

Will mall be able to lure upscale shops?

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Jeff Berkowitz doesn't have a crystal-clear picture yet of what his newest West Kendall shopping mall will look like.

But he's getting there.

"I think the theme will be entertainment," Berkowitz said. "My project is one with a theater in it and a number of

upscale stores and upscale restaurants. I want to do something compatible to the area."

Members of the Community Zoning Appeals Board Area 11 (West Kendall) are urging Berkowitz to come back to them next year with a more detailed draft of what he wants to build there. Not until then, they said at their zoning meeting last

Possible tenants include Caribbean-food chain Bahama Breeze and a Mexican restaurant called On-The-Border.

week, will they make a final vote on whether to approve or reject his development plan.

"The zoning board asked me to come back and submit a comprehensive plan for developing

the whole project and that's what I am going to do," Berkowitz said. "They want a specific plan, so I am going to try to get them one. Believe me — I've had that property 10 years and I would like very much like to start using at least part of it."

Board members are not per-

PLEASE SEE MALL, 8

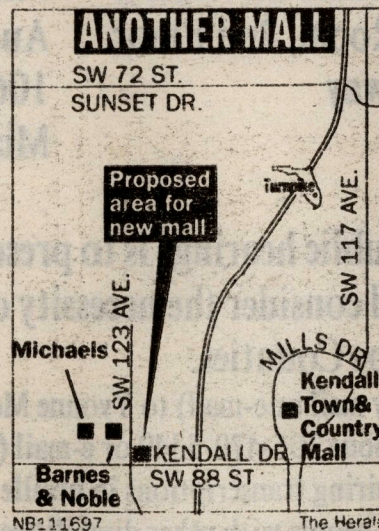
Board considers developer's dream for W. Kendall mall entertainment

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mitted to comment until a final decision is made.

Berkowitz' property at 12275-12395 SW 88th St., which he calls Kendall Village, is sandwiched between two other strip malls he also developed and owns: Kendallgate Shopping Center across the street that includes Kendall Nine Regal Cinema and Kendall Village West mall next door, the home of a Barnes & Noble superstore and a Michael's Arts & Crafts store.

"The key is to bring to Kendall more entertainment and activities with combination of restaurants and movies and other stores to generate an entertainment theme," said Miles Moss, president of the Kendall Federation. The federation represents residents and homeowners associations within the area between the Palmetto Expressway and Krome Avenue from



Bird Road to 160th Street.

In 1992 Berkowitz presented the county with plans to build a mall similar to CocoWalk in Coconut Grove. But he could not get the right tenants to lease space.

"We couldn't fit all the pieces

together at same time," Berkowitz said. "I had the buildings in place but not the tenants to occupy them. Now I have the tenants in place and am trying to get approval to put the buildings where the tenants have requested them."

Berkowitz says he is working to bring a Caribbean-food chain known as Bahama Breeze and a Mexican-food restaurant called On-The-Border as well as a state-of-the-art theater with stadium seating to the mall.

The appeals board — which also functions as the community council for Area 11 — rescheduled a public hearing for Jan. 14 to give homeowners a second chance to voice their opinions.

"We want a complete site plan, and I think he clearly will have it. Whether or not he will follow through with it is completely another issue," Moss said. "If he wants to change it again, the plans have to be approved, so we have that level of protection."