

# Los Angeles Times

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## Developer Buys Brentwood Country Mart



Ken Hively / Los Angeles Times

**LOCAL LANDMARK:** Built in 1948, the Brentwood Country Mart has fallen on hard Times in recent years and has lost its food market, post office and candy store, among other business.

**BY Roger Vincent**  
Times Staff Writer

The Brentwood Country Mart has been purchased by a Santa Monica developer who intends to restore the aging retail center in the middle of the affluent Westside neighborhood.

James S. Rosenfield bought the property at San Vicente Boulevard and 26th Street in a transaction valued at \$30 million. The deal includes the red barn-like structure and a long-term ground lease.

Built in 1948 with a stylistic nod to Farmers Market in Los Angeles' Fairfax district, the mart was an early local mall with two courtyards, a fire pit and such services as a barber shop, shoe repair and a pharmacy.

The 30,000-square-foot mart is now more

than 40% empty, however, having lost its food market, post office and candy store, among other businesses, said Rosenfield, who vowed to persuade such tenants to return.

The mart is "at the worst state it's been in since it was built," said Rosenfield, president of J.S. Rosenfield & Co. "But I love it and I'm going to bring it back."

Rosenfield, 40, grew up in the area and has fond memories of eating barbecued chicken at Reddi-Chick, which still is operating, and visiting other shops at the mart, including children's clothing store Hansel & Gretel, which has been there since 1948.

"People sometimes came on horseback back then," Rosenfield said.

"It's always been one of the simple pleasures of the community."

Rosenfield said it might cost more than \$1 million to renovate the property and make it

attractive to the high-end tenants he wants to sign while preserving its ambience. The neighborhood is appealing to certain merchants — the average annual household income within a one-mile radius is more than \$260,000, according to Rosenfield.

Selling the property was John E. Anderson, chairman of Los Angeles-based Topa Equities and namesake of UCLA's Anderson business school. Anderson bought the property in 1971 and remains the owner of the land upon which the mart is built. Rosenfield owns the buildings and holds a 60-year ground lease.

Rosenfield also owns and operates the Aero Theater and the building that houses the Waterworks store, both of which are on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica.

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