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High-profile project is out of hibernation

Second structure is being built at Galleria-area BLVD Place

By Nancy Sarnoff

Construction has restarted at BLVD Place, three years after the first building opened on the 21-acre parcel along Post Oak Boulevard just down the street from the Galleria.

“The property has weathered a very difficult economic time frame,” said John Breeding, president of the Uptown District, who called the project “almost a symbol of Houston’s economy.”

Work is under way on a second building at the site that will include the long-awaited Whole Foods Market. The store now is expected to open in the summer of 2014, developer Ed Wulfe said.

Including the urban-style grocer, the new building will have a total of 211,000 square feet of offices, restaurant and shop space.

Frost Bank has just signed a lease to expand its Houston presence with 53,000 square feet in the building, giving it a prominent spot at the corner of southwest corner of Post Oak Boulevard and San Felipe.



Whole Foods Market and Frost Bank will be prominent occupants of the second building in the BLVD Place project.



Work proceeds Friday on BLVD Place. “We’re changing the face of Post Oak,” developer Ed Wulfe says.



A burst of development is evident along Post Oak Boulevard. BLVD Place's next phase was on hold during the economic downturn.

BLVD Place “has a lot of cool things about it,” said David LePori, region president for Frost. “We’re excited about the prospect of being there.”

The first BLVD Place building, completed in 2009, contains 70,000 square feet in four stories. Several restaurants and high-end shops, including RDG+Bar Annie, Philippe Restaurant and Hermes, lease space there.

Along with other real estate developments announced before the recession, BLVD Place sat on hold during the economic downturn.

The resumption of construction is part of a new wave of development along Post Oak Boulevard and in the area overall.

Two office buildings are under construction, as are several luxury apartment developments.

“We’re changing the face of Post Oak,” said Wulfe, chairman of Wulfe & Co., managing partner of BLVD Place. “It will be a much more urban center, densely populated with retail, office and residential.”

When it’s completed, BLVD Place is expected to include several hundred thousand square feet of restaurants, shops and offices, as well as a corporate headquarters campus, possibly three residential towers and a hotel.

Earlier this year, Apache Corp., acquired nearly a third of the acreage.

W.S. Bellows Construction Corp. is building the second retail and office structure.

A hole is being dug for what will be underground parking for Whole Foods. Like its flagship Austin store, the grocer will have a moving sidewalk from the below-ground parking into the store.

Others involved in BLVD Place are the Stockbridge Capital Group of San Francisco as the equity investment adviser, and the Los Angeles office of AECOM, which designed the building.

CBRE and SRS Realty were involved in the Frost lease negotiations. Colvill Properties was also involved.