

Reviving a landmark

Owners plan to bring Clemson theater back to life as restaurant and brewery

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — A Seneca-based company is moving forward with plans to turn the former Astro Triple movie theater in Clemson into a new restaurant and brewery — and they're hoping to connect the building's future with its past.

Magnetic South Brewing Company submitted plans for the facility to the Clemson Board of Architectural Review earlier this month, and the board will vote on final approval of the plans at its monthly meeting Tuesday night.

Paul Cain, Tanner Coombs and Adam Willier own the company.

Willier remembers the first time he saw the Astro building, which has been vacant for nearly 11 years.

"I had never been to Clemson before, even though I've been in the Upstate for 10 years," he said. "When we looked at pieces of property, the Astro was the last one I saw, and I thought 'This is it.' This is an icon in the community and it's going to be really cool. We're going to try and keep some of the seats in there and get them upholstered. There were some old projectors in there we're going to get cleaned up.

"I definitely want to keep some of those aspects alive."

Cain said the Astro is 9,400 square feet. The brewery is planned for about 5,500 square feet, with 3,500 square feet for the restaurant. Seating capacity is estimated at 225.



Cain, a member of Oconee County Council, said the business will be family friendly.

"We want it to be a place where you don't have to come here and drink alcohol," Cain said. "You can come here with the kids and get a root beer or ginger ale or snack or a beer or glass of wine. Our goal is to have an environment where you can bring your kids, your parents, a place where retirees, seniors and young professionals and single folks will be.

"We want to make sure everyone is welcome and are trying to embody what the South is to us. It's magnetic, where if you're not from here, when you visit, you feel drawn to return or stay, and if you're from here, you don't want to leave."

Cain said plans call for TVs inside the brewery, including "a couple of large screens," though

none will be as large as a movie screen. The owners said the opportunity for customers to walk to nearby Abernathy Park via the boardwalk behind the facility is another potential plus.

"Our goal is to be as inviting as we can be and as hospitable — not just to college students, but all of Clemson," Cain said.

Cain said keeping the memories of the Astro alive is important.

"It was important to us to keep as many of the elements of the building and movie theater (as possible) alive through our operation," he said. "We'll be adding windows, adding glass, adding garage roll-up doors to make it more open, but we will keep the marquee."

Coombs said "it takes more imagination" when walking inside the Astro building in its current state.

"It's kind of like climbing a mountain — the closer you get, the bigger it looks, and you realize how much work you have cut out for you," Coombs said. "We know it's a huge task, but we feel we're up to it."

Cain said the group was

told it would be about nine months after the project's submission to the Board of Architectural Review on March 12 before a building permit could be issued.

"We hope that timeline can be shortened, but we're working with the

city and will follow their process and what they request us to do to make sure we're complying with their code and their regulations," he said.

goliver@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6687
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RED LOCKS TO TAKE OFF (E-Y-L)
Top Gun Mini-Golf & Arcade
Renovating on March 25, 2019
Ending on March 25, 2019
Completed on March 25, 2019 at 08:18 AM

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	STATUS
03/25/19	08:18 AM	Top Gun Mini-Golf & Arcade	Completed
03/25/19	08:18 AM	Top Gun Mini-Golf & Arcade	Completed



PHOTOS BY GREG OLIVER | THE JOURNAL

Paul Cain, one of the owners of the Magnetic South Brewing Company set to open in the former Astro Triple movie theater, said an extensive renovation will be required since the facility has fallen into disrepair since it closed in 2008. The group plans to renovate the building into a restaurant and brewery while keeping some elements of the old theater — including the marquee and some seats.