

Main Street property is awarded spring Pioneer Salute

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Contributing Writer

The Pride in Community Committee, a part of the Mercer Advancement and Beautification Council, presents the Pioneer Salute to community members and organizations that show pride in and promote the character of Harrodsburg and Mercer County by improving the aesthetics of their property through restoration efforts and landscape improvements.

When a property undergoes a transformation and brightens a corner on South Main Street, it garners attention. Thus, the property at 200 S. Main Street on the Southwest corner of Main and Poplar is the recipient of a Pioneer Salute. Purchased in October of 2020 by OCP Properties, LLC, the business of Daarik Gray and Adam Johnson, this is the first commercial property they have renovated.

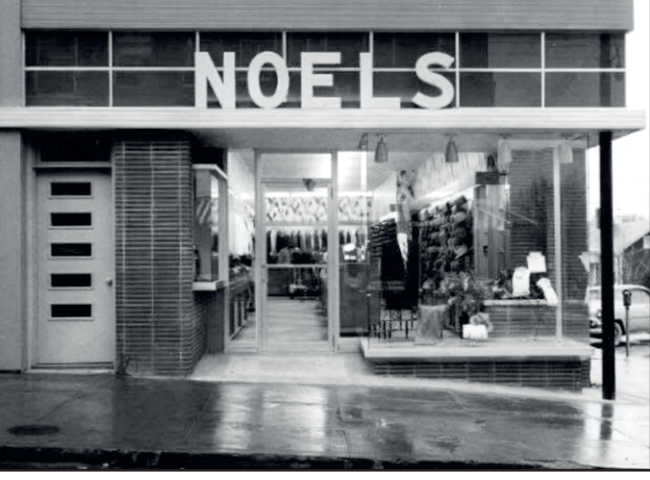
Although not new to the process, having bought, rehabbed and sold residential properties, they decided to purchase a retail property, not to flip, but as an investment. It is an investment in the city they live in and take pride in.

In an effort to determine when the building was built, a deed search was initiated. This building and property have had many owners and tenants over the years, with the most recent being the Guthrie Law Office, from whom Gray and Adams purchased. Prior to that, Jimmy Sexton of Sexton Real Estate purchased the building from Frank Bradshaw in 1976. He operated his business there, having originally rented a portion from the previous owner, Frank Bradshaw. Bradshaw, who had an insurance business, purchased the property in 1954. The deed to the property was held by the heirs of C. D. Tucker, who purchased the “property with building” in 1913 from F.P. James. What was interesting in researching deeds is that C.D. Tucker, who was a widower in 1911, sold the property to F.P. James, but purchased it back in 1913. It remained in the family of C.D. Tucker for 41 years, until purchased by Bradshaw. Lodge #18 (Oddfellows), by W.W. Emsinger (Noble Grand, its Chief Officer), sold the property to C.D. Tucker for \$4,500 in 1906. Deed research became a bit



Photo Submitted

The property above, located at 200 S. Main Street, owned by Daarik Gray and Adam Johnson, is this month’s Pioneer Salute. Below is what the building looked like from the 1940s through the 1960s.



“muddy” prior to that, but it appears the Oddfellows purchased the property from Mrs. D.L. Curry, who had purchased it from Ranal Litsey & Louise Litsey, husband and wife, in 1889.

Tracking back and seeing names that are noted on streets and roads in town and in Mercer County, such as Bradshaw, Curry, James, Litsey and Sexton and seeing these names on deeds from 1869 on, it is apparent that those families had some influence in the county. However, it was very difficult to determine from the deeds when the current building was constructed; it most likely dates to the late 1800s. The architecture suggests that

time frame, with the dentil course below the roofline, the conical detailing of brickwork, the rosettes within the brick circles, and the curved arches over the second-story windows. According to *The History of Harrodsburg and The Great Settlement Area of Kentucky 1774-1900* by George M. Chinn, the 1880s were an “Era of Evolution” for Main Street. The new look was the result of several disastrous fires. In 1883 alone, 35 buildings were burned or partially wrecked by fire. The BIG FIRE of 1890 was the last major blaze of the century, and by 1893, a water system had been installed.

The Sanborn Map Compa-

ny, which was prominent from the mid 19th century through the mid 20th century, was created primarily to help insurance companies assess fire risks. The maps documented buildings in detail, including their dimensions and proximity to water sources. It was first determined by the A. G. Beers Map and Co. of 1876 and the Sanborn Maps of 1886 – 1914 that there has been a building on that corner. The businesses were also listed on the maps, except on the Beers map, which showed no occupancy. Starting in 1886 according to the Sanborn Maps the businesses were the following: 1st floor Harness Shop, and side Poplar Street entry, Express Office (used for shipping and handling parcels and mail to transport goods quickly); 1891 - 1st floor confectioner (maker of sweets), 2nd floor- dentist; 1896 - 1st floor jeweler and office, Poplar Street entry, Express Office, 2nd floor-milliner and dentist; 1901 - 1st floor jeweler and office, Poplar Street entry, Express Office, 2nd floor nothing; 1908 – 1st floor cobbler and bank, Poplar Street entry, Telephone Office; 1914 - 1st Clothing Store. As one can see, with the Sanborn Maps as historical documents, the past can be traced in detail to help understand what was there and how Main Street has been preserved.

The men’s clothing store Noels, founded by Charlie Noel Sr., occupied the building from the 1940s through the 1960s. It was possibly during the mid 50s that there was a surge in modernizing the downtown storefronts and this

building is no exception. The first floor was dramatically transformed into mid-century modern by opening up the front windows to showcase the merchandise within, and a narrow Roman brick was added, accentuating the lower facade. The canopy over the entry, showcasing the name, is in front of the large glass tiles, which were popular at the time. Even the door to the upstairs space was changed to reflect that period with its narrow horizontal windows.

By the time Gray and Johnson purchased the property, it was rather a sad-looking structure. Their vision was to enhance the property and make it appealing for a business that would flourish and add value to the community and be a draw for Main Street. As Gray stated, it was not purchased to get rich, but to enrich the community and be affordable to lease for someone to have for a business. It is a long-term investment, and Main Street is a desirable location. With that goal in mind, the rehabbing process began. The interior with electric updates, plumbing, painting, and HVAC began, and improvements were all done on the first floor. Also, the roof has undergone extensive repairs, and this is an ongoing process for the flat roofs of many of the Main Street properties. Their first tenant for the downstairs front was January 2021 and the Haus of Reverie is still occupying that space. Therapeutic massage is provided by two therapists and there is also a gift shop in front selling products that

are unique to their clientele and to the public when open for events. The building, as noted in earlier descriptions, has a side entrance on West Poplar, which is now separate from the front entrance. One business at 104 West Poplar is Weld and Shine. They sell permanent jewelry, cuff bracelets and do personalization/engraving. The other business at 106 West Poplar is Soul Speak tattoo and art. The upstairs was apartments, and one renter had lived there for 35 years but recently moved to be with family. It was decided that, to fix and maintain the facilities upstairs on an ongoing basis, it was best to use the 2-bed, 1-bath and the 1-bed, 1-bath apartments as Airbnbs rather than yearly rentals. Although the one upstairs space had been renovated, the long-term rental space is being completely rehabbed before it is used as an Airbnb. There are three viable businesses now occupying almost 4,500 sq. ft., but the most visible change is the new exterior paint. They even ran a survey on Facebook to get the community’s input on the best color choice. The deep blue with white trim features won, and local painting company Trevor Blevins Painting started painting in October 2021.

The building is a salute to the past, preserving its unique historical architecture, which has mostly been retained and improved, while also a tribute to the future through its modern function. It is a purposeful and positive enhancement, and we say to Daarik and Adam-- a job WELL DONE!

Join the boosters for their Derby party

Mackville Boosters

Maria Wheeler & Barbara Best
Guest Columnist

April showers usually bring May flowers, but not this year. It is too dry and windy. Maybe the flowers need some extra watering this month.

We had another outstanding meal at Boosters this Wednesday: chicken and noodles, broccoli casserole, corn, crescent rolls, and chocolate “Mississippi Mud” cake.

The craft for today was painting a Derby horse head door decoration.

Maurice Wilson is back to delivering the mail part-time. Welcome back!

Our neighbor, Billie Ann, has returned from her winter vacation in Florida. A big, hearty welcome back to her as well!

There will be a Derby Party on Saturday, May 2, at 5 p.m. There will be plenty of finger foods and everyone is welcome!

There will be a meeting of the Mackville Community Center Board and the public of Mackville are invited to attend. It will be Tuesday, May 5, at 7 p.m. Bring your ideas and suggestions!

There will be a Gospel Music Concert on June 6, at 6 p.m. There will be food for sale. Performers are The Noblemen, Family Legacy, and Lost in the Backwoods. The concert is free of charge, so come on out!

Our prayers this week are for Glenn Black, Betty Wohner, Holli Harmon White, Jerry Masters, Sue Masters, Barbara Ward, Penny Warner, Betty Bugg, Bobby Brady, June Green, Stan Green, Rose Mary Devine, Linda Anderson.

Mackville Community’s sympathy goes to the Leon Chance family and the Blake Yaste family.

Board

all have known about it for two months now.”

Board member Howard Waggener moved to approve with the following conditions—30 day rental limit, a local contact to deal with complaints, a maximum occupancy of 28 people, which would be posted on platforms, the applicant must return before the board if any changes are made, 10 or more parking spaces and only one residential unit on the parcel. Elliott seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

In other business, the Harrodsburg—Mercer County Joint Board of Adjustments and Appeals:

- Approved a five-foot sign variance—from 25-feet to 30-feet— requested by USA Signs for the property

located at 905 North College Street. The property is owned by GBT Realty Corporation and zoned B-2 (Commercial).

Ella Clay with USA Signs represents the applicant. Clay said the sign was for the new Tractor Supply Company location that’s currently under construction. She said the sign is within code and noted that other signs were that height.

After it was noted that other signs had been granted variances, Elliott suggested they review the ordinance.

“Maybe we should put that in the plan for the next couple of meetings,” Elliott said.

- Approved a 20-foot variance—from 40-foot to 20-foot on the front yard setback— requested by Luke Diemunsch for the property located at 4463 Deep Creek Road. The

property is zoned A-2 (Agricultural). The applicant said he wanted to build a barn at the location.

“Just a barn for farm use?” Elliott joked. “You’re not putting an AirBNB in it?”

Donnally noted the land was sloped so steeply that there was nowhere else to locate the barn. She suggested approving the variance.

The Harrodsburg-Mercer County Joint Board of Adjustments and Appeals is responsible for hearing requests on certain variances from the zoning ordinances of Mercer County and Harrodsburg. Their next meeting will be Friday, May 22, at 8:15 a.m. on the second floor of Harrodsburg City Hall (208 South Main Street).

from 3A

KFW

oversized load traveling from Houston, Texas, to Columbus, Ohio, blocked the two-lane highway for more than seven hours.

“We did verify that they did have a permit issued by the Department of Transportation to use 68,” Kelty said. The sheriff said he had the driver’s permit number on his phone.

“At one point, I felt sorry for him,” Kelty said.

Over the past year, residents in Mercer County and other rural counties have complained about oversized equipment loads being routed onto local roads. In many cases, the trucks have been redirected away from interstates, which are designed to handle that sort of traffic, because of construction and lane closures.

“We did everything we could as quickly as we could as safely as we could to get that out of there,” Kelty said.

Judge Steele said the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has issued an alert on the online system used by interstate transportation planners, informing them about conditions on US 68. While the route is officially a US highway, long sections of the road are only two narrow lanes, which get really tight in the Palisades area along the Kentucky River.

At Tuesday’s meeting, the fiscal court also approved the MCSO’s first quarterly report.

In other business, the Mercer County Fiscal Court:

- Approved the County

Road Aid Cooperative Agreement for Fiscal Year 2027, which starts July 1.

- Approved salaries for terms beginning January 2027 as required by state law.

- Approved the jailer’s salary and duties as required by state law.

On Tuesday, Steele distributed the Fiscal Year 2027 budget proposal to the magistrates. They will give the budget its first reading next month.

The next meeting of the Mercer County Fiscal Court is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, at 10 a.m. at the fiscal courthouse (207 West Lexington Street). For more information, visit mercercounty.ky.gov.

from 3A

INSPECTION PERIOD FOR THE PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT ROLL

The Mercer County real property tax roll will be opened for inspection from May 4 – May 18, 2026. Under the supervision of the property valuation administrator or one of the deputies, any person may inspect the tax roll.

This is the January 1, 2026, assessment on which state, county and school taxes for 2026 will be due in Fall 2026.

The tax roll is in the office of the Property Valuation Administrator at 207 W. Lexington St. and may be inspected between the hours of Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. by appointments only.

Any taxpayer desiring to appeal an assessment on real property made by the PVA must first request a conference with the PVA or a designated deputy. The conference may be held prior to or during the inspection period.

Any taxpayer still aggrieved by an assessment on real property, after the conference with the PVA or designated deputy, may appeal to the county board of assessment appeals.

The taxpayer can appeal his assessment by filing in person or sending a letter or other written petition stating the reasons for appeal, identifying the property and stating the taxpayer’s opinion of the fair cash value of the property.

The appeal must be filed with the county clerk’s office no later than one work day following the conclusion of the inspection period.

Any taxpayer failing to appeal to the county board of assessment appeals, or failing to appear before the board, either in person or by designated representative, will not be eligible to appeal directly to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Appeals of personal property assessments shall not be made to the county board of assessment appeals. Personal property taxpayers shall be served notice under the provisions of KRS 132.450(4) and shall have the protest and appeal rights granted under the provisions of KRS 131.110.

The following steps should be taken when a taxpayer does not agree with the assessed value of personal property as determined by the office of property valuation administrator.

- (1) He must list under protest (for certification) what he believes to be the fair cash value of his property.
- (2) He must file a written protest directly with the Department of Revenue, Office of Property Valuation within 30 days from the date of the notice of assessment.
- (3) This protest must be in accordance with KRS 131.110.
- (4) The final decision of the Department of Revenue may be appealed to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Jessica Elliott,
Mercer County PVA