THE NEWS&OBSERVER

Midtown Raleigh News

Section M

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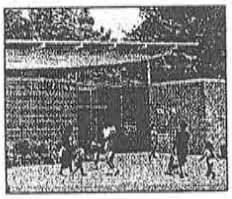
PEOPLE&PLACES



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Kane's North Hills hot spot growing

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS SEWARD

With a hotel and his North Hills East underway, the developer looks next door for his next move.

By David Bracken
STAFF WRITER

Ask developer John Kane about the success of North Hills, and he'll likely mention the crowds that have shown up every Thursday at his landmark shopping, dining and entertainment complex to listen to live outdoor music.

For Kane, a Raleigh developer who looks to old Europe for inspiration, those crowds are an indication that he has built a gathering place that fosters commerce and community.

"It is the most rewarding thing I've ever done," Kane said recently at his second-story office overlooking the North Hills traffic circle. "I get thanked by people a lot. Developers are not used to that kind of reception."

North Hills' praises have been sung so frequently and effusively that it's easy to forget that the project wasn't always universally embraced.

Before Kane Realty formally submitted plans to redevelop the wilting North Hills Mall on the west side of Raleigh's Six Forks Road at the Beltline, neighbors organized and hired an attorney to monitor the project.

The North Hills Neighborhood Association's concerns were mainly about securing a buffer between nearby homes and Kane's development, said Bert Rosefield, who was the association's president when Kane proposed his project. Although Rosefield would like to have seen more old trees retained and less density created, he counts himself a North Hills fan.

Rosefield is waiting to see what rises in North Hills East, where Kane is turning 50 acres east of Six Forks Road into a mix of shops, offices, hotel rooms and houses.

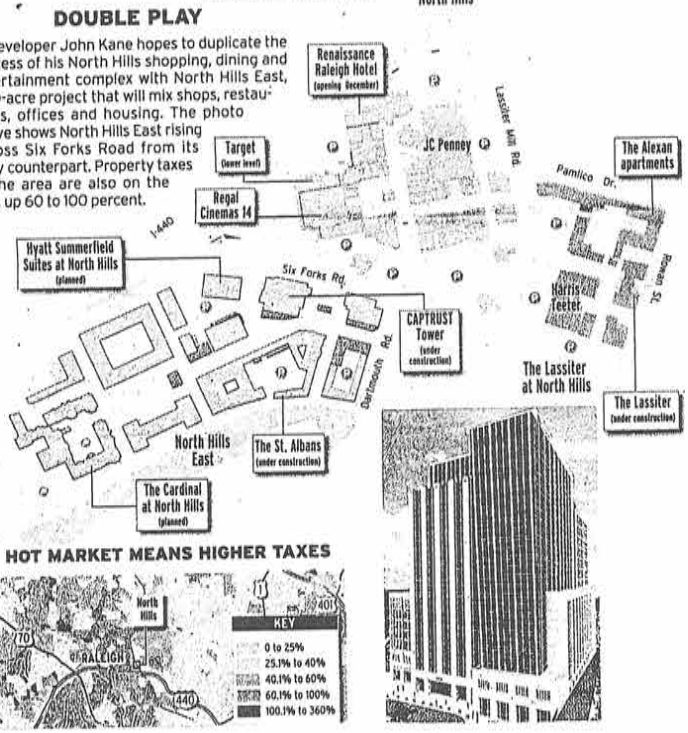
"I'm just interested to watch it develop," Rosefield said.

Having found a successful formula with North Hills, Kane said North Hills East will build on popular features. That means more open space like The Commons, the artificial grass lawn in front of Starbucks Coffee where children play and

SEE NORTH HILLS, PAGE 4M

DOUBLE PLAY

Developer John Kane hopes to duplicate the success of his North Hills shopping, dining and entertainment complex with North Hills East, a 50-acre project that will mix shops, restaurants, offices and housing. The photo above shows North Hills East rising across Six Forks Road from its busy counterpart. Property taxes in the area are also on the rise, up 60 to 100 percent.



HOT MARKET MEANS HIGHER TAXES

NORTH HILLS

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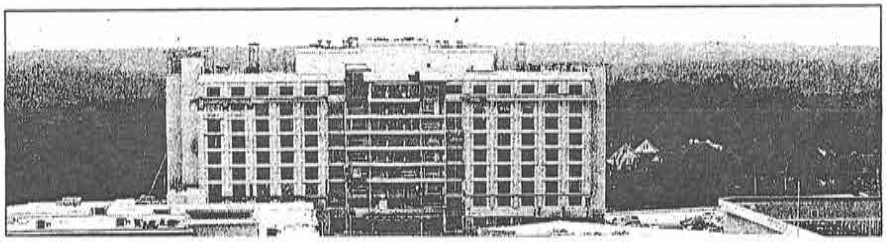
people congregate to socialize and listen to local bands.

"People just thrive on that," Kane said.

Doug Lester, 65, who lives in a Carnegie Park condominium behind nearby Crabtree Valley Mall, has become a regular at North Hills' concerts this summer.

Lester said the appeal