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Face-lift to begin on 'lynchpin' of town center

Former Sears in W'boro to be office space

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WILLINGBORO — Renovations could soon begin on the long-abandoned Sears building, a lynchpin of the Willingboro Town Center redevelopment effort along Route 130.

Delco Development LLC of Mount Laurel needs township approval on several minor issues such as the type of landscaping before the \$6 million renovation project can begin.

Thomas Juliano, senior vice president of Delco Development, said he

hoped to begin the project within a few months. He said it would take six months to prepare the two-story, 90,000-square-foot building to be leased for office space.

The Sears building has been vacant since 1982, when the department store moved into Burlington Center Mall on Route 541 in Burlington Township. The building has since fallen into disrepair, but Juliano said that will change.

"It's going to be a Class-A office building," he said. "It's going to change that whole section of Route 130. We'd like to see it be something the town's proud of."

Meanwhile, Juliano said he expected to break ground this week on a Ruby Tuesday restaurant in the Town Center.

Earlier this year, the restaurant acquired the first liquor license ever issued in Willingboro, a town that was dry until November 2002, when residents approved a referendum creating six liquor licenses.

Juliano said the restaurant would open early next year.

Delco already has constructed a 23,000-square-foot retail building housing Hollywood Video, Quiznos sandwich shop, Rita's Water Ice and Game Crazy video game store in the

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Town Center. It also built a Starbucks coffee shop in a separate building.

Juliano said all but one store in those buildings has been leased.

Under development for six years, the 56-acre Willingboro Town Center includes a 216-unit apartment complex, a library, an Acme supermarket, Medco Health Solutions pharmaceutical distribution plant and a mixture of retail, office and educational tenants.