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Bankrupt JCPenney to close its Orlando Fashion Square mall store



By **AUSTIN FULLER**
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The JCPenney at the Orlando Fashion Square mall, on Thursday, June 4, 2020. (Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/Orlando Sentinel)

The JCPenney store at Orlando Fashion Square is closing after the national retailer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last month and as redevelopment plans for the mall loom.

It will be the only metro Orlando JCPenney to shut its doors during the first phase of 154 closings. Sales are expected to start in the coming weeks and take 10 to 16 weeks to complete, according to a news release Thursday.

The Fashion Square store is listed on the company's website as temporarily closed. The chain's locations in Florida Mall, Altamonte Mall, Seminole Towne Center, West Oaks Mall in Ocoee, Volusia Mall in Daytona Beach, Kissimmee and Clermont have so far been spared.

Previously filed Securities and Exchange Commission documents had indicated the company planned to shutter 192 of its 846 stores in the 2020 fiscal year and close and sell another 50 stores by the end of the second quarter of 2021.

“While closing stores is always an extremely difficult decision, our store optimization strategy is vital to ensuring we emerge from both Chapter 11 and the COVID-19 pandemic as a stronger retailer with greater financial flexibility to allow us to continue serving our loyal customers for decades to come,” CEO Jill Soltau said in a news release.

Developers Chuck Whittall and Daryl Carter have purchased the land under Fashion Square with the hope of tearing it down and replacing it with an open-air center, but they still have to reach a deal with the owner of the mall's building.

Whittall said this week he plans to focus heavily on that project next year.

The former Sears store there was demolished and replaced with a Floor & Decor and a space that was expected to be an **Orchard Supply Hardware before Lowe's Companies discontinued that brand.**

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