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Retail-restaurant building planned for vacant parcel near convention center

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A Korean investor plans to develop a retail and restaurant building with a rooftop area on a vacant parcel near the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu, the broker handling leasing for the project confirmed to Pacific Business News.

About a year ago, Kapiolani 1700 LLC, headed by Korean investors, purchased the 14,403-square-foot contiguous parcels at 1700 and 1688 Kapiolani Blvd. The parcels are currently being used as a parking lot near 24 Hour Fitness and were sold by San Diego-based Cushman Properties LP for nearly \$5 million.

Timothy Lee of Honolulu-based Avalon Commercial, who represented the undisclosed buyer in the deal, told PBN that Kapiolani 1700 is currently in permit review for a 7,223-square-foot single-story retail and restaurant building for that property.

“We are in discussions with a few food and beverage operators to occupy a large space in the building,” he said. “The project is located adjacent to the Pan Am Building and directly across from the planned 234-unit Manaolana Partners LLC's hotel and condominium project on the corner of Kapiolani Boulevard and Atkinson Street, as well as the planned 485-unit Kapiolani Residence.”

Avalon Commercial, a subsidiary of Hawaii developer Christine Camp's Avalon Group, is handling leasing for the planned retail and restaurant building project.

The parcels, which currently have a height limit of 350 feet, could have been developed into a residential project.

Lee also handled another restaurant building deal nearby. San Diego-based Trinion Logistics Inc. purchased the vacant contiguous parcels at 1731 and 1739 Kalakaua Ave. near the Hawaii Convention Center. It has also leased the building on those parcels, which is currently under construction, to a Japanese farm-to-table restaurant and a sushi restaurant.

The 1700 Kapiolani Blvd. property once had a blue-and-white building on it.



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A rendering of a retail and restaurant building planned for a vacant parcel near the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu.

The ground level of the four-floor building was once home to Blue Tropix nightclub for about five years before the 18-and-over hot spot closed its doors in 2005.

The venue, which was run by brothers Darren and Steve Tsuchiya, is probably most remembered as “the monkey bar” for its exhibition of live spider monkeys enclosed behind a main bar.

In January 2006, a sushi bar and lounge opened in the former Blue Tropix space. It was briefly called Koi Sushi Bar and Sake Lounge before the owners changed its name a few months later to Osake Sushi Bar and Lounge.

While not reflected in its name, the venue also served as a nightclub.

Meanwhile, the Osake nightclub didn’t last long after becoming a crime scene on Feb. 10, 2007.

An off-duty deputy sheriff was shot and killed that morning when he tried to subdue a masked armed robber at the lounge. He had been working part time at the lounge as a bartender’s assistant.

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