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Greenacres to grow even bigger

R420m expansion includes hotel

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PORT Elizabeth's busiest shopping centre, Greenacres, has received a R420-million boost from owners Liberty Group, which will see the popular 30-year-old centre substantially expanded.

The investment includes the building of retail stores, a hotel and offices.

The expansion plans include over 7 000m² of additional retail space to be added on the north side of the centre, where entrances one and two are located. There will also be a food hall with a partially indoor and outdoor environment.

"The whole process will take about 18 months to have everything completed

A new basement parking area will also be developed below the extension.

"We just spent R50-million on Checkers [which was damaged in a fire in January]. We are looking at spending a billion on the centre over a period of two years," Liberty Properties managing director of developments Giles Pendleton said.

"We want to bring international brands to the mall. We cannot announce the names yet, but it will be more than one.

"The extension will give existing retailers the potential to expand as well as attract unique new specialist stores, national retailers not yet represented in the centre, as well as new international brands," Pendleton said.

"We believe in Greenacres, we believe in the Eastern Cape and we believe in Port Elizabeth."

He said preliminary work had begun.

"The whole process will take about 18 months to have everything completed. We would like to be trading by the 2014 Easter holidays," he said.

The redevelopment and expansion will also include a refreshed interior, upgraded restrooms and a modernised facade.

The new hotel will be a three-star, 130-room business hotel. A full-scale revamp is also planned for the existing 2 200m² office space.

"I know people already say there are a lot of hotels in Port Elizabeth, but not in that area.

"We are introducing new environmentally sound initiatives to promote water and electricity efficiencies. The addition of natural light is a very important element of the new extension. A living wall, to be incorporated on the facades, will make a green statement to be enjoyed by the local community," he said.

Pendleton said the centre was currently 100% let. It features 85 national and local retailers and attracts over one million people a month.