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New townhouses for the Rail District

By Lisa Brody

Eight new rental townhouses to be built on Villa in Birmingham's Rail District received unanimous final site plan and design review approval from the Birmingham Planning Board in late March.

The townhouses are to be built on the site of the former Eton Street Station development, also known as Crosswinds Development, which ceased development in 2005 after building 120 units and later filed for bankruptcy protection. In 2011, a group of investors purchased the lot on Villa, according to David Steuer of Steuer & Associates in Farmington Hills, who came before the planning board and intends to build the eight units.

The final site plan and design review now has to be approved by the city commission.

Steuer said the new units, which will be built on the Eton Street Station building pad using the previous site plan, will be called Villa Lofts.

"Because there are already 120 units of Eton Street Station, which are done in a tudor-style, we decided we could create units with a similar style to the District Lofts, which have a renovated factory loft style, so that when you are driving down Villa, it will provide an overall continuity," Steuer said.

He said they will not directly mimic District Lofts, which are four-story loft buildings. Villa Lofts will be two-and-a-half story townhouses with flat roofs, using a "more earth-tone siding and stone," Steuer said, while utilizing the same window manufacturer and black grills as District Lofts.

He said their consumer research showed that residents, particularly divorced fathers who have been Birmingham residents, are seeking more living space, so each unit will be 2,450 square feet, and each will be three-bedrooms with four-and-a-half baths. They will feature a two-story great room with a fireplace and a finished lower level with daylight windows. Each unit will also have its own patio.

Rentals are expected to be in the upper \$2,000 per month, Steuer said. **D**