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Superstore signs lease

Cosmetics retailer coming to city

By **JOAN DAVIS**
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T.J. Maxx and Target will have a new neighbor at Hammond Square this summer.

Cosmetics and fragrance retailer Ulta will locate a 9,800-square-foot store at 2026 Hammond Square Drive between the two big retailers. Stirling is anticipating an opening between July 1 and Aug. 1.

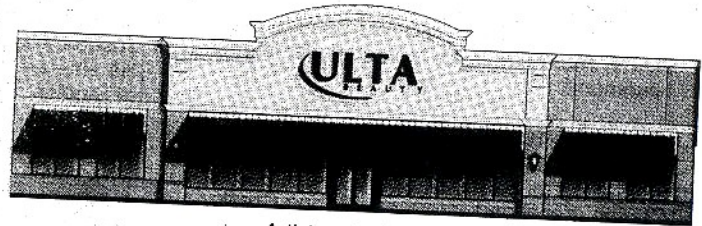
Grady Brame, Stirling Properties executive vice president and partner, said Stirling has filed for the retailer's business permit and has already begun initial construction in the existing shell, including dry wall, electrical, a new canopy and

adding more window frontage as requested by the retailer. Ulta will then finish the buildout to their own specifications inside.

Stirling Properties has been "sweating out a lease" for the past three weeks and has been in negotiations since last August, he said.

"Part of the retail world is it just takes a while to get from an agreed-upon deal to a successful transaction, and we can't be more excited about having Ulta being a part of Hammond Square."

The shell was designed for a retailer similar in size to Ulta, he said. Ulta had prior commitments to another development on the North Shore, which didn't pan out,



Artist rendering courtesy of Hammond Square

freeing them to locate elsewhere.

"The main issue is they wanted to be in this market, on the North Shore," Brame said.

The store has locations at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge and at Regal Court in Shreveport with no location in New Orleans. It

will be a big attractor for other retailers at Hammond Square, he said.

"Ulta is basically a superstore, the Best Buy of cosmetics and fragrances and a tremendous draw for the shopping center," Brame said.

See **ULTA**, 2A

ULTA SIGNS LEASE

Continued from page 1A

"They are a great co-tenant for Target and T.J. Maxx and will open (Hammond Square) up for some other big-name retailers in the apparel and women's wear market. It gives us a real draw in that section of the industry that I think will help us filling out the rest of the center.

"There's no question that this is a tremendous accomplishment," he said. "The location will give Ulta great visibility and is a real draw for them. It's a good tenant mix, the retail we were wishing for."

He added that the acquisition of Ulta does not preclude having a bath and body product type store elsewhere in the shopping center.

Ulta offers brand-name skin-care products, cosmetics, professional hair and nail brands, fragrances, professional hair tools and Ulta's own brands of cosmetics, bath and body, spa products, accessories and can-

dles.

The store will be illuminated with natural light so guests can easily see the true shade of the products they are testing, according to a company press release. The full-service salon has licensed designers and skin therapists with services ranging from cuts and color to brow design and specialty facials and complimentary hair and skin care consultations.

"Our goal is to help women look and feel their absolute best, while encouraging them to fully enjoy their personal shopping time," said Lyn Kirby, Ulta's president and CEO. "Ulta provides every guest with a memorable experience that allows her to escape from her busy day-to-day schedule while she experiments and interacts with our extensive selection of brands."

Ulta is headquartered in Bolingbrook, Ill.

City Editor Joan Davis gets calls at 254-7833.