

With renovations nearing completion, Mayberry Mall seeks new tenants

By John Brasier – Reporter, Triad Business Journal

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In a time when many brick-and-mortar retailers are closing, a "new" indoor shopping mall is close to opening in a small Triad city commonly associated with simpler times.

Renovations on Mayberry Mall in Mount Airy are expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2021, according to Frank Peters of mall owner WRS Inc. Real Estate Investments of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, which has invested more than \$10 million in an extensive renovation covering about 140,000 square feet.

The mall now includes a new Hobby Lobby building that Peters said should be open before the majority of the renovated portions.

The Mayberry Mall project, shown here in October, is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2021.

The mall was almost dead when WRS bought it in February 2019. Faced with a failing roof that had led to major water damage, the new owner gutted most of the mall's interior, replaced the roof and fixed several other problems. A portion of the old mall was torn down to give Hobby Lobby a prime spot with an outside entrance.

"We want people to know this is a brand new mall," said Peters, the leasing director.

Belk, which owns its approximately 50,000 SF store, has remained open. So has Shoe Dept., which moved from a 7,500 SF spot into the former 20,000 JCPenney space. Hallmark, LA Nails and Enmar Accessories also remained open.

Belk, which owns its store at Mayberry Mall, has remained open during the renovations.

The new configuration of the mall has space for 19 stores in addition to Belk. Peters said WRS is also negotiating to put a restaurant on an outparcel. He said potential tenants include local, regional and national retailers and restaurants.

"We've had a lot of interest in space -- that shows demand," Peters said. "I think a lot of people have been waiting to see what it looks like before signing up."

J.G. Coram of Mount Airy is the general contractor on the project.

The mall is named after Mayberry, the fictional setting of The Andy Griffith Show from the 1960s. Andy Griffith grew up in Mount Airy, which has an Andy Griffith Museum that draws tourist traffic from the television show's fans. Though its population is just over 10,000, Mount Airy had a Starbucks open in 2017.

Mayberry Mall is just west of downtown Mount Airy along U.S. 52 North (Andy Griffith Parkway).

WRS bought the mall, built in 1968, from Kohan Retail Investment Group. WRS has retail properties in Tennessee, Georgia and Florida and the Carolinas, including Liberty Square in Thomasville.

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