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Major renovations underway for 1970s-era Franklin Street icon

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Driving down Franklin Street in Chapel Hill, it's hard to miss the construction work underway at one of Chapel Hill's tallest buildings: the iconic retail and office building at 137 E. Franklin St., which is best known for its street-level CVS drug store.

A complete exterior renovation of the building is underway, confirms [Todd Zapolski](#) of Zapolski Real Estate in Durham who is a part owner in the building. He says the exterior work should be complete by late November or early December.

Renovation of the building's lobby, elevator cabs and the lower level of the building on the Rosemary Street side is already complete, and renovation work is underway on two of the upper level vacant floors.

Much of the upper floor office space is currently occupied by administrative and research offices for UNC-Chapel Hill, but many of those employees will be moving into new spaces at [the Carolina Square mixed-use project that's slated to open in 2017](#), also on Franklin Street. As those spaces are vacated, Zapolski says they'll be working to renovate them, too.

"It's a very stable property," he says. "It's had some challenges with design, but it's one of the only buildings with unique access to both Franklin Street and Rosemary Street. It can be a critical spine in downtown."

Zapolski estimates the building's ownership has already invested close to \$2 million in its renovations. Zapolski and Manhattan-based Atco Properties and Management purchased the building, which is actually two buildings joined together, along with the parking garage [in 2014 for \\$26.2 million](#). It was the first time in the property's 37-year history that it has changed ownership. In its early years, it was known as NCNB Plaza and later Bank of America Plaza for its anchor bank tenants.

The building is a combination of two office buildings with retail on the main level. Due to the layout of the site, three floors, including the retail CVS store, face Franklin Street. Five levels of office face Rosemary Street on the other side and are adjacent to the parking deck. The building altogether is about 100,000 square feet.

The property owners are working with [Trademark Properties](#) of Raleigh to market and lease the building.



ALLIANCE ARCHITECTURE C/O TRADEMARK PROPERTIES
Exterior renovations to the 137 East building on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill.

“The lower level facing Rosemary street is unique in that it has exposed ceilings and above average ceiling heights and is perfect for open collaborative work space,” says [Fred Dickens](#) with Trademark. “Also, Rosemary Street is in the process of a major renovation of the sidewalks and street and is going to be a much cleaner and livelier environment.”

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