

# A new lease on life?



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The former Astro Triple theater in Clemson has been vacant for more than a decade, but city officials approved a plan recently that could put a gym in part of the old building.

## Gym could fill part of former Astro theater building

**BY GREG OLIVER**  
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — After 37 years as a movie theater, the Astro Triple on College Avenue in Clemson has been vacant since closing its doors in 2008.

While several projects have been proposed for the building in the years since, none have come to fruition as the building continues to decay after more than a decade of non-usage.

But the latest set of plans, recently presented to the Clemson Board of Architectural Review, call for a portion of the building to be con-

verted into a studio for The Junkyard, a gym started in Anderson by former Clemson football players Ben Boulware and Marcus Brown. The Junkyard also has a studio in Greenville.

### GYM DETAILS

City planning and codes director Todd Steadman said the gym will cover 3,578 square feet of the building, according to plans submitted by Pavilion Development. No timeline for the project has been given.

Plans for a restaurant and brewery in the building — with the brewery occupying about 5,500 square feet and the restaurant taking up

3,500 — are off. But Steadman said it doesn't mean the building still couldn't be used for that in the future.

"A restaurant could still go in the other space, and there has been some interest expressed," Steadman said.

Steadman said plans approved by the BAR were to salvage whatever possible from the existing Astro building, which is basically the exterior walls, "and go from there."

"No construction documents have been submitted, and there has definitely not been any request to demo

# ASTRO: Other options still a possibility

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the building," Steadman said, addressing rumors the entire building would be demolished.

After its closing, the city made several efforts to purchase the property and establish a movie theater and musical entertainment venue. But those efforts failed in 2010 when city officials said the asking price of \$1.6 million up front was too high.

## EFFORTS MADE TO REVITALIZE

In 2013, a rezoning request to turn the property into a 92-unit mixed-use apartment with 1,800 square feet of commercial space was rejected by the Clemson Planning Commission. The commission felt the lack of parking in the downtown area would place a large strain on the existing businesses already dealing with parking capacity issues, as well as adjoining neighborhoods.

In January 2018, the city



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**After years of disrepair, the former Astro theater building in Clemson could finally see some rejuvenation soon.**

announced a local business owner who obtained a purchase option for the old theater withdrew plans to convert the building into a new downtown Clemson event center.

The following year, Magnetic South Brewing Company submitted plans for a restaurant-brewery with an estimated seating capacity of 225. Those plans have since been withdrawn, as the company selected a location in another Upstate city.

The BAR approved sev-

eral proposed revisions to the Astro theater building, including replacing the plaza out front instead of having parking.

An accessory freestanding parking structure and improvement of the existing parking lot, included in the plans for Phase 1, were also unanimously approved by the board. The freestanding parking structure, proposed for behind the building, would include 16 car stackers that can stack three cars high and

screened with artificial vegetation and cedar slats.

Chairman Kyle McCormick said the hotel next door has no parking, so the stackers "is where they will valet the cars." Whether the parking stacker is built "is going to depend upon what the occupancy of the Astro (the portion not set aside for a gym) becomes."

"If it becomes a restaurant, they may need those spaces, because that's also serving as the valets for the hotel," McCormick said. "It may not even be built, but was just an option depending on what tenant they end up getting in there in the future."

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