218 S. Main Street, which has been vacant for about a decade.

The new building is being developed by Tasso Teftsis, co-owner of Red Smoke Barbecue and Astoria Pastry Shop in Greektown and the Astoria Pastry Shop on Main Street in Royal Oak, said Todd Fenton, Royal Oak's economic development manager.

“The first floor would be dedicated to a restaurant, possibly a Red Smoke Barbecue location, along with three retails spaces,” he said. “The second floor is for 8,000 square feet of office space.”

Construction is expected to take up to 16 months and begin sometime this spring.

Fenton said the project is a \$4 million development being done by Ethos Properties, LLC, of which Teftsis is a member.

“When we met with them earlier we pushed for office space and told them we would like to see more (retail) storefronts,” he said.

A foundation for the new building is designed so that another two floors could be added to the building in the future if there is more demand for office space.

The developer gauged demand for office space in the area before committing to the project, Fenton added.

Passersby at the long-vacant bank building are already taking notice, said Eric Adams of the Adams Group which finished demolishing the old 4,000-square-foot bank this week.

“The amount of buzz from people on the sidewalks has been real positive,” Adams said. “People were saying they were glad to see the old building coming down.”

Adams said half of the materials from the demolition, which took about two weeks, are being recycled.

Royal Oak has been pushing for new office development in its downtown for more than a year.

Other projects in the works include a deal with Etkin Acquisition, LLC in Southfield to develop a 70,000-square-foot office building on a parking lot between 11 Mile and Second Street behind businesses on the west side of Main Street.

Another project is in the works to build an office building between City Hall and the rear of Main Street businesses as part of a proposed development that would raze City Hall and the police station for a park. It is projected to have about 160,000 square feet of space and include a parking deck. City Hall would be relocate to two floors of the building and own its space there. A new police station would be built next to the city's courthouse.

The developers -- Surnow Co. and the Boji Group -- are expected to unveil details of their plan in a public meeting before Royal Oak city commissioners at 6 p.m. April 18.

Real estate developer Burton-Katzman, LLC, is proposing two mixed-use buildings on downtown parking lots on Main Street at Sixth and Seventh streets. The buildings would include residential and retail components and have office space of up to 44,000 square feet.

Royal Oak officials in January signed a 6-month exclusivity agreement with Burton-Katzman to give the developer time to pull a deal together.

Royal Oak needs more office space to increase daytime foot traffic for its downtown businesses, Fenton said.

"We're trying to be more of a 24/7 vibrant downtown," he said. "We want to have more daytime traffic with office workers spending money here and with new developments bringing in new property taxes as well."

URL: <http://www.theoaklandpress.com/general-news/20160311/royal-oaks-downtown-getting-new-restaurant-retail-and-office-building-at-former-citizens-bank-site>

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