

From basement to bar

By JACK HAGEL, Staff Writer

And the award for the convenient deal of the year goes to ... Andrew Leager.

Leager, whose company, Special Projects, does architectural woodwork for courthouses, libraries and banks, and a few interior renovations for bars and restaurants, is leasing a 13,500-square-foot building at the southeast corner of Boylan Avenue and Hargett Street in Raleigh.

Leager plans to upfit the space himself and turn part of it into Sidetrack Brewpub.

It's convenient because Leager's shop is in the basement.

By fixing it up himself, he estimates he'll save about \$50,000.

And once the space is built out -- likely by next summer -- it's Miller time ... Or is it?

Leager's hobby is making homebrew, meaning it's time for Andrew's Ales, some North Carolina wines and bar food.

Leager plans to convert a half-dozen parking spots into a garden area that would overlook the city's warehouse district, which is emerging as an entertainment destination.

It's another example of projects feeding off the success of the warehouse district and Glenwood South, another drink, dine, and dance sector. Some other signs of nearby bustle:

* Raleigh developer John Bruckel wants to break ground early next year on 94 condominiums across Boylan Avenue from Leager's site.

* The Boulevard Co. of Charlotte, which specializes in infill projects, paid about \$1.4 million in July for the former Tao Auto site on Hillsborough Street at Boylan Avenue and the adjacent American Cancer Society offices for a mixed-use project.

The price was about one-third above the tax value. Boulevard doesn't have concrete plans for the 0.67-of-an-acre site, but retail, office and residential are possible.

The American Cancer Society, which owned both buildings, plans to move to 10,000 square feet at the American Institute of Healthcare & Fitness, a \$30 million, 180,000-square-foot wellness center on about 16 acres near Lead Mine Road in North Raleigh, says Guy Harvey, the Staubach Co. broker

who represented the society.

That project is to be complete a year from now.

* Cowell Properties of Raleigh this month paid Langford & Morris Group of Raleigh \$2.05 million for a 15,000-square-foot building at 615 Hillsborough, two doors down from the Tao site.

The price was slightly more than double what the building sold for five years ago, and about five times what it sold for in 1994.

Tips? deals? Contact Jack Hagel at 829-8917 or jack.hagel@newsobserver.com.

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