

Foundation for 'trophy-quality' buildings

By Richard Conn/Daily News Staff

WALTHAM — It's a premier location along the Rte. 128 business corridor that for years has seemed ripe for development, yet remained dormant.

No longer, as Hobbs Brook Management broke ground yesterday for two new office buildings totaling some 335,000 square feet at 175 and 185 Wyman St. - the foot of the Hobbs Brook Office Park.



Thursday's groundbreaking for Hobbs Brook Office Park at 175 and 185 Wyman St. in Waltham.

Thomas Dusel, president and CEO of Hobbs Brook Management, said the property deserves two "trophy quality" buildings.

The property, which at one time was owned by Hewlett Packard, is already the site of an existing 330,000-square-foot building. That structure will be demolished, yet much of it will still remain. That's because about 90 percent of the steel, masonry and concrete will be recycled and used during construction there.

"The more you can recycle of the existing building, the better," Dusel said.

Materials from the old building not used for redeveloping the property will be taken to another in-state construction site.

Hobbs Office Park already contains nine buildings, and when the two new structures are completed, will total some 1.5 million square feet.

Construction on the two new buildings will begin later this summer and is expected to be completed by late 2009 or early 2010.

Marc Margulies, architect for the project, said other developers had eyed the roughly 26-acre property, but looked to create something much larger than the two-story office buildings that will now be built there.

"The reason that this site has been left undeveloped for so long is that everyone else was trying to create some behemoth," Margulies said.

Margulies said the two new office buildings would frame a landscaped courtyard.

Dusel, noting long-time tenants such as IBM that are already in the Hobbs Brook Office Park, said companies that would occupy the new buildings would likely also become fixtures in Waltham.

"Once we get tenants in our building, they stay for a long, long time," Dusel said.

To ensure the buildings are Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, an underground water storage tank will capture runoff from the roof to irrigate the landscape. Also, new roofs will be constructed with a high reflection rating to reduce heat island effect.

Chip Batchelder of Wyman Street Advisors, leasing agent for the new office buildings, called the location "the best suburban office park development in the entire Eastern seaboard."

He said no tenants have signed up yet, but interest is high.

"If you've got a 100,000 square-foot tenant that you want to sign up today, lunch is on me," Batchelder told the crowd at the groundbreaking ceremony. Dusel said that the new office campus could be attractive to biomedical companies, where the market is now leaning.

Among those attending the groundbreaking were state Rep. Thomas Stanley, D-Waltham, who is also an at large city councilor, along with city councilors Sarafina "Sally" Collura and Gary Marchese.

Stanley, noting the tough economic climate, said the city would "greatly appreciate the tax revenue" the new office campus would bring.

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