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# Alaska Building plan now is for a 253-room Marriott

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By **[JON SILVER](#)**

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Photo by Ben Minnick

[\[enlarge\]](#)

Renovation should start this summer, including seismic upgrades and a 37,000-square-foot addition.

Kauri Investments CEO Kent Angier said work to restore downtown Seattle's historic Alaska Building at 612 Second Ave. could begin in two or three months.

The city approved the sale of the building for \$8.5 million to Kauri and Ariel Development in August 2005. Plans for the 1904 building — Seattle's first steel-frame skyscraper — have variously included offices, condos and a hotel.

But Angier said the building's 13.5-foot column spacing proved ideal for a hotel layout, so the developer decided to go to a hotel-only format last July.

Plans now call for a creating 253-room Marriott. The existing first-floor retail spaces will be reconfigured in the new design. The hotel lobby will open onto Second Avenue, and a restaurant is being sought for space at the corner of Second Avenue and Cherry Street.

The renovation will include significant seismic upgrades to bring the building up to code. A 37,000-square-foot addition is planned for the crook of the L-shaped structure, facing the alley behind the building, that will add seismic support.

Modern structures generally rely on elevator shafts and stairway towers for seismic support, Angier said, but in this case, "we're doing it in reverse order."

That means running the bracing addition outside, along the full height of the 15-story building, connecting it to the building's steel frame.

The combination of the steel frame and space for the addition allows Coughlin Porter Lundeen, the structural engineer, to avoid using a less attractive — and more intrusive — cross-bracing design that's common among older buildings that have been seismically reinforced.

"There's some stuff that has to happen inside the building (to bring it up to date)," Angier said, "but you're not going to see it from the outside."

The addition will have a brick exterior to complement the rest of the building. The bricks won't quite match the existing ones, Angier said, so it will be readily apparent which part of the building is new.

"The front of the building doesn't look any different," he said. Some not-so-historic awnings will be removed, "but generally speaking, the building will be what you see today."

The project is expected to take 12 to 14 months to complete. Clark Design Group is the architect, and Graham Construction has been providing preconstruction services.

Clark Design Group partner Brenda Barnes said she will present the design for the hotel to the Pioneer Square Preservation Board at its Wednesday meeting, set for 9 a.m. at Seattle City Hall, Room L280, 600 Fourth Ave.

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