



January 2, 2012

Former Wayside site aids East Market Street

Developers rework old shelter complex

By Sheldon S. Shafer

Nina Moseley, chief operating officer for Wayside Christian Mission, is willing to say aloud that businesses near its former shelter on East Market Street didn't want homeless men walking up and down the street.

"They feared it would deter their customers," she said

Nor is anyone shy about proclaiming the turnaround since a development group bought the 10-building complex in the 800 block of East Market for \$5 million in 2008.

The group — including filmmaker and businessman Gill Holland; his wife, Brown-Forman heiress Augusta Brown Holland; and developer Tim Peters — spent an additional \$1 million on upgrades. Today, 25 tenants occupy most of the 75,000 square feet of space. They include a glass studio, galleries, marketing and engineering firms, design companies, a learning center, a photo shop, a film society, a furniture store and several restaurants. Some of the smaller buildings have been sold to the new occupants or are for sale.

East Market "has become a destination place," said George Morris, co-owner of Toast on Market, a breakfast-brunch business that earlier this month moved from 736 E. Market, where it opened in 2006, to larger quarters at 620 E. Market. Although Toast is not a tenant in the former Wayside property, the renovation of those tracts "has brought in a lot of new business ... and a lot of new places for people to go. It has enlivened the street," Morris said.

Cindy Brown Kinloch, executive director of the Phoenix Hill Neighborhood Association, said Holland's group "has been strategic" in developing what's now being called the NuLu neighborhood. Though there were improvements before the group came along, she said, its work "kicked it up a notch."

Billy Hertz, one of a handful of artists who get credit for giving the district some initial impetus as early as the 1970s, agreed.

Hertz opened a studio in the 600 block of East Market in the late 1970s and a gallery there in 1991.

"We started to get people coming" to East Market in the 1980s, said Hertz, who has since moved his business to Third Street. "Nearly everything was empty."

But renovation of the Wayside property "has made the area so much better," he said, adding that before that, the shelter was "a thorn in the side of some people, because of the parade of winos in the morning leaving the mission and in the afternoon heading toward the mission."

\$10 million investment

Before the Wayside purchase, the Hollands bought what is now the environmentally friendly Green Building on Market Street in 2006. They later bought several other nearby properties, in some cases in partnerships that included actor William Mapother, Peters and businesswoman Lois Mateus. At least

one tract, part of the old Disney Tire property near Jefferson Street, awaits a tenant, Holland said.

He estimates his group's total investment in the NuLu neighborhood, which he sees stretching from Preston Street east to the Home of the Innocents, at \$10 million.

Over the years, the area has been gradually upgraded, boosted especially when the Home of the Innocents bought and redeveloped the old Bourbon Stock Yards in the late 1990s.

Joe Ley has operated his well-known antique business in the 600 block of East Market for 34 years. He recalled the early days as "pretty rough. We had a lot of empty buildings and a lot of property that wasn't taken care of. There were a lot of absentee landlords."

Ley acknowledged that he was among the first to campaign to get Wayside to move, noting that the center generated "a tremendous amount of transient traffic."

Ley said the renovation of the Wayside property has made the neighborhood "tremendously better. People are no longer reluctant to wander around."

Muth's Candy Store has operated on Market, near Ley Antiques, since 1962 and for 40 years before that at another nearby Market Street location. Martha Voories, whose family owns the business, said she grew up in the store and has seen major changes since Wayside was purchased.

The recent renovation of the Wayside property "has made people feel safe, comfortable as they walk around," Voories said. "We have recently picked up a lot of tourism. There is so much to do, with shops and the arts. Things have really changed a lot."

The Louisville Downtown Development Corp., Mayor Greg Fischer's lead agency on downtown projects, is working with neighborhood leaders on streetscape improvements in the East Market corridor. The changes are designed to make the neighborhood more walkable, Holland said. One proposal is to change Campbell and Shelby streets from one-way to two-way.

Wayside plan blocked

Wayside bought its Market Street property in the early 1970s. But a plan to expand on Market met opposition from district business leaders as early as 2000.

They filed a historic-preservation lawsuit to sidetrack the plans, and the Holland group agreed to buy the complex.

That \$5 million was key in the mission's purchase of the old Holiday Inn at Second Street and Broadway for about \$7 million, said Moseley, adding that the move to Broadway has provided Wayside with more space for classes, job training and programs. The old hotel also has provided a new source of revenue by renting rooms overnight. And, Moseley said, Wayside was able to sign deals with nearby Jefferson Community and Technical College on cooperative programs.

Brown Kinloch, the Phoenix Hill association executive director, said that, while Wayside tried to be a good neighbor on East Market, many area leaders "really wanted them out of there."

But she noted that several churches with outreach missions remain in the general Phoenix Hill area, including Wayside's current men's shelter at 432 E. Jefferson St. Those missions "aren't going anywhere," she said, adding that the association "is proud of the neighborhood's diversity, in terms of race, socioeconomic status and its mix of businesses and residents. We have social service agencies and homeless folks, and we've got wheelchairs all over the place.

"That is why we love it."

Brown Kinloch said the development of more housing would complement the influx of businesses and other activity. She noted there are plans to further develop housing at the Liberty Green project at the old Clarksdale public-housing complex site between NuLu and downtown.

William Marzian owns two buildings on East Market, one in the 700 block he bought six years ago and the other in the 800 block purchased eight years ago. He said about \$500,000 was spent on their renovation.

Marzian said the district was already headed in the right direction when the Holland group “saved 10 or 12 buildings that might have ended up being torn down. That really would have harmed the character of the neighborhood. Those buildings distinguish the neighborhood from the suburbs. (Holland’s group) has brought in an interesting mix — the right kind — of businesses. They fit right in.”

In five to 10 years, Holland said, he sees “more of the same” for NuLu, with a continuing influx of mostly locally grown businesses, more places to eat and shop, development of loft apartments, and perhaps a boutique hotel or two.
