



News

Westside's story takes another turn

Law school's addition continues redevelopment drive

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Northwest Charlotte is adding academia to its makeover.

The Charlotte School of Law will move next to Bryant Park at the intersection of Suttle Avenue and Wilkinson Boulevard, continuing a surge in development in the area.

Once associated with blight and heavy industry, Wilkinson has added several high-profile retail locales in the last five years, including a Wal-Mart Supercenter and Starbucks.



Mitchell

"This is great," said Mecklenburg County Commissioner Norman Mitchell, whose district includes Wilkinson Boulevard. "When you get on this side of town, it's very beneficial. This is the new frontier."

The school will remain in its present location at 1211 East Morehead until the new building is completed next year.

The development, named after the city park on West Morehead, is the site of Radiator Specialty Company. A four-story, 102,000-square foot building will be built with classrooms, law library, offices, clinics, moot court, meeting space and student organization areas.

"We've worked very hard to secure a location that will best serve our current and future students," said Eugene Clark, dean of Charlotte School of Law. "The Bryant Park development will provide a state-of-the-art facility with the convenience of free parking. The central location, its close proximity to Uptown Charlotte and easy access to the area's interstate system puts all of Charlotte's amenities in easy reach of our students as well as the community that utilizes our law library."

Bryant Park was developed in 1930 to serve residents in the Wesley Heights neighborhood and was completed during the height of the Great Depression. It possesses local historic significance as one of Charlotte's first small-scale public parks.

The project will be developed by Suttle Avenue LLC, a joint venture by Crosland LLC and siblings Alan, Philip and Samuel Blumenthal, owners of the Radiator Specialty site. Merrifield Partners is the project developer.

Groundbreaking details will be announced later.

The developers' vision for the adjacent property is to create a vibrant area between West Morehead and Wilkinson Boulevard that will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment of the northwest. Judge Shirley Fulton, chairman of the law school's board of advisors and a champion of redevelopment in the Wesley Heights community, said the selection of the Bryant Park location will help make it one of Charlotte's signature neighborhoods.

"I am proud that Charlotte School of Law will serve as an anchor for future development of Charlotte's west side," Fulton said in a statement. "A mission of the school is to serve and reach out to the community, and we're excited to help fulfill that goal as a catalyst for growth in this historic community and as a resource to the surrounding area."

Gwenarda Isley, executive director of the Northwest Corridor Community Development Corporation, said the law school will boost Wilkinson as a destination for professionals in law and academia in addition to solidifying its role as a vital artery to the center city.

"The folks on Wilkinson will be excited because they'll be moving from industrial," as an economic base, she said. "Now you have Charlotte Law School, and you have more dynamics in terms of facilities."

Charlotte Law, as the school is called, will also be a magnet for the city's core as well as a lure for new students.

"For Wilkinson, they have a lot of opportunity," Isley said. "I think it's a good location, plus it's in Charlotte, which will motivate our students to stay home instead of going away."

On the Net:
Charlotte School of Law
www.charlottelaw.org.



Charlotte School of Law

The Charlotte School of Law will move into a four-story, 102,000-square foot facility at the current Radiator Specialty Company site on Wilkinson Boulevard. The development is the latest high-profile facility to move to Wilkinson, once associated with blight and heavy industry.