

Tower Place moves forward; restaurant is likely

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — Tower Place, a five-story, mixed-use project on College Avenue, is progressing with occupancy expected by July 30.

"Caldwell Construction has already begun some remedial work," said architect Rob Seel during an update to his fellow members of the Clemson Board of Architectural Review this week. Seel and BAR Chairman Russ Hebert III are involved in the project.

Seel said there is one problem that is being looked into.

"Because the original contractor proceeded with construction and did not adhere to building codes, we're having to address seismic concerns," Seel said. "Structural engineers are taking a look at it now. Because it is a load bearing masonry structure, we're running tests to see if it is fully reinforced with a steel wall."

Tower Place ceased construction in 2008. The project ran into financial difficulties when the initial bank lender released funds to the general contractor that were not approved by the developers or a third party inspector. As a result, College Avenue Development had to file a claim against the bank and a court ruling required the lender to return \$835,000 to the investor group late last year, enabling the project to be refinanced.



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Construction of Tower Place — a building on College Avenue — that had been halted since 2009 has resumed. The project is now expected to be completed later this summer.

Seel said a restaurant on the second floor is "still in play" but added that handicapped accessibility is being addressed. There will also be a paved parking lot behind the building, with one parking space per level for residents and two for the fifth floor per an agreement with the tenant. One must consist of a handicapped parking space.

The main floor will consist of two retail spaces — 1,200 and 1,800 square feet — while the second floor will feature one 3,000-square foot restaurant space with a 700-square foot brick terrace coming out toward College Avenue. There will also be 1,200 to 2,900 square feet of condo space.

Hebert said recently that two-thirds of the commercial portion has already been rented. While Bellacino's will not be a part of it, the Clemson developer said a number of other restaurants have expressed interest.