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March/April 2013



The North Hills Expansion

John Kane Has Big Plans for Retail in Raleigh

By Julie Schaeffer

The site along the I-440 beltline adjacent to Six Forks Road in Raleigh, North Carolina, once housed a



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John Kane, Kane Realty

small, decaying shopping mall. That was until John Kane, CEO of Kane Realty Corporation, got a hold of the property. Today, it’s a glowing example of sustainable redevelopment, home to a mixed-use community that attracts 8.4 million visitors a year—and is still growing. Kane shares the ins and outs of the North Hills project with *gb&d*.

gb&d: Is sustainability a part of everything you do?

John Kane: It’s one of many things we offer, and it’s a big part of the North Hills Raleigh Mall project, where we’ve been recycling for the past 12 years. We bought it and the adjacent properties and have been renewing the entire area piece by piece.

gb&d: It’s a large project. How big exactly?

Kane: It’s evolving. We have 1 million square feet of retail space, 500,000 square feet of office space, one full-service hotel built and another under construction, and 900 residential units with another 400 under construction. And there’s a lot more to come. We’ve done 10 projects so far within the acreage and will probably do another 20 before we’re finished.

The Green Report: North Hills Expansion

Pedestrian friendly The walkable design of the North Hills area benefits both residents and hotel guests, who can walk to work or shops and restaurants.

Recycling Developer John Kane says the property recycles anything that can be recycled, and the program has been in place for 12 years.

Solar panels Rooftop solar arrays on various buildings generate clean, renewable energy.

Charging stations Three stations offer owners of electric vehicles the opportunity to charge their cars.

LEED Gold The 17-story Captrust Office and Retail Building was completed two years ago and

achieved LEED's second-highest ranking.

gb&d: Such a development isn't cheap. What's the total cost of the North Hills Expansion?

Kane: It's hard to say, but by the time we're finished, it could be as much as \$2 billion.

gb&d: How did this project come to you?

Kane: I live about a mile from the site, and I saw that it was great piece of real estate that just needed a new direction. I've been doing development for a long time, and the opportunity to recycle an old mall that was in a really good location fit my skills and interests naturally.

gb&d: Was it difficult to find the funding?

Kane: We bought the land in pieces over a five-year period. We have different sources of backing—some traditional bank financing, some institutional financing, some friends and family.

gb&d: Tell me about the major sustainable features.

Kane: It's pedestrian friendly. People live in apartments and walk to work; they stay in hotels and walk to business and leisure activities. We recycle whatever we can; we have solar panels on a lot of roofs; and there are three charging stations for electric cars. We're conscious of how the things we do affect the environment and, in some cases, have backed it with formal accreditation. We completed a 17-story office building two years ago that's LEED Gold.

gb&d: What response have you received from retailers and visitors regarding the sustainable elements?

Kane: I think for some people sustainability is important. REI is a tenant of ours, and obviously, they're very into sustainability. For other people, it's less important. But people definitely appreciate the fact that we recycled this whole area, and they like the walkability. But we have the fiduciary responsibility to try to do the right thing by the environment.

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