







ORANGE COUNTY

Raleigh student housing provider buys old Breadmen's site in downtown Chapel Hill

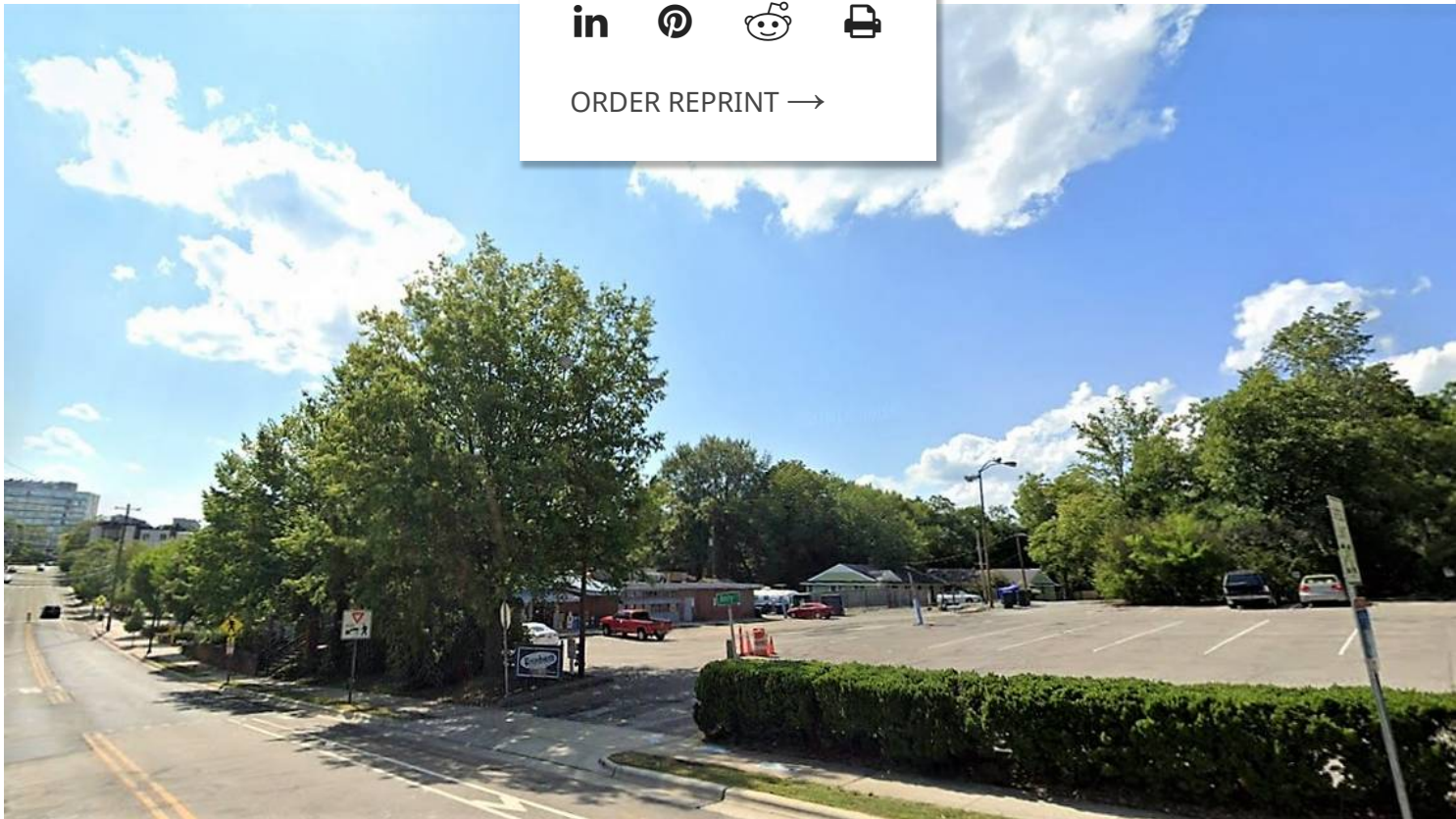
BY TAMMY GRUBB

FEBRUARY 18, 2021 04:09 PM



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The former Breadman's restaurant site on West Rosemary Street in Chapel Hill was sold Feb. 5, 2020, to a Florida developer. *GOOGLE IMAGES CONTRIBUTED*



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CHAPEL HILL

Five lots in downtown Chapel Hill were sold last week to a Raleigh apartment developer after the owners spent years trying to build a mixed-use project.

Amity Station LLC, the previous owner, had a project that was expected to be approved under the current zoning for 318-326 W. Rosemary St.

Instead, developer Larry Short and former Breadmen's owners Roy and Bill Piscitello, who were partners in the project, sold most of the land.

TGAP The Warehouse at Chapel Hill II Owner LLC bought the nearly 1.3-acre site for \$7.15 million Feb. 5, according to county records. Amity Station is keeping 0.86 acres behind the Breadmen's site, which includes several apartments.

TGAP is part of [The Preiss Co.](#), based in Raleigh, which operates student housing across the nation. Among its Triangle properties is The Warehouse apartments, located beside the former Breadmen's site and purchased in 2019.

A phone message left for company officials was not returned.

NORTHSIDE NEGOTIATIONS, AMITY STATION

The West Rosemary corridor lies between busy Franklin Street and Chapel Hill's Northside neighborhood, which has fought to protect its character from growing student rentals. It is subject to the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District, which limits what can be built.

Short started planning for Amity Station in 2015, at first proposing a 10-story apartment building with ground-floor commercial space, and then reducing the height but increasing the number of apartments in successive plans.

The town, Short and Northside neighbors talked for three years about how to ease concerns and benefit the community with the project, including a tenant age restriction to weed out undergraduate students and low-cost business space. The talks ended in 2019 with affordable housing, startup and business space, and a \$1 million donation to the Northside Neighborhood Initiative on the table.

Breadmen's was sold to longtime employees, who moved the restaurant to the Elliott Square shopping center on South Elliott Road. The building was demolished, and Short [submitted plans for a by-right proposal last year](#) that met all the zoning requirements.

The plan for each lot called for a roughly four-story, 19,999-square-foot building, just under the 20,000 square feet that would trigger a more rigorous review process. The five buildings were separated by a paper-thin gap.

The [Planning Commission, which approves projects meeting the site zoning, rejected the plan](#), with one member calling it "procedural trickery." The Board of Adjustment overturned that decision, allowing the project to proceed.

The town's planning staff is still reviewing the [approved construction plans](#), assistant planning director Judy Johnson said Wednesday.

He doesn't know what the new owners plan to do, Short said when reached by phone Wednesday. He declined further comment. Roy Piscitello referred questions to Short but said "it just comes down to risk at some point."

"The only thing I'll say is the property really didn't have any value until we did what we did," and got the by-right project approved, Piscitello said.

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An architect’s rendering looks at the new Amity Station project from the east. The project -- five three-story buildings atop ground-level parking beside The Warehouse Apartments -- would replace the former Breadmen’s restaurant on West Rosemary Street. *COULTER JEWELL THAMES COURTESY OF*

TAMMY GRUBB





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Tammy Grubb has written about Orange County’s politics, people and government since 2010. She is a UNC-Chapel Hill alumna and has lived and worked in the Triangle for over 25 years.

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