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## Coffee, snacks ahead for canal walkers

City officials praise proposal to renovate church to house shops, restaurant and pub.

**By Matthew Tully**  
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October 22, 2003

Those going for a healthy walk on the Downtown Canal soon will have new options at the end of their stroll -- a cool cup of custard and, possibly, a burger and a beer.

A local developer Tuesday unveiled plans to renovate a dilapidated city-owned former church on the north end of the canal and fill it with a Ritter's Frozen Custard, as well as a coffee shop and a restaurant and pub.

The development, which provides the most significant retail options to date along the canal, could be ready for business in about a year.

It will "greatly enhance the already popular Downtown Canal walk," Mayor Bart Peterson said.

Buggs Development Group will pay the city \$1 for the 2 1/2-story Buggs Temple, which was built in 1899 but has not been used since the city bought it 10 years ago.

In return for the bargain sale price, the developers will spend \$1.3 million renovating the structure and preparing it for business.

City spokeswoman Angie Dye called the church "a big, old brick building that's boarded up." But she said city officials are excited that the developers will "preserve the historic nature" of the building's exterior.

Along with Ritter's, developer John Bales said the owners of Moe & Johnny's restaurant and bar have signed on to the project. Bales said he could not identify the coffee-store chain that likely will move in.

Regardless, Bales said the location is ideal.

He pointed to about 9,000 nearby workers and many canal-area residents.

"We have a captive audience," he said. "It was as close to a no-brainer from a retail standpoint as you'll ever find."

Call Star reporter Matthew Tully at 1-317-444-2751.

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