

# Brewery presses pause button on Astro project

BY GREG OLIVER  
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CLEMSON — The former Astro theater that has stood vacant on College Avenue in Clemson for a dozen years will stay that way for the foreseeable future, as Magnetic South Brewing Company has put plans to locate in

the building on hold. “We’re not ruling out the possibility, but let’s just say there’s not a current plan at this time,” Oconee County Councilman Paul Cain, one of the three owners of the brewery, told The Journal on Tuesday. Cain said the project

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**Magnetic South Brewing Company co-owner Paul Cain said Tuesday that the brewery has put plans to renovate the former Astro theater in Clemson on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

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“is currently unfeasible.”

“COVID-19 has impacted operations for all sorts of different types of businesses,” Cain said. “Opening a business in this environment that also heavily relies on a market that is, in large part, Clemson University, we’re not sure what the impact is going to be with football season and all those athletic events that bring a lot of people to town.”

The Astro closed its doors in 2008 after 37 years in operation. While several plans have been announced for the facility in the years that followed, none came to fruition for

various reasons. However, Magnetic South Brewing Company, owned by Cain, Tanner Coombs and Adam Willier, had its plans approved by the Clemson Board of Architectural Review last year.

While the former theater consisted of 9,400 square feet, plans for the brewery called for 5,500 square feet, with 3,500 square feet for a restaurant and seating capacity estimated at 225. Cain also said last year that the brewery planned to keep elements of the theater alive, including its marquee.

During the past decade, the building has become one of the most prominent eyesores in the city,

and brewery officials said extensive renovation work was needed inside.

Cain admitted that COVID-19 “has slowed us down.”

“We’re in sort of a delayed decision making, waiting for, hopefully, a vaccine to come out and people to follow what scientists and medical experts are recommending—like wearing masks and social distancing,” he said.

Plans for a brewery and restaurant, designed to attract a large clientele, are also elements Cain feels don’t currently bode well due to the virus.

“We need a lot of people, but unfortunately, we’re a victim of the

pandemic right now,” Cain said. “We’re not anticipating opening there any time soon. We will eventually be establishing our business, but I can’t say when, because we don’t know.”

Cain urges people to take COVID-19 seriously.

“This virus doesn’t exist in and of itself. It is transferred by people, and so if people will be careful and follow precautions, we can stop this thing,” he said. “But until folks take it seriously, it’s going to continue to grow and we’re just going to be waiting on a vaccine.”