The Bridge to the past

Music, food and retail venue to pay homage to pawn shop, musicians

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Tulsa World

A local developer and a designer plan to convert a former pawn shop frequented by musicians into an all-in-one venue for music, food and retail.

It is called the The Bridge, an estimated $4 million project envisioned by developer Jay Williams and architect Brian Freese at the former site of The Golden Pawn II, 1319 S. Peoria Ave. Construction on the roughly 18,000-square-foot building is set to begin in the summer of 2021 and be completed by the spring of 2022.

"That whole part of town is representative of a unique part of Tulsa's history," Freese, owner of Freese Architecture, said by phone. "Church Studio is not too far away. Golden Pawn is a well-known haunt for musicians locally and for some who have traveled through and have played in Tulsa before.

"The part of town also has kind of an interesting, gritty, industrial vibe. All of those things kind of came together in a cocktail that the developer, Jay Williams, thought made for a compelling opportunity to do something unique and different that was reflective of Tulsa's history, particularly its music history."

Until its recent closing — owner Kelly Knowlton died in December — Golden Pawn II had operated at the site since the late 1970s, buying, selling and trading used and sometimes rare guitars and sound equipment. Touring performers often would spend hours at the place seeking to add to their collections. Some — among them the Counting Crows, blues rock guitarist Joe Bonamassa and late Tractors' guitarist Steve Ripley — even autographed walls and beams of the facility.

Williams bought the property in early 2020 and planned to raze the building to construct housing. But after learning of its history, he pivoted and sought to pay appropriate homage.

Williams plans to preserve most of the original steel structure, including areas where artists left their signatures, Freese said.

"Some of the shapes and forms are based on simple, older industrial buildings, with the raised, clear-story spine that allows natural light in and natural ventilation out," he said. "The materials are very elemental, corrugated metal siding, metal windows, very simple shaped, deep canopies in the right places to provide coverage and solar shading.

"In general, we were trying to capture that essence, that feeling of older, industrial buildings that have never lost their charm."

The design will have east-west sections, with the longer east portion featuring a pitched roof and clear-story spine. The building also will include a themed restaurant, music-bar venue, retail space and a third-floor rooftop bar.

Located in a tax-advantaged Opportunity Zone, The Bridge alludes to the link it hopes to provide between the Cherry Street and Pearl District neighborhoods.

"Brian designed this building as a one-stop, date-night destination," Williams said in a statement. "It's a place where people can have dinner, take in some music and finish the night with a cocktail over-looking the Tulsa skyline, all with one Uber ride."

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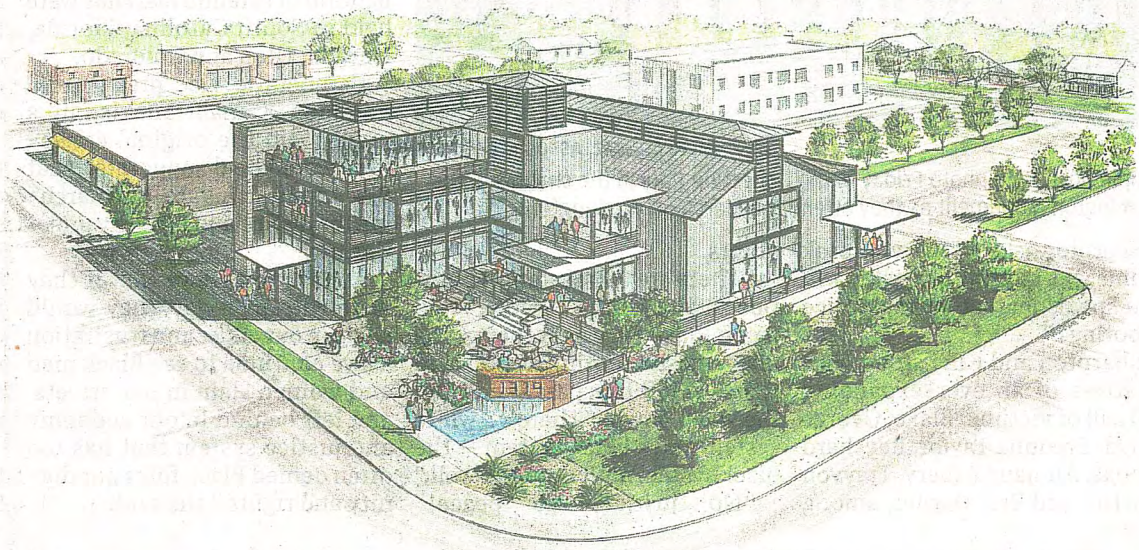

THE BRIDGE
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

FREESE ARCHITECTURE

COURTESY

The Bridge, a proposed mixed-used development, will sit at the former Golden Pawn II site at 1319 S. Peoria Ave.

COURTESY

The former Golden Pawn II, 1319 S. Peoria Ave., is scheduled to be transformed into a mixed-use development that reflects its musical legacy.

Market watch

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Yen/dollar	105.43	▼ -1.19
Gold	1,974.90	▲ +42.30