

# St. Paul: 7th St. Tavern to close at end of July

By Sarah Horner

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Another light is about to go out at the slowly shuttering Sibley Plaza strip mall on St. Paul's West Seventh Street.

The 7th Street Tavern -- formerly Champps Sports Bar -- is not renewing its lease. The bar and restaurant's last day is July 31.

"It's sad; we've been here for 30 years," said owner Dan Greenberg.

Greenberg, who also owned Champps, said he was forced to change the restaurant's name last year after the corporation that owned it emerged from bankruptcy and was sold to another company. That company wouldn't allow any Champps operating without a franchise agreement to continue using the name, Greenberg said.

"Nothing changed inside, though: same owner, same staff, same menu. ... Other than the name on the front door, everything was the same," Greenberg said.

The name change, along with construction on the Minnesota 5 bridge and other changes in the neighborhood, added to a dwindling customer base at the sports bar, Greenberg said.

It likely didn't help that the strip mall itself has endured dwindling activity for years. Much of the 94,000-square-foot mall has sat vacant as the property's owner, Paster Enterprises, proceeds with tentative plans to redevelop it.

The only remaining tenants in the decades-old building are Cooper's Foods, Tuesday Morning, a medical clinic and a couple other retail shops.

Neighbors have been calling for improvements to the plaza for years.



Paster announced tentative plans last year that included razing the property and redeveloping it along with developer Bader Development into luxury apartments, a multistory fitness center, and a natural and organics grocer.

It's unclear whether the proposal has changed since, and Paster Enterprises declined to comment on current plans. The company's marketing manager said the company would provide an update when there was one.

Gary Cooper, owner of Cooper's Foods, said he's heard the plan remains on track but said he was unsure of the timeline. "Last time I talked to (Howard Paster) he told me I'd be there another year yet," Cooper said. "Obviously, we'd like to be there longer, but I guess we don't fit in to the long-term plan."

Cooper plans to make continued investments at his other grocery store on West Seventh Street in the meantime.

"We're putting in a deli, some new checkouts, new flooring. ... We want to try and make that store as nice as possible and grow that business for when we lose this site," Cooper said.

It's hard to see 7th Street Tavern go, Cooper added.

"I don't like seeing all those spaces sit empty," he said.

Based on University Avenue in St. Paul, Paster Enterprises has been managing commercial real estate in the Twin Cities since 1948, and St. Louis Park-based Bader Development has been building multifamily housing for nearly as long.

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From the Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

<http://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2015/06/26/7th-street-tavern-closing-st-paul-champss.html>

# Closing soon: 7th Street Tavern, the first -ever Champps

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A longstanding bar and restaurant in southwest St. Paul is calling it quits.

The 7th Street Tavern will close at the end of July, said owner [Dan Greenberg](#).

Greenberg said he opted not to renew the 30-year-old restaurant's lease, though he did not explain. Assets of the business will [be auctioned off at AcesBid.com](#).

## See Also

- [Chick-fil-A and Starbucks will replace Burnsville Champps](#)
- [Maplewood Champps closes after 21 years](#)
- [COV Wayzata restaurant opens Thursday in former Sunsets space](#)

"We feel it is time to move on," Greenberg said in an email. "It has been a great run and we want to thank our longstanding employees and our loyal customers for 30 years of great success."

7th Street Tavern was a **Champps** until last year. It was the restaurant chain's first location, followed by 60 more by 2007.

Greenberg [changed the restaurant's name](#) after Cerberus Business Finance bought the chain's Wichita, Kan.-based parent company, F&H Acquisition Corp., [for \\$125 million in bankruptcy court](#). Cerberus compelled franchisees to change their names and logos after the sale closed near the end of 2014.

There were nine Champps locations in Minnesota when F&H [filed for bankruptcy](#). Only three Minnesota locations remain, according to its website: Eden Prairie, Minnetonka and Richfield.

Meanwhile, the Sibley Plaza shopping center containing 7th Street Tavern is slated for a redevelopment spearheaded by property owner Paster Enterprises and Bader Development. The retail center will be replaced with a new Fresh Thyme Farmers Market grocery, fitness center and apartments.

It is unclear when the project will begin, though initial plans called for demolition this summer. A spokesperson for Paster Enterprises said the company was still working on "pre-leasing efforts" but had no further update to share.

Clare Kennedy writes about food and drink.

Internet Explorer browser interface showing the address bar with the URL <http://www.7thstreetavern.com/>. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for Home, Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Print, and Search. The Favorites bar lists several sites: Infor Login Page, Odyssey File & Serve, Thomson Reuters Concour..., Suggested Sites, BCA-Lab, Cole's Metro Search, DVS, and ECF MN. The status bar at the bottom shows 100% zoom, 2:16 PM, and 9/4/2015.

Internet Explorer cannot display the webpage

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Windows taskbar showing the Start button, taskbar buttons for Internet Explorer, Word, and other applications, and the system tray with the clock and date.