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## **Classy bistro gets go-ahead for Triangle site**

By Jay M. Grossman - STAFF WRITER

Suddenly, the Triangle District is the place to be in Birmingham.

Brian Polcyn, one of the top chefs in the country, drove home that point by picking the corner of Elm Street and Forest to open his next restaurant, appropriately called The Forest Avenue Bistro.

The 64-seat restaurant, opening on the first floor of the new 735 Forest building, will help anchor the district and likely serve as a catalyst for similar projects.

By a 7-0 vote, the project received final site plan approval and a bistro liquor license at Monday's City Commission meeting.

"This will be a restaurant with soul," Polcyn promised the packed audience that attended Monday's meeting to learn more about the project.

How good is Polcyn? His restaurant in downtown Milford, The Five Lakes Grill, was named Restaurant of the Year in Michigan for 2005 and 2006. Polcyn himself was a finalist for the "best chef in the Midwest" award in 2006.

Even better, he's clearly excited about opening a restaurant in the heart of the Triangle, a somewhat neglected area of Birmingham that's quickly taking off.

Bordered by Maple, Woodward and Adams, the district has single-family homes to the north and standalone commercial buildings toward the south.

The 735 Forest building is the first mixed-used development in the Triangle. The restaurant will occupy the first floor; the second floor is reserved for office space, topped by 11 urban lofts on the third floor.

Polcyn handled the crowd deftly at Monday's meeting, promising he would do everything to keep his employees and customers from parking in the adjacent neighborhoods.

"I come out in favor of this proposal," said Gil Goode, a 59-year resident on Chestnut Street. "I think this is an opportunity."