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Development planned at Fifth, Park

Sat, 04/23/2011 - 9:00am | Don Dodson

CHAMPAIGN -- Kenwood Sullivan hopes the new apartment and commercial building he's planning at Fifth and Park streets helps trigger more development in the area.

Sullivan, the owner of Sullivan Plumbing, plans to build the \$1.2 million, two-story structure at the southwest corner of Fifth and Park cater-corner from Salem Baptist Church and just down the street from Bethel A.M.E. Church.



Photo by: The News-Gazette

An artist's drawing of the proposed development at Fifth and Park streets in Champaign.

Until recently, the lot was occupied by a single-story building that once housed a seed-corn business and was probably best known for a mural that graced its wall.

Sullivan's new building will face Park Street, and its main level will have 4,400 square feet of leasable space for clinical, professional or business use. That level can divided into either two or four offices, he said.

The second story will have four apartments, each 1,100 square feet, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. Each apartment will have a private balcony.

The apartments will be targeted at young professionals who work nearby, Sullivan said.

The location is close to downtown Champaign, the University of Illinois and Provena Covenant and Carle hospitals, allowing residents to walk or ride their bikes to work.

Residents will also have access to a rooftop terrace that includes a trellis for shade. But they won't be visible from street level.

Apartment rents haven't been determined, but Sullivan said they'll probably be in the \$1,500 range.

Construction is expected to begin next week, and Sullivan hopes it will be complete by the end of the year.

The building, designed by Champaign-based Weger and Associates, will have beige and brown tones on the exterior, with masonry on the first floor and siding on the second floor. A parking lot to the south will be screened off with a masonry wall.

The main entrance to the building will be from Park Street, but businesses will have their own entrances on the east and west sides.

Sullivan said he has photos of the mural that was on the site, and he hopes to feature them in the building's lobby. The mural, which had an African-American history theme, was created in 1978 by neighborhood residents under the coordination of Angela Rivers.

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The new building will be just northeast of the Sullivan Plumbing building at 412 E. University Ave., C. That building was built in 1994, when Sullivan moved his business there from Urbana.

The Rev. Larry Lewis, pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, said the church is "completely supportive" of the new building, which will be just east of the church parking lot.

"It adds to the aesthetic beauty of the neighborhood," he said of the project. "We're for it 100 percent."

Bethel has its own plans for development, Lewis said. The church hopes to add onto its building at 401 E. Park St., with the Bridgewater-Sullivan Community Life Center. That's expected to be a three-year project.

The center, which would provide space for community service, would be named for Erma Bridgewater and Kenwood Sullivan, Lewis said.

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