



# CARRBORO'S GROWTH SPURT

WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PIPELINE,  
THE TOWN ONCE KNOWN AS THE "WEST END"  
OF CHAPEL HILL COMES INTO ITS OWN

BY CHANTAL ALLAM  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIANA BROUGH

**W**ANDER DOWN SOUTH GREENSBORO Street, past the century-old mill houses, and it's hard to avoid the frenzy of activity happening on Carrboro's south side.

At the bottom of the hill, where once a dilapidated warehouse stood, a six-acre lot is now cleared. Roadblocks divert traffic as crews busily work to repair underground pipes in preparation for the new **South Green** retail center due to break ground this June.

By far the largest, it's not the only project in the works. Across town, construction is set to begin on the new **Hilton Garden Inn** on Padgett Lane, while **Inter-Faith Council for Social Service's**





WELCOME



**FoodFirst** community kitchen is being considered for West Main Street.

As growth grips the area, some locals may be wondering about what kind of impact this will have on the town that prides itself on its size and quirky character.

But according to **Annette Lafferty**, director of economic and community development for the **Town of Carrboro**, there's no need to worry.

"These projects have been very well vetted and impacts considered," she says.

There's another upshot: much-needed tax revenue. "In theory, it would relieve the tax burden on the residential sector to the commercial sector."

## 'GATEWAY OF CARRBORO'

For years, local investor **Gary Hill** drove past the warehouse at 501 South Greensboro Street, just off the 54 West Bypass, and wondered why it had remained abandoned for so long.

Then it came up for sale, and he saw an opportunity. With his partners at **Woodhill NC, LLC** – a group comprised entirely of local residents – they bought the property and came up with a plan: to build a 45,000-square-foot retail center.

"Obviously this is an investment, but we wanted to get rid of an eyesore and create something the entire community could be proud of," says Gary, who is also a senior associate at **Avison Young**, the company providing leasing services for the development. "We want this to be the gateway of Carrboro."

As part of the deal, Woodhill has agreed to fix the flooding issues that have long plagued the property and surrounding area. They will also build a roundabout at the entrance for traffic



**FROM TOP** The work site of the new South Green retail center; Town of Carrboro's Annette Lafferty; Gary Hill of Woodhill NC, LLC and Avison Young (with wife Angela and twin daughters Georgia and Lucy).



flow and safety.

Another top priority was incorporating Carrboro's character into its design.

With a nod to its textile mill past, Woodhill partner **Runyon Woods** came up with a plan including four-sided brick buildings with window openings reminiscent of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century mills.

The center will also extend the Carrboro bike path and include the largest pervious parking lot in the Triangle area.

"We're going from an abandoned, flooded, decrepit building on a major entranceway into town, to an attractive set of commercial buildings," says Runyon.

Among the first tenants to sign up is chef **Kevin Callaghan**, owner of **Acme Food & Beverage Company**. He's planning to open the new **Atlas Taco Bar**.

For him, it's largely about accessibility.

**CARRBORO FUN FACTS**

- Carrboro was first settled in 1882 around a UNC railroad spur.
- It was originally known as "West End" due to its location west of Chapel Hill.
- The town was first called Venable after a UNC president.
- In 1912, its name was changed to Carrboro in honor of local textile mill owner.
- For the first 50 years after incorporation, it remained a small textile mill town.
- Today, over 20,000 people call Carrboro home.

"You're going to be able to get in and out pretty easily and not be thinking stressfully about parking," he says. "That's the thing that is missing in this town."

## NEIGHBORS ANXIOUSLY AWAIT

Construction on South Green is expected to be complete by the fourth quarter of 2018. For some, it can't come soon enough.

"It will be nice to have more restaurants and businesses within walking distance, and establish a safe footpath and sidewalks to get from south of 54 to downtown Carrboro," says **Berryhill** resident and mother-of-two **Diana Urlaub**.

Others, meanwhile, are holding out to make up their minds.

"We're waiting to see what type of tenants ultimately move into South Green," says **Greg Andeck**, a **Park Slope** resident who lives next door to the development. "It's important that we don't see strip malls in Carrboro."

He admits, however, that he's happy about the improvements to the drainage system. "Our hope is that it is a net positive to the community." **CHM**

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